



Women in Emergency Management: Models of Leadership and Tools for Change

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Women in Emergency Management: Models of Leadership and Tools for Change

Elizabeth O'Donnell

A Thesis in the Field of International Relations
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

Women continue to be under-represented as leaders in emergency management, thus there is a need for more voices that can influence decision making and advocate for considerations that bolster communities to be more resilient. This thesis examines the leadership tools, styles, strategies, and skills used by women in the field of emergency management.

There is limited research that draws parallels between leadership tools and how they have been successfully applied by female emergency managers. The qualitative interviews and survey conducted as part of this study provide evidence that fills a gap in this research. Nineteen women in executive leadership emergency management positions were interviewed, and a survey was completed by 36 rising female leaders. Findings show the career path and trajectory of established leaders, tools utilized by leaders, and recommendations for future leaders.

Author's Biographical Sketch

Elizabeth O'Donnell holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science *Magna Cum Laude* and a Master of Arts Degree in Political Science *Cum Laude with Honors* from Long Island University/C.W. Post, New York. O'Donnell has interned for various organizations such as United States Congress, New York City Global Partners, the Peace Caravan Project, the United Nations, and New York City Commission for the United Nations, Consular Corps and Protocol. In 2011, O'Donnell worked for the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University.

In 2012, O'Donnell was hired by New York City Emergency Management. Since 2012, O'Donnell has served within multiple Emergency Support Functions and Sections roles (e.g., Logistics Emergency Support Function, Planning Section Chief, EOC Manager) during real-world emergencies including during Hurricane Sandy and the COVID-19 pandemic, and she was deployed to San Juan, Puerto Rico to support the city's Emergency Operations Center following Hurricane Maria. O'Donnell also contributed to the agency by support the Ready New York Program, New York City Community Emergency Response Team Program, and Watch Command Auxiliary.

Among her achievements are a graduate of: NYCEM's Emergency Management Certificate Program, NYCEM's Emerging Leaders Program, and the Big City Emergency Managers' Emerging Leaders Program. In 2020, O'Donnell received her Master Exercise Practitioner certification from FEMA and Certified Emergency Management certification from the International Association of Emergency Managers

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my mother and grandmother who have inspired me to make a difference in this world.

I also attribute this project to all men and women who mentor and support the development of future female leaders. My goal is that this work empowers future female leaders in the emergency management industry.

Acknowledgments

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I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to Trudi Goldberg Pires for her time, patience, effort, and assistance in the formatting of this thesis. I am also thankful for the continuous support of my Research Advisor, Dr. Doug Bond, who provided advice and encouragement as I established the foundation of this work. I appreciate his immense knowledge and assistance to help me complete this thesis.

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I would like to thank Katie Murphy and Laura Black for helping me proofread this thesis. Also, a special thanks to Sabrina Piccolo for her support on the writing

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Chapter I

Introduction

Women in emergency management have demonstrated leadership during a time of crisis. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted their contributions and capabilities to successfully lead. Evidence of their effectiveness during this global emergency proved that women can address complex challenges. For example, in a study conducted by Supriya Garikipati and Uma Kambhampati, in a sample of 20 women-led countries and 94 men-led countries, “Women leaders reacted more quickly and decisively in the face of potential fatalities, locking down earlier than men leaders.”¹ Outcomes from women-led countries resulted were more positive, such as fewer COVID-19 cases and fatalities during the initial stage of the pandemic.² These women utilized leadership tools such as styles, strategies, and skills (e.g., problem-solving and decision-making abilities), which resulted in positive outcomes during the disaster.

In this study, the sample of women-led countries is notably small. If more women had been in positions to lead COVID-19 responses, might more favorable results have been produced? With the likely increase of more complex emergencies and disasters, there is a need for more inclusion of women to contribute to solutions for complex problems.

¹ Supriya Garikipati and Uma Kambhampati, “Leading the Fight Against the Pandemic: Does Gender Really Matter?,” *Feminist Economics* 27, no. 1-2 (March 2021): 412.

² Garikipati and Kambhampati, “Leading the Fight Against the Pandemic,” 415.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed many challenges to leaders while creating an environment that was “dynamic, evolving, changing frequently.”³ Herman B. Leonard, Arnold M. Howitt, and David W. Giles addressed the importance of incorporating diversity (e.g., gender) in crisis work because it brings different perspectives.⁴ The emergency management field is an evolving industry that requires individuals with various skill sets to respond. Emergency management continues to slowly grow and flourish with the rise of women in the industry and especially in leadership roles. Even though the number of women in the industry continue to increase, women remain under-represented as leaders. Strong female leaders who connect with their community, influence decision making, and make their communities more resilient are invaluable in all phases of the emergency management cycle: preparation, response, mitigation, and recovery.

During the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in 1994, the “Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World” provided guidelines for the emergency management cycle. One of the actions in these guidelines identified the importance of:

. . . stimulat[ing] genuine community involvement and empowerment of women and other socially disadvantaged groups at all stages of disaster management programmes in order to facilitate capacity building, which is an essential precondition for reducing vulnerability of communities to natural disasters.⁵

³ Herman B. Leonard, Arnold M. Howitt, and David W. Giles, “Crisis Management for Leaders Coping with COVID-19,” Harvard University (April 2020): 2. https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/research-initiatives/crisisleadership/files/PCL_Crisis-Management-for-COVID_Web20200428.pdf.

⁴ Leonard, Howitt, and Giles, “Crisis Management for Leaders Coping with COVID-19,” 2.

⁵ World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, “Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation.” United Nations Office

Although this strategy and plan does not specifically point out a need for female leaders, it does point out that community involvement allows communities to contribute to their needs and influence decisions. Women are assets to emergency and disaster management as they provide gender perspectives regarding needs and decisions during disasters.

This thesis addresses the following question:

What propelled women forward in their careers to attain executive positions in emergency management?

Subsidiary questions address:

- Why is it important for women to fill leadership positions?
- What barriers did established leaders overcome?
- What leadership tools can be utilized by women in emergency management?
- How can these leadership tools help women both rise to and be effective in leadership positions in emergency management?

There are resources available on the topic of leadership, but few apply directly to female leaders in emergency management. Since men tend to hold more leadership roles in this industry, gender-specific resources and guides have not been widely developed. The information available for and about women in emergency management remains extremely underdeveloped. While there is some information that highlights how women have a role in various emergency and disaster events, there is limited research that

investigates leadership tools for women and how they have been applied during real-world events to make them successful.

To help fill the information void, this thesis identifies real-world examples of women who have filled leadership roles. Even though few resources highlight connections between leadership and women in emergency management, qualitative evidence collected through my survey and the series of semi-structured interviews I conducted shed light on leadership tools used by established female leaders in emergency management and indicate how they can be applied by future female emergency managers.

Leadership tools can shape decisions, processes, and policies that influence the outcome of an emergency or disaster. Such tools can be applied to day-to-day correspondence, face-to-face interactions, document creation, and actions pertaining to blue-sky work and gray-sky operations. In this research, key leadership tools highlighted by established female leaders are *strategies* and *skills*. Additionally, rising women leaders in emergency management heighten more than ever the need for and importance of professional development and mentorship.

This thesis provides background on emergency management and women in leadership roles and expands on leadership tools. If women deploy these tools, they will become more equipped to fill leadership positions and navigate an industry in need of further evolution.

Note: the terms “female” and “woman” refer to individuals who identify as such without delving into the biological definition or social construct of gender.

Chapter II

Background

The main goal of emergency management is to “sustain life, minimize damage to property, and maintain the safety and welfare of a community.”⁶ To address these areas, coordination and collaboration among stakeholders are critical to handling disasters and emergencies.⁷

Emergency Management

Emergency management is a field that supports the community through different phases such as preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery.⁸ This field is constantly evolving to adapt to the dynamic nature of threats, hazards, risks, and impending needs. Capabilities and current emergency and disaster structures differ between countries due to various factors (i.e., cultural, economic, institutional, and political). To address emergencies and disasters, many countries have these structures in place while others do not.⁹

This thesis focuses on the emergency management profession in the United States, with a specific emphasis on women’s leadership roles in the field. Common barriers and issues related to women and being under-represented also exist in the

⁶ David H. McElreath, Daniel Adrian Doss, Robert Nations, Jeffrey Van Slyke, and Michael Wigginton, Jr., *Introduction to Homeland Security* (Second edition.). (Milton Park, UK: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 45.

⁷ McElreath, et al., *Introduction to Homeland Security*, 45.

⁸ Damon P. Coppola, *The Management of Disasters. An Introduction to International Disaster Management* (Second edition) (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2011), 9-10.

⁹ Coppola, *Management of Disasters*, 1.

profession internationally. These differ from country to country (e.g., access to education, economics, employment equality, freedom). Although there are international differences regarding how countries advance equality, women continue to be challenged to combat societal expectations, prejudices, biases, and discrimination.

Brief History

In the United States, emergency management began to take shape in the early 1800s. A history of FEMA stated:

FEMA can trace its beginnings to the Congressional Act of 1803. This Act, generally considered the first piece of disaster legislation, provided assistance to a New Hampshire town following an extensive fire. In the century that followed, ad hoc legislation was passed more than 100 times in response to hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and other natural disasters.¹⁰

Legislation was the crux of addressing emergencies and disasters, although likely not in a uniform way.

In the 1940s, the focus of emergency response pertained to civil defense.

McElreath, et al. note:

In 1941, with World War II unfolding in Europe and Asia, the Office of Civilian Defense was established . . . to assure effective coordination of federal relations with state and local governments engaged in furtherance of war programs; to provide for necessary cooperation with state and local government with respect to measures for adequate protection of the civilian population in war emergencies.¹¹

¹⁰ FEMA, “Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Overview,” FEMA History, Emergency Management Institute. Modified October 16, 2019. <https://training.fema.gov/history.aspx>.

¹¹ McElreath, et al., *Introduction to Homeland Security*, 48.

Soon after World War II ended in 1945, the United States entered into the Cold War era where the focus shifted to new threats such as nuclear attacks.¹² Claire Rubin emphasized the emergency management focus prior to 1950, stating:

For many decades, emergency management functions were performed primarily at the local level. The main national organization involved in providing humanitarian assistance to disaster victims prior to 1950 was the American Red Cross although some federal government and military agencies . . . have been involved with disaster responses for more than a century.¹³

In the 1960s and 1970s, federal disaster management agencies began to focus more on natural disasters due to the increasing number of these events, which often resulted in costly property damage. For example, Congress allocated \$23.5 million to address the devastation caused by the Alaska earthquake of 1964, also Hurricane Betsy in 1965, which resulted in more than \$1 billion¹⁴ in damages.¹⁵

The requisite response and recovery from various natural disasters were sufficiently catastrophic to lead to legislation that supported “individual victims of disasters and to state and local governments.”¹⁶ The Disaster Relief Act of 1966 enabled various entities to receive financial assistance after a disaster. This act “authorized federal agencies to provide loans at below-market rates, . . . extended aid to unincorporated communities in rural areas, and created a new category of eligibility for public colleges

¹² McElreath, et al., *Introduction to Homeland Security*, 48.

¹³ Claire B. Rubin, “Introduction: 110 Years of Disaster Response and Emergency Management in the United States.” In: *Emergency Management: The American Experience*, ed. Claire B. Rubin, p. 6 (New York: Routledge, 2020).

¹⁴ \$1 billion amount is equivalent to “\$8 billion in 2005 dollars.” Cited in Keith Bea, “The Formative Years: 1950-1978.” In *Emergency Management: The American Experience*, ed. Claire B. Rubin, p. 91 (New York: Routledge, 2020).

¹⁵ Bea, “Formative Years,” 89-91.

¹⁶ Bea, “Formative Years,” 89-93.

and universities damaged by disasters.”¹⁷ A few years later, the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 was passed to establish flood insurance for individuals who owned homes.¹⁸ To address the impacts of natural disasters spilling across jurisdictional boundaries and states not sufficiently large enough to handle resource needs, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was established in 1979 to coordinate with local, state, and federal partners, allocate resources, and aid in disaster relief.¹⁹ Richard Sylves wrote that “from 1979-1992, FEMA came to address a growing range of natural and human-caused disasters.”²⁰ Sylves also discusses how FEMA has addressed all phases of emergency management: preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation since it originated.²¹

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew came ashore in Florida, causing \$26.5 billion in damage as it moved north.²² The administration of President George H. W. Bush identified major areas that needed improvement in how FEMA responded to this disaster,²³ including leadership challenges that caused slowed responses to the disaster.²⁴ A 1993 report from the National Academy of Public Administration indicated:

FEMA had not successfully integrated disaster mitigation into its mission. . . . FEMA has been ill-served by congressional and White House neglect,

¹⁷ Bea, “Formative Years,” 93.

¹⁸ FEMA, Emergency Management Institute.

¹⁹ Jerry Ellig, “Learning from the Leaders: Results-Based Management at the Federal Emergency Management Agency.” PhD diss., George Mason University, March 29, 2000, p. 6. Available from: <https://www.mercatus.org/students/research/working-papers/learning-leaders-results-based-management-federal-emergency>.

²⁰ Richard T. Sylves, “Federal Emergency Management Comes of Age: 1979-2001.” In *Emergency Management: The American Experience*, ed. Claire B. Rubin, p. 14 (New York: Routledge, 2020).

²¹ Sylves, “Federal Emergency Management Comes of Age,” 114.

²² Sylves, “Federal Emergency Management Comes of Age,” 151.

²³ Sylves, “Federal Emergency Management Comes of Age,” 124.

²⁴ Sylves, “Federal Emergency Management Comes of Age,” 152.

a fragmented statutory charter, irregular funding, and the uneven quality of its political executives appointed by past presidents.²⁵

During the President Bill Clinton's Administration, under the direction of FEMA Director James Lee Witt, FEMA was reorganized.²⁶ In 2001, a study conducted by Jerry Ellig shed light on the positive impacts of FEMA's 1993 reorganization efforts,²⁷ which helped this agency to operate more effectively. Ellig's findings included:

A clear mission accompanied by results-oriented performance measures.

Clear roles and responsibilities, coupled with a distribution of decision-making authority that allowed people to achieve the outcomes for which they were responsible.

Internal communication of results that fueled employees' intrinsic motivation. Customer-friendly systems for gathering key information from disaster victims.

A small organizational size, which facilitates informal transfer of knowledge. Core values that are actually implemented in practice.

Use of the organization's mission to shape communication strategies with key constituencies.

Leadership that drove a change from a rule-driven to a results-driven culture.²⁸

The reorganization was no minor task, and Witt's efforts to address issues regarding goals, roles and responsibilities, communication, and core-values had a significant impact on FEMA's future.

²⁵ Sylves, "Federal Emergency Management Comes of Age," 139.

²⁶ James Lee Witt and James Morgan, *Stronger in the Broken Places: Nine Lessons for Turning Crisis Into Triumph* (New York: Times Books, 2002), 1-11.

²⁷ Ellig, "Learning from the Leaders," 6.

²⁸ Ellig, "Learning from the Leaders," 34.

Various efforts to focus emergency management showed a shift in priorities in the mid-1990s. For example, in 1995 one textbook defined emergency management as strategic preparations throughout all emergency management phases. Strategies included:

Organized analysis, planning, decision-making, and assignment of available resources to mitigate . . . prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of all hazards. The goal of emergency management is to save lives, prevent injuries, and protect property and the environment if an emergency occurs.²⁹

When Witt was again appointed in 1993 as Director of FEMA during the Clinton Administration, he continued his influence on emergency management.³⁰

In 1997, the approach to emergency management added a humanitarian focus by seeking to reduce economic loss. McElreath et al., stated:

The process by which uncertainties exist in potentially hazardous situations can be minimized and public safety maximized. The goal is to limit the costs of emergencies or disasters through the implementation of a series of strategies and tactics reflecting the full life cycle of disaster, i.e., preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.³¹

The focus was on implementing a strategy to make decisions that would in turn save money in future disasters.

The September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks on the United States changed the terrain of the industry, propelling emergency management forward with a focus on counterterrorism.³² Under the George W. Bush Administration,³³ the Homeland Security Act of 2002 was enacted, which resulted in the creation of the Department of Homeland

²⁹ McElreath, et al., *Introduction to Homeland Security*, 44.

³⁰ Sylves, "Federal Emergency Management Comes of Age," 115.

³¹ McElreath, et al., *Introduction to Homeland Security*, 44.

³² Rubin, "Introduction: 110 Years of Disaster Response," 1.

³³ Sylves, "Federal Emergency Management Comes of Age," 124.

Security, thus bringing together 22 federal agencies.³⁴ These agencies, which share responsibility for dealing with terrorism, were reorganized under a new, cabinet-level agency so they could more effectively coordinate with each other.

In response to 9/11, the United States developed a national response system comprised of stakeholders from “local, state, and federal civilian and military response forces.”³⁵ A National Incident Management System was mandated by the Homeland Security Act of 2002. The Department of Homeland Security “created a process that would establish a unified and integrated national response system and embarked on implantation efforts.”³⁶

Since the Bush Administration focused on counterterrorism, there was a lack of attention to natural disasters. Evidence of this was seen in 2005. In response to Hurricane Katrina, the National Incident Response System in the National Response Plan was found to be too detailed for various federal, state, and local agencies to implement.³⁷ A revision of the document was undertaken in 2007, and the National Response Framework was published in 2008.³⁸ This document was more effective because it clarified roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and was less prescriptive.³⁹

In 2010, the oil spill at the BP Deepwater Horizon oil rig highlighted the importance of a national response system and well-developed doctrines. This was a

³⁴ Douglas A. Brook, and Cynthia L. King, “Civil Service Reform as National Security: The Homeland Security Act of 2002,” *Public Administration Review* 67, no.3 (May/June 2007): 399. <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2007.00723.x>.

³⁵ John R. Harrald, “Emergency Management Restructured,” in *Emergency Management: The American Experience*, ed. Claire B. Rubin (New York: Routledge, 2020), 173.

³⁶ Harrald, “Emergency Management Restructured,” 175.

³⁷ Harrald, “Emergency Management Restructured,” 186-187.

³⁸ Harrald, “Emergency Management Restructured,” 188.

³⁹ John R. Harrald, “Emergency Management Restructured,” 188-189.

significant manmade event that occurred during the Obama Administration. Authors Liesel A. Ritchie, Duane A. Gill, and John R. Harrald stated: “Our response to extreme events in federal government systems requires a strongly led and adequately resourced national response, but it must also respect the needs and prerogatives of state and local governments.”⁴⁰ Challenges to the response of the oil spill were attributed to issues with coordination and authority because

doctrinal conflicts and inconsistencies occurred between the ‘top-down’ federally directed oil spill response conducted under authority of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA-90) and [National Contingency Plan] and the locally familiar ‘bottom-up’ natural disaster response coordinated by FEMA under its Stafford Act authority and National Response Framework doctrine.⁴¹

This incident demonstrated the importance of having doctrines that provide a clear authority for agencies and organizations to coordinate.

In 2011, the Obama Administration issued Presidential Preparedness Directive 8, which led to the development of FEMA’s “National Preparedness Goal,” which expands different phases of emergency management, including prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.⁴² The *prevention* phase tackles deterrence of terrorism and involves collaboration with various entities (e.g., law enforcement) to address threats.⁴³ The *protection* phase protects the community against threats and hazards (e.g., natural disasters, man-made disasters).⁴⁴ The *mitigation* phase focuses on reducing the impact of

⁴⁰ Liesel A. Ritchie, Duane A. Gill, and John R. Harrald, “Systems Are Tested: BP *Deepwater Horizon*,” p. 233. In *Emergency Management: The American Experience*, ed. Claire B. Rubin (New York: Routledge, 2020).

⁴¹ Ritchie, Gill, and Harrald, “Systems Are Tested,” 225.

⁴² Melanie Gall and Suzan L. Cutter, “2005 Events and Outcomes,” p. 211. In *Emergency Management: The American Experience*, ed. Claire B. Rubin (New York: Routledge, 2020).

⁴³ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), *National Preparedness Goal*, September 2015, p. 1. https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/national_preparedness_goal_2nd_edition.pdf.

⁴⁴ FEMA, *National Preparedness Goal*, 12.

a disaster on property and lives, often requiring planning around the risk that may impact a community.⁴⁵ The *response* phase focus is solely to “save lives, protect property, . . . and meet basic human needs.”⁴⁶ The response phase is often the most complex phase due to limited time for decision making and the many unique issues that arise. The *recovery* phase involves assisting communities following a disaster.⁴⁷ Each emergency management phase requires leaders with different skills to handle and address the evolving needs of the community.

The National Preparedness Goal defines preparedness as

the shared responsibility of our entire nation. The whole community contributes, beginning with individuals and communities, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and all governments (local, regional/metropolitan, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal).⁴⁸

Various circles of responders are vital to their contribution to emergencies.

Herman B. Leonard and Arnold M. Howitt describe points in time where intervention is critical to supporting human needs before, during, and after a disaster.

Unlike FEMA, there are three forms of preparedness, including: prevention and mitigation, crisis management and response, and recovery.⁴⁹ Leonard and Howitt emphasize the idea of advance recovery.⁵⁰ They argue:

⁴⁵ FEMA, National Preparedness Goal, 10-11.

⁴⁶ FEMA, National Preparedness Goal, 12-13.

⁴⁷ FEMA, National Preparedness Goal, 17.

⁴⁸ FEMA, National Preparedness Goal, 1.

⁴⁹ Herman B. Leonard and Arnold M. Howitt, “Acting in Time Against Disasters: A Comprehensive Risk-Management Framework,” pp. 23-29. In *Learning From Catastrophes: Strategies for Reaction and Response*, Michael Useem and Howard Kunreuther (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Wharton School Publication, 2010).

⁵⁰ Leonard and Howitt, “Acting in Time Against Disasters: A Comprehensive Risk-Management Framework,” 23-29.

We can make these interventions in three different forms:

- (a) *Prevention and Mitigation*. We can intervene (through prevention or mitigation measures) to shape the event itself– we can try to keep it from happening at all or can try to shift its consequences if it does occur;
- (b) *Crisis Management and Response*. We can intervene (through crisis management of the event) to execute an effective, further-damage-limiting response for those events that do take place; and
- (c) *Recovery*. We can intervene (through recovery efforts) to push the social welfare trajectory back toward where it would otherwise have been.⁵¹

There are various roles organizations fill in emergency management. Nicholas B. Hambridge, Arnold M. Howitt, and David W. Giles provide an illustration (see Figure 1) that demonstrates how critical emergency management is to missions in different types of organizations.⁵² As stated in the article:

The inner circle contains traditional first responders (fire, police, and emergency medicine) and emergency management agencies.

The second circle contains organizations whose primary missions are not emergency-focused, but which often find themselves directly involved in emergency response efforts alongside first responders. This category includes disciplines such as transportation, public health, public works, and utilities.

The third circle is comprised of entities that play support roles to first and second circle response agencies during emergency response. Private businesses, religious institutions, and schools typically provide support services and resources to frontline responders in the emergency response phase of an incident, while taking on a greater share of direct service delivery to disaster victims in the recovery phase.⁵³

⁵¹ Leonard and Howitt, “Acting in Time Against Disaster: A Comprehensive Risk-Management Framework,” 23-24.

⁵² Nicholas B. Hambridge, Arnold M. Howitt, and David W. Giles, “Coordination in Crises: Implementation of the National Incident Management System by Surface Transportation Agencies,” *Homeland Security Affairs* 13, no. 3 (March 2017): 7-8. <https://www.hsaj.org/articles/13773>.

⁵³ Hambridge, Howitt, and Giles, “Coordination in Crises,” 7-8.

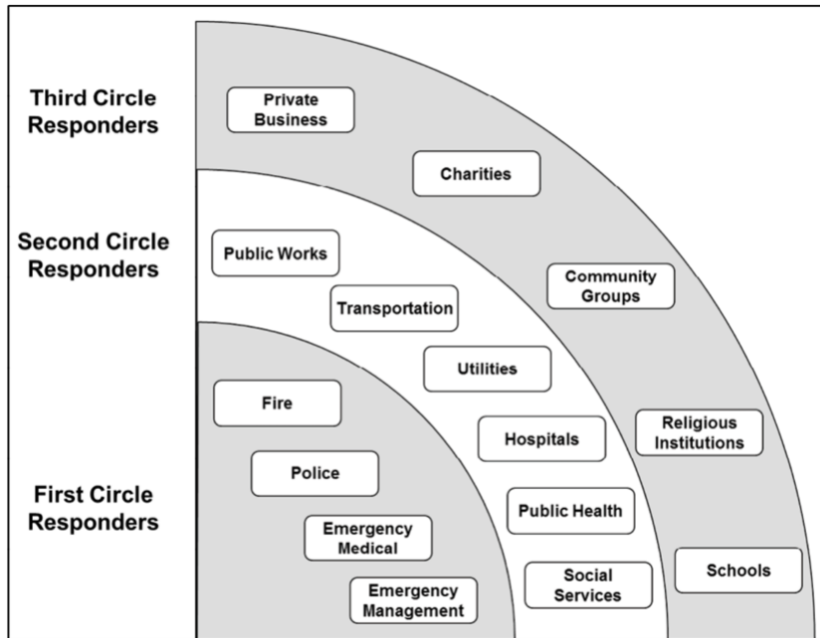


Figure 1. Centrality of Emergency Response to Organizational Mission.

Source: Hambridge, Howitt, and Giles, p. 8.

All three circles are valuable to the infrastructure of emergency management. However, this thesis focuses on women in emergency management who play a significant role in First Circle Responders.

Male-Dominated Industry

The purpose of this section is not to discount the value and work of men in emergency management. Rather, my purpose is to share the origin of the industry, its evolution, and mechanisms, expecting that men can also play a role in reducing the gender gap.

Since the 1940s, those who supported the emergency management field were men from industries that performed similar roles. Elaine Enarson and Betty Morrow discuss the types of professions that helped build this industry:

Arising from a perceived need for civil defense and preparedness, disaster practice has traditionally been associated with civil defense agencies, the military, emergency medicine, engineering and related professions, and crisis relief agencies. At the higher levels, it has largely been the practice of men whose experiences and attitudes reflected cultural norms of gender, class, and racial privilege . . . most male students of disaster worked in male-dominated environments in which the work at hand was undertaken ‘through eyes of men.’⁵⁴

Emergency management drew personnel from men who previously filled roles in the military and other fields and now filled emergency management positions.

According to the American Community Survey (based on 2019 data), “65.2% of emergency management directors are male, making them the more common gender in the occupation.”⁵⁵ Women comprised only 34.8% of emergency management director positions. The 2021 U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Annual Employee Survey revealed 39.3% are women who work for this DHS.⁵⁶ Both surveys revealed a similar outcome, demonstrating that even though women are involved in emergency management today, gender disparity still exists.

Women are affected by disasters and should be a part of disaster-related decision making. Disaster management impacts the community, thus decisions should represent all

⁵⁴ Elaine Enarson and Betty Hearn Morrow, “Why Gender? Why Women? An Introduction to Women and Disaster,” p. 4. In *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women’s Eyes*, eds. Elaine Enarson and Betty Hearn Morrow (NY: Praeger, 1998).

⁵⁵ Emergency Management Directors, Data USA. Accessed May 25, 2022, <https://datausa.io/profile/soc/emergency-management-directors#demographics> .

⁵⁶ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results: 2021 Annual Employee Survey (AES) Report.” Accessed May 25, 2022, <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/2021-OPM-FEVS-Annual-Employee-Survey-Results-DHS.pdf> .

people. Enarson and Marrow indicated that “women survivors and responders must have a seat at the table and their voices must be heard when disaster decisions are made, relationships forged, and agendas set.”⁵⁷ By including diverse voices of individuals impacted by disasters and responders, a path can be forged that addresses a disaster in the most comprehensive and strategic way.

Women make a difference in their communities when they step into leadership roles before, during, and after disasters. Kayla Sergent and Alexander D. Stajkovic believe women excel in crisis situations because they have the capabilities to do so.⁵⁸ Examples of these capabilities include “being understanding, intuitive, and creative.”⁵⁹ Additionally, Sergent and Stajkovic argue that research provides evidence that women demonstrate these capabilities more than men.⁶⁰ Women have the ability to thrive during a disaster, thus increasing the participation of women in leadership roles will contribute to additional thought processes and approaches that can propel progressive disaster-related work.

Although the field is evolving, there is still work to be done to increase inclusion. The idea that women are under-represented in emergency management is not new, and although this is certainly an issue that urgently needs to be addressed in the present, there

⁵⁷ Elaine Enarson and Betty Hearn Morrow, “Toward Gendered Disaster Policy, Practice, and Research,” p. 227. In *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women’s Eyes*, ed. Elaine Enarson and Betty Hearn Morrow (NY: Praeger, 1998).

⁵⁸ Kayla Sergent and Alexander D. Stajkovic, “Women’s Leadership is Associated with Fewer Deaths During the COVID-19 Crisis: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of United States Governors,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 105, no.8 (July 2020): 773.

⁵⁹ Michelle K. Ryan, S. Alexander Haslam, Mette D Hersby, and Renata Bongiorno, “Think Crisis-Think Female: The Glass Cliff and Contextual Variation in the Think Manager-Think Male Stereotype,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 96, no 3 (2011): 472. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022133>.

⁶⁰ Sergent and Stajkovic, “Women’s Leadership,” 773.

also is an ongoing opportunity for women and men to move forward together rather than be competing entities.

Prafulla Mishra, Deputy Director of the International Rescue Committee, expands on the idea that involving men with women can improve the progress of disaster relief work. She wrote:

There is a great need for increased engagement of men in the movement to engender disaster relief and development work . . . disasters severely stress all social dynamics including gender relations in the family and society, but provide a real opportunity for change by engaging men and women equally . . . engaging with men as agents of change rather than barriers to change would help push conventional boundaries.⁶¹

Perspectives from both men and women will positively impact disaster management.

In disasters, various factors make women vulnerable, and these vary from country to country. Examples include:

“Less access to warning information and poor ability to respond”⁶²;

“Greater risk of sexual and domestic violence, sexual abuse”⁶³;

“Childbirth and pregnancy-related factors”⁶⁴.

⁶¹ Prafulla Mishra, “Let’s Share the Stage: Involving Men in Gender Equality and Disaster Risk Reduction,” in *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives*, eds. Elaine Enarson and P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti (New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2009), 36-37.

⁶² Helena Molin Valdés: “Women were highly represented among the 120,000 killed in the 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh . . . because cultural norms constrained their access to emergency warnings and cyclone shelters.” Helena Molin Valdés, “A Gender Perspective on Disaster Risk Reduction,” p. 20. In *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives*, eds. Elaine Enarson and P. G. Dhar Chakrabarti (New Delhi: Sage, 2009).

⁶³ Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu, “Within hours of the tsunami having devastated entire coastal regions of Sri Lanka, tsunami-affected women were subjected to rape and physical and sexual abuse. There is the reported incidence of a 17-year-old girl who was gang-raped hours after being washed ashore, left orphaned and homeless.” Ariyabandu, “Sex, Gender, and Gender Relations,” p. 10. In *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives*, eds. Elaine Enarson and P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti (New Delhi: Sage, 2009).

⁶⁴ Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu, “Post-tsunami Aceh, no special care was provided to pregnant women. There were cases of miscarriages and premature births, and others continuing their pregnancies under conditions of severe deprivation. . . . Women were giving birth in unsanitary conditions without medical assistance, some in the open air in the rain.” Ariyabandu, “Sex, Gender, and Gender Relations,” p. 11. In

These gender-based issues make women more susceptible to risk. Integrating more women in disaster and emergency management can reduce challenges that impact women.

In addition to the importance of collaboration between men and women, understanding the needs of both genders is important. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk and Reduction (UNDRR) addresses gender and disaster risk. It indicates:

Gender inequalities, which exist in every society, result in gender-differentiated disaster impacts. Gender discrimination can impact the control that women and girls have over the decisions that govern their lives, as well as their access to resources and opportunities, which heightens exposure to risk and can result in disasters having a disproportionate impact on women and girls. But equally, ideas and understandings of masculinities and the roles and responsibilities of men in a society can result in men and boys experiencing higher mortality in some disaster contexts. . . . Effective disaster risk reduction requires meaningful and diverse participation, engagement and leadership, through an inclusive and accessible, all-of-society approach. It must consider the ways in which gender dynamics influence disaster impacts. When women's capacities, knowledge and skills are utilized in disaster risk reduction efforts, we will all benefit.⁶⁵

UNDRR not only provides insight into the importance of gender considerations, but also how inclusive and diverse leadership can more thoroughly address challenges that impact both genders.

Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives, eds. Elaine Enarson and P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti (New Delhi: Sage, 2009).

⁶⁵ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk and Reduction (UNDRR), "Gender." Accessed November 25, 2022. <https://www.undrr.org/gender>.

Low Representation of Women in Emergency Management

Women are under-represented in emergency management. Low representation is traditionally attributed to the recruitment of individuals from the law enforcement, military, and fire fields.⁶⁶ The demographics of these fields show much higher percentages of men in these occupations. The Department of Defense 2020 Demographics Profile of the Military Community shows there are 81.3% (1,731,231) male members and 18.7% (398, 546) female members.⁶⁷ According to 2019 demographics of firefighters in the United States, there are 95.8% (319,000) men and 4.2% (13,800) women.⁶⁸ The 2019 demographics of police officers in the United States show 85.2% (692,000) men and 14.8% (120,000) women.⁶⁹

Following 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, the emergency management profession developed a common entry path rather than entrance to the field through a public safety or military occupation. Alternatively, individuals can attend educational programs and enter the emergency management profession directly. There is now more emphasis on the importance of emergency managers obtaining a formal education in the field. It has been noted:

The field of emergency management has experienced tremendous “professionalization” in the past two decades, as practitioners have gone

⁶⁶ Clayton Wukich and Scott E. Robinson, “Leadership Strategies at the Meso Level of Emergency Management Networks,” *International Review of Public Administration* 18, no 1 (April 2013): 41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12294659.2013.10805239>.

⁶⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, “2020 Demographics Profile of the Military Community.” Accessed May 25, 2022, <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2020-demographics-report.pdf>

⁶⁸ Data USA, “Firefighters.” Accessed May 25, 2022. <https://datausa.io/profile/soc/firefighters#demographics>.

⁶⁹ Data USA, “Police Officers.” Accessed May 25, 2022, <https://datausa.io/profile/soc/police-officers#demographics>.

from having little formal education to earning specialized master's and doctorate degrees in the field.⁷⁰

This education will aid in standardizing concepts, making information and resources available, and providing more transparency in the industry.

Additionally, such professional education will open up opportunities to women in particular because it will help them establish credentials prior to work experience. This will enable women to compete and be noticed in a field where women are under-represented. An article by DeeDee Bennett shows results from the 2017 annual FEMA Higher Education Program survey, which indicates that approximately 37% of students in emergency management-related programs are female.⁷¹ Diversity is benefitted by grounding decision making in varied life experiences and perspectives.

⁷⁰ Coppola, *Management of Disasters*, 432.

⁷¹ DeeDee M. Bennett, "Diversity in Emergency Management Scholarship," *Journal of Emergency Management* 17, no. 2 (March/April 2019): 151. <https://doi.org/10.5055/jem.2019.0407>.

Chapter III

Literature Review

This literature review highlights significant resources on the topics of (1) women and emergency management, and (2) leadership. Although the resources below show the importance of gender in the emergency management profession and disaster research, evidence of the leadership tools specifically feasible for women in the industry remains limited.

Women and Emergency Management

Gender is important to consider in emergency management because it can inform decision making in communities. An article by Betty Hearn Morrow and Elaine Enarson sheds light on the lack of published disaster literature that discusses gender.⁷² To help fill this gap, Morrow and Enarson mentioned a few policy recommendations, including to

engage women fully in disaster planning and response programs, . . . take action to eliminate gender bias from agencies and practices . . . [and] identify and fully utilize the resources of women leaders and their informal and formal networks in the recovery process.⁷³

Morrow and Enarson highlight the importance of including women in the development of emergency management programs, removing structural barriers that perpetuate gender bias in organizations, and tapping into the resources and networks

⁷² Betty Hearn Morrow, and Elaine Enarson, "Hurricane Andrew through Women's Eyes: Issues and Recommendations," *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 14, no. 1 (March 1996): 7-8.

⁷³ Morrow and Enarson, "Hurricane Andrew through Women's Eyes," 16-17.

utilized by women. The inclusion of women in all emergency management processes will ensure that gender-related needs for the entire community are met. My research findings presented here show the importance of networking.

Alice Fothergill takes a similar stance to that of Morrow and Enarson when she discusses the importance of gender in disaster research. Fothergill's findings show that women are vulnerable during disasters.⁷⁴ She identifies the need for further research to "explain women's experience in disasters and elucidate the issues of gender stratification."⁷⁵ She emphasizes the need to address gaps in research about women who are impacted by emergencies. She also notes that a major gap remains in women's participation in the emergency management work, such as planning, response, and recovery.

Gender, Development, and Disasters by Sarah Bradshaw illustrates that often the effort of women in response roles, compared to men, is perceived differently and discounted during and/or following the response. Bradshaw indicates that the interpretation of rescue efforts by women are often perceived as "invisible" and/or misinterpreted.⁷⁶ In the case of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Bradshaw highlighted the challenges that women encountered due to "socially constructed roles and gendered socialization."⁷⁷ She explains:

Women, then, are constructed as 'helpers' rather than 'rescuers.' Women may indeed be helpers rather than rescuers, since in many cultures a woman would not think of undertaking actions to 'rescue' a man. If such an act cannot be imagined by women, or men, then men are unlikely to

⁷⁴ Alice Fothergill. "Gender, Risk, and Disaster." *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 14, no. 1 (March 1996): 48.

⁷⁵ Fothergill, "Gender, Risk, and Disaster," 49.

⁷⁶ Sarah Bradshaw, *Gender, Development and Disasters* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2013), 83.

⁷⁷ Bradshaw, *Gender, Development and Disasters*, 83.

accept the act even if offered. Women's actions are often invisible to those involved during an event, or made invisible by those involved immediately afterwards.⁷⁸

Bradshaw found that the perception of traditional gender roles detracts from the response capabilities of women and limits their achievements.

A reader could conclude from Bradshaw's research that while the acceptance of women in the workplace differs throughout the world, women still encounter significant challenges in societies that include women in the workplace. The participation, value, and competencies of women in first-responder roles are often not perceived well or as a norm.

Could society do more to change the perception of women in first-responder roles? Perhaps the perception could be changed if society heard success stories in the news or if children read about female first responders doing the same job as a male. As will become apparent in my findings, more visual representation of women in emergency management is critical to changing the perception of women in the industry.

Bradshaw also notes: "How people respond, and why people respond, is relatively well documented in the literature, but a missing element is an understanding of the gendered differences in response."⁷⁹ She explains there is information available on the purpose and operating procedure of response; however, there is a lack of information on the attributes of men and women who lead emergency management during an emergency response.

Like Bradshaw, an article by DeeDee M. Bennett notes "the lack of women and racial/ethnic minorities in the profession and their perceived absence in research or

⁷⁸ Bradshaw, *Gender, Development and Disasters*, 83-84.

⁷⁹ Bradshaw, *Gender, Development and Disasters*, 83.

scholarly study may have impacts on the effectiveness of response and recovery efforts as well as the broader scientific knowledge within the field.”⁸⁰ Bennett explains that the lack of diversity in the emergency management literature limits an understanding of the full potential of certain groups to address innovation, problem solving, and decision making.

Literature on women in emergency management, especially women in leadership positions, could provide information on the tools they use to respond to the vulnerabilities women may be susceptible to in a disaster, and their impact on female disaster survivors. In disasters, women in communities face disproportionate risks compared to men, which can be attributed to social and economic factors. Some risks include susceptibility to sexual violence and increased threats due to pregnancy and childbirth.⁸¹

Research shows there is a disparity in post-disaster deaths between men and women. For instance, “women represented an estimated 61% of fatalities in Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis in 2008, 70% after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Banda Aceh, and 91% after Cyclone Gorky in Bangladesh in 1991.”⁸² These figures portray a devastatingly significant mortality rate of women.

Elaine Enarson and Betty Hearn Marrow discuss works that address gender relations and disasters as well as the vulnerability of women. This work, comprised of case studies, explores many facets of women in disasters, including an article by Gloria Noel, a former Emergency Preparedness Advisor with Pan American Health

⁸⁰ Bennett, “Diversity in Emergency Management Scholarship,” 148.

⁸¹ World Bank, “Making Women’s Voices Count: Integrating Gender Issues in Disaster Risk Management Overview and Resources for Guidance Notes,” October 2012. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/723731468234284901/pdf/658410REVISED00view0Final0for0email.pdf>.

⁸² World Bank, “Making Women’s Voices Count.”

Organization. Noel noted that “a focus on the roles of women, and on measures to ensure their participation in the processes of decision-making at every level helps to generate ideas and perspectives that can enhance disaster management programs.”⁸³ She further recommends expanding the roles of women at higher levels of policy and decision making.⁸⁴ The distinctive perspectives and experiences of women in leadership roles could address the vulnerabilities of women in disasters as well as methods women use to respond to emergencies and disasters.

The literature of Bennet, Bradshaw, Enarson, Fothergill, and Marrow highlight the importance of including gender in disaster research to provide an accurate portrayal of the role women play in disaster response and on the needs of women impacted by disaster. Enarson, Marrow, and Noel provide similar arguments to engage women in decision making in order to advance the inclusion of women in disaster response work.

Research is limited on women filling leadership positions in the emergency management industry. Although there is a vast amount of information about leadership available, which I explore in the following chapters, few researchers have considered the types of tools that would further propel women into these roles.

Leadership

Many resources are available on the topic of leadership and diverse definitions of leadership—both of which have varied over time. In 1978, James MacGregor Burns

⁸³ Gloria E. Noel, “The Role of Women in Health-Related Aspects of Emergency Management: A Caribbean Perspective”, in *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women’s Eyes*, eds. Elaine Enarson and Betty Hearn Morrow (NY: Praeger, 1998), 216.

⁸⁴ Noel, “The Role of Women in Health-Related Aspects of Emergency Management,” 218.

defined leadership as “leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—*of both leaders and followers*.”⁸⁵ Burns goes on to explain that there are two forms of leadership: (1) transactional,⁸⁶ and (2) transforming.⁸⁷ In describing transactional and transforming leadership, he frames them in the form of a hierarchical structure: leaders at the top of the structure, although the incentives between leader and follower differ.⁸⁸ One can conclude that the transactional leadership approach focuses on mutual benefits between leaders and followers, while transforming leadership uses motivation to engage individuals.

Expanding on Burns’s work, in 1985 Bernard Bass commented on the importance of motivation: “A transformational leader is one who motivates us to do more than we originally expected to do.”⁸⁹ He also discusses the idea of charismatic leadership⁹⁰ and how it is essential if transformational leadership is expected to take place. Charismatic leadership is an approach rooted in traits (e.g., communication) that are centralized to the leader and ultimately appeal to followers. Bass mentions that “charismatic leaders have

⁸⁵ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 19.

⁸⁶ According to Burns, transactional leadership “occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things.” This leadership style utilizes the hierarchical relationship between a leader and a follower to produce results. Burns, *Leadership*, 19-20.

⁸⁷ Burns described transformational leadership as “when one or more persons *engage* with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and mortality.” Transformational leadership shapes and shares values; there is no compulsion involved. Burns, *Leadership*, 20.

⁸⁸ Burns, *Leadership*, 19.

⁸⁹ Bernard M. Bass, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations* (New York: Free Press, 1985), 20.

⁹⁰ Bass defines a charismatic leader as one who “inspire in their followers unquestioning loyalty and devotion without regard to the followers’ own self-interests.” Bass, *Leadership and Performance*, 35.

great power and influence” and that often during times of “stress and disorganization” transformational leadership most likely occurs.⁹¹

According to Jay A. Conger in 1989, “Vision . . . is the cornerstone of charismatic leadership.”⁹² Conger writes that a charismatic leader focuses on the actions of an individual that create and deliver an impression of charisma.⁹³ Conger further describes a model that defines charismatic leadership in four stages: (1) “Sensing Opportunity and Formulating a Vision,” (2) “Articulating a Vision,” (3) “Building Trust in the Vision,” and (4) “Achieving the Vision.”⁹⁴ These stages expand based on the type of behaviors utilized by charismatic leaders. Leaders who secure a vision that aligns with shared values will be seen as a charismatic leader.⁹⁵ The skills vital to a charismatic leader include visioning, communication, trust-building, and empowerment.⁹⁶ As discussed in my research findings, communication and trust are equally important for female leaders in emergency management.

An article by Robert Hogan, Gordon J. Curphy, and Joyce Hogan points out the importance of the connection of leadership and creating a team to fulfill goals. The authors define leadership as

persuading other people to set aside for a period of time their individual concerns and to pursue a common goal that is important for the responsibilities and welfare of a group . . . leadership concerns building

⁹¹ Bass, *Leadership and Performance*, xiv.

⁹² Jay A. Conger, *The Charismatic Leader* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989), 36.

⁹³ Conger, *Charismatic Leader*, 23.

⁹⁴ Conger, *Charismatic Leader*, 26-34.

⁹⁵ Conger, *Charismatic Leader*, 23-24.

⁹⁶ Conger, *Charismatic Leader*, 164-172.

cohesive and goal-oriented teams; there is a causal and definitional link between leadership and team performance.⁹⁷

Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan discuss a correlation between a leader and team who work well together to produce positive outcomes. My analysis in this thesis discusses the importance of a leader's role to supporting a team.

An article written by Bill George, Peter Sims, Andrew N. McLean, and Diana Mayer and presented in 2007, discusses the importance of authentic leadership. The authors wrote:

During the past 50 years, leadership scholars have conducted more than 1,000 studies in an attempt to determine the definitive styles, characteristics, or personality traits of great leaders. None of these studies have produced a clear profile of the ideal leader.⁹⁸

These studies imply that not identifying a definitive profile of a leader occurs because no single ideal leadership exists. Leadership may be situation-based, or no one style of leadership may work for all situations. Readers may conclude that leaders who utilize a personalized approach to their leadership style are more powerful than those who try to mirror a leadership style that does not work for them.

George, Sims, McLean, and Mayer expand the idea of authentic leadership, which includes a series of questions for those looking to explore becoming an authentic leader. Those questions include:

Which people and experiences in your early life had the greatest impact on you?...

⁹⁷ Robert Hogan, Gordon J. Curphy, and Joyce Hogan, "What We Know About Leadership," *American Psychologist* 49, no. 6 (June 1994): 493.

⁹⁸ Bill George, Peter Sims, Andrew N. McLean, and Diana Mayer, "Discovering Your Authentic Leadership," *Harvard Business Review* 85, no. 2 (February 2007): 129.

What tools do you use to become self-aware?...

What are your most deeply held values?...

What motivates your extrinsically?...

What kind of support team do you have?...

Is your life integrated?...

What does being authentic mean in your life?...

What steps can you take today, tomorrow, and over the next year to develop your authentic leadership?⁹⁹

The authors suggest these questions are vital to facilitating an independent self-dialogue that enables an individual to create her own leadership style.

Further, in another article by Hogan, Gordon, and Hogan titled “What We Know About Leadership,” the authors suggest that authentic leaders are developed by several actions such as applying principles and values, building a support network, and empowering others to lead.¹⁰⁰ Readers might conclude that there is a mismatch between an authentic leadership style and adjusting one’s leadership style to what a specific situation demands. George, Sims, McLean, and Mayer, as well as Hogan, Gordon, and Hogan, all found that those looking to become an authentic leader can incorporate the findings from their self-dialogue and take action that will shape leadership style. Findings in my empirical work will show the value of authentic leadership.

George, Sims, McLean, and Mayer amplify the importance of identifying personal values in leadership. Readers may determine that values are one pillar of an

⁹⁹ Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan, “What We Know About Leadership,” 134.

¹⁰⁰ George, Sims, McLean, and Mayer, “Discovering Your Authentic Leadership,” 134-138.

authentic leadership style. Deborah L. Rhode and Amanda K. Packel, in their 2011 book, also discuss the importance of upholding values. They talk about how Burns' definitions of transactional and transformational leadership styles incorporate values.¹⁰¹ They state:

Transactional approaches focus on the relationship between leaders and subordinates and on what each gains or loses from the exchange. Such frameworks assume that people are motivated primarily by rewards and punishments and need financial, psychological, and status-related incentive to comply with specified rules and goals. Yet these approaches fail to capture the complexity of human motivation and the importance of values. Accordingly, transformational approaches stress the capacity not simply to influence followers' behaviors through reward and sanctions but also to transform their objectives and, in the process, to elevate leaders' own sense of purpose. Transformational leadership inspires individuals to transcend their immediate self-interest in the service of the greater good of the organization or society. Such leadership is 'moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led'.¹⁰²

Rhode and Packel compare the inclusion of values in transactional and transformational leadership styles. They suggest that transactional leadership does not incorporate values when working to achieve outcomes as where transformational leadership does incorporate values when working toward an end result. Findings in my empirical work demonstrate the importance for established leaders to uphold values, morals, and ethics.

The article "The 7 Indicators That Demonstrate Good Leadership" by Michelle Gibbings highlights the importance for leaders to adjust their leadership style based on need. Gibbings states:

- Leadership is never a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Successful leaders hold true to their values, while adapting and adjusting their style to suit the context in which they are operating.

¹⁰¹ Deborah L. Rhode and Amanda K. Packel. *Leadership: Law, Policy, and Management*. 1st ed. (New York: Wolters Kluwer Law & Business, 2011), 10.

¹⁰² Rhode and Packel, *Leadership: Law, Policy, and Management*, 10.

- Adapting and adjusting requires leaders to regularly assess their leadership effectiveness against seven key indicators to highlight what needs to shift in them.¹⁰³

A few of the seven indicators Gibbings include are self-awareness,¹⁰⁴ authenticity,¹⁰⁵ mindset,¹⁰⁶ and relationship style.¹⁰⁷ One may argue that these indicators are valuable attributes to help adjust one's leadership style to address various situations.

Rhode and Packel also spotlighted the findings of research conducted by Daniel Goleman. In a random sample of 20,000 executives with 3,871 responses, Goleman's research identified six leadership styles used by executives: (1) coercive,¹⁰⁸ (2) authoritative,¹⁰⁹ (3) affiliative,¹¹⁰ (4) democratic,¹¹¹ (5) pacesetting,¹¹² and (6)

¹⁰³ Michelle Gibbings, "The 7 Indicators That Demonstrate Good Leadership," *Governance Directions* 72: no 8 (September 2020): 399-402. <https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.386596906291586>.

¹⁰⁴ According to Gibbings, *self-awareness* is comprised of internal and external components. She states: "internal self-awareness centres on how clearly you can notice and identify your values, passions, aspirations, fit with your environment, thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and the impact you have on others. . . . External self-awareness focuses on how accurately you can assess how people view your levels of self awareness." Gibbings, "7 Indicators," 399-402.

¹⁰⁵ Gibbings defines *authenticity* as when a leader bases ones actions on "values and behaviours." Gibbings, "7 Indicators," 400.

¹⁰⁶ Gibbings describes two types of *mindset*: (1) feast and (2) famine. The feast mindset "sees the work environment as full of opportunity, with more than enough to go around." The famine mindset occurs when the leader restricts the growth and opportunity of followers. Examples include "[hoarding] resources, rewards and recognition." Gibbings, "7 Indicators," 400.

¹⁰⁷ *Relationship style* involves making decisions that are conducive to building an inclusive team. Gibbings, "7 Indicators," 401.

¹⁰⁸ The *coercive* leadership style uses "the leader's extreme top-down decision making kills new ideas on the vine. . . . The style undermines one of the leaders' prime tools—motivating people by showing them how their job fits into a grand, shared mission." Rhode & Packel, *Leadership*, 46.

¹⁰⁹ The *authoritative* leader "motivates people by making clear to them how their work fits into a larger vision for the organizations. . . . Authoritative leadership also maximizes commitment to the organization's goals and strategy." Rhode & Packel, *Leadership*, 46.

¹¹⁰ The *affiliative* leadership style "revolves around people—its proponents value individuals and their emotions more than tasks and goals." Rhode & Packel, *Leadership*, 47.

¹¹¹ The *democratic* leadership style "[spends] time getting people's ideas and buy-in, a leader builds trust, respect, and commitment." Rhode & Packel, *Leadership*, 48.

¹¹² The *pacesetting* leadership style is utilized when a leader "sets extremely high performance standards and exemplifies them [on oneself]." Rhode & Packel, *Leadership*, 49.

coaching.¹¹³ Goleman indicated that often the most successful leaders can adjust their style depending on needs, and they also apply four or more of these leadership styles to their work.¹¹⁴

Various scholars have defined leadership, and over time these definitions have evolved. Burns defined transactional and transformational leadership; Bass built upon Burns' definition of leadership by indicating charismatic leadership is a sub-category of transformational leadership. To support Bass's idea on charismatic leaders, Conger described vision as a key to a charismatic leader. Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan emphasized leadership and the importance of using a style that builds teams. These ideas narrowly described particular leadership styles.

However, they shifted when George, Sims, Mclean, and Mayer discussed authentic leadership—a customized approach to defining one's leadership style. Similarly, Rhodes and Packel addressed the importance of values in leadership. They also highlighted other leadership styles that were documented in research conducted by Daniel Goleman. As Gibbings described, readers may conclude that various leadership styles can be utilized situationally and adjusted based on need.

¹¹³ The *coaching* style is used by leaders who “help employees identify their unique strengths and weaknesses and tie them to their personal and career aspirations. They encourage employees to establish long-term development goals and help them conceptualize a plan for attaining them.” Rhode & Packel, *Leadership*, 49.

¹¹⁴ Rhode and Packel, *Leadership: Law, Policy, and Management*, 45-50.

Leadership and Emergency Management

There are various tools and attributes that are vital to an effective leader in the industry. This section discusses leadership literature that addresses emergency management specifically.

A study published in 2013 by Hasan Karaca, Naim Kapucu, and Montgomery Van Wart, showed there was a need for transformational leadership at that time in FEMA.¹¹⁵ The authors found that leadership styles that produce behaviors such as creative thinking and problem solving bode well for emergency management. Their study showed that, based on employee perceptions of leadership success, “In terms of the structure of transformational leadership, intellectual stimulation [is] substantially more important than inspirational motivation or idealized influence for effectiveness.”¹¹⁶ This leadership style is helpful for leaders to embrace in a field where there are often complex, rapidly changing, and at times unique challenges. Although some may argue that if an environment encourages intellectual stimulation, transactional leadership is useful to support periods of incremental change.

William L. Waugh and Gregory Streib present the importance of collaboration for emergency managers. Based on their research findings from the response to Hurricane Katrina, Waugh and Streib pinpointed the importance of two types of leadership traits: imagination, and initiative,¹¹⁷ traits that are alternate distinctions of leadership to

¹¹⁵ Hasan Karaca, Naim Kapucu, and Montgomery Van Wart, “Examining the Role of Transformational Leadership in Emergency Management: The Case of FEMA,” *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy* 3, no.3 (January 2013): 35. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rhc3.10>.

¹¹⁶ Karaca, Kapucu, and Van Wart, “Examining the Role of Transformational Leadership,” 35.

¹¹⁷ William L. Waugh Jr., and Gregory Streib, “Collaboration and Leadership for Effective Emergency Management,” *Public Administration Review* 66, no. s-1 (November 2006): 134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00673.x>.

transformational and transactional leadership. Lessons learned from these events taught how important it is for leaders to take initiative based on information received and remain open to other perspectives and insights while engaging creativity and the ability to be proactive. My research findings also discuss the importance of leaders encouraging shared perspectives.

Wukich and Robinson discuss the importance of meso-leadership in emergency management. They define meso-leadership as an approach that focuses on “interorganizational cooperation”¹¹⁸ and emphasizes the type of leadership that focuses on relationship building. This is different than macro-leadership, which primarily focuses outside an organization, and micro-leadership which is organization-centric.¹¹⁹ Unlike micro- and macro-leadership, according to Wukich and Robinson meso-leadership is most beneficial to the work of emergency managers. The authors expand on types of styles and techniques under the meso-leadership approach that can be used in an emergency: (1) closure and (2) brokerage. The closure leadership technique “reinforces group norms.” Closure is successful when there is cooperation between various response networks. Often used during routine emergencies, trust is developed over time.¹²⁰ The brokerage leadership technique includes “efforts to engage diverse actors. . . . Brokerage ties tend to develop between dissimilar organizations in response to sudden urgent events.”¹²¹ Wukich and Robinson present the importance of closure because it “reinforces basic competencies and promotes sound performance in known, stable operating

¹¹⁸ Wukich & Robinson, “Leadership Strategies,” 44.

¹¹⁹ Wukich & Robinson, “Leadership Strategies,” 44.

¹²⁰ Wukich & Robinson, “Leadership Strategies,” 41-50.

¹²¹ Wukich & Robinson, “Leadership Strategies,” 41-54.

environments”¹²² and the importance of brokerage because “leaders must assess how to build sustainable relationships over time that can facilitate interactions in response to sudden, urgent events.”¹²³ Closure establishes credibility and brokerage builds connections that can be beneficial to addressing a disaster.

Unlike other literature specifically related to emergency management and leadership, Leonard, Howitt, and Giles provide insight on leadership in their article “Crisis Management for Leaders Coping with COVID-19.” They distinguish between two types of leadership: that used in a routine emergency, and that used during a crisis.¹²⁴ A routine emergency is one that be more readily addressed because of previous preparedness efforts.¹²⁵ A crisis is a type of emergency where there are no plans, procedures, protocols, or historical precedents established, and it has a novel component associated with it.¹²⁶

Defining a *routine emergency*, Leonard, Howitt, and Giles state:

A routine emergency is characterized by *familiarity*. . . . As a result of prior experiences [individuals] have had a chance to determine the best ways to respond to [an emergency], and they have developed an organization well equipped to deal with such situations by combining standard operating procedures, plans, equipment, people with the requisite training, experience, and skills, and a structure for organizing and directing the response that is optimized for effectiveness and efficiency.¹²⁷

A routine emergency is more readily dealt with because of previous preparedness efforts.¹²⁸ During a routine emergency, the authors explain:

¹²² Wukich & Robinson, “Leadership Strategies,” 50.

¹²³ Wukich & Robinson, “Leadership Strategies,” 49.

¹²⁴ Leonard, Howitt, and Giles, “Crisis Management,” 3.

¹²⁵ Leonard, Howitt, and Giles, “Crisis Management,” 2.

¹²⁶ Leonard, Howitt, and Giles, “Crisis Management,” 3.

¹²⁷ Leonard, Howitt, and Giles, “Crisis Management,” 2.

¹²⁸ Leonard, Howitt, and Giles, “Crisis Management,” 2.

Experienced leaders in routine emergency situations can thus appropriately be anticipated to be able promptly to give clear, decisive instructions, based on their training, experience, knowledge, and expertise, that will effectively deal with the challenges the emergency presents.¹²⁹

However, a different type of leadership is needed in a *crisis*. A crisis is a type of emergency where there are no plans, procedures, protocols, or historical precedents established, and often there is a novel component associated with it.¹³⁰ As per Leonard, Howitt, and Giles:

Crisis situations like COVID-19 confront leaders with high-stakes, highly uncertain circumstances that go beyond current understanding. These situations also present threats for which required resources may go beyond what is normally available, where this is no known or completion solution, and where there is no assurance of a successful or even adequate response.¹³¹

Further, a crisis is also defined by novelty and lack of complete information. The authors state:

Effective leadership in a true crisis situation can thus be characterized by rapid innovation, under stress, embedded in fear. This is a profoundly different leadership challenge than operating in a familiar routine emergency. In a routine emergency, we can expect experts to be able to provide answers about what is happening, what will happen, and what we should do about it. In a true crisis emergency, no one is in a position to provide complete or comprehensive answers. A true crisis thus presents us with a humbling and troubling question: What do we do when no one knows what to do? The fact that no one knows immediately implies that in crisis circumstances, our hopes and confidence need to be placed in the operation of the appropriate PROCESS. Leaders should resist being put in the position of providing answers when novel circumstances create substantial uncertainty about the future; instead, they should put their confidence in a process that will generate the best available answer.¹³²

¹²⁹ Leonard, Howitt, and Giles, "Crisis Management," 3.

¹³⁰ Leonard, Howitt, and Giles, "Crisis Management," 3.

¹³¹ Leonard, Howitt, and Giles, "Crisis Management," 3.

¹³² Leonard, Howitt, and Giles, "Crisis Management," 3-4.

Leonard, Howitt, and Giles describe adaptive leadership, the type of leadership used during a crisis environment as a creative process to solve issues during a disaster. This type of leadership is unique because it requires the individual to be creative since their lack of experience leaves them without a guide. Keeping these leadership approaches in mind, leaders should recognize the type of emergency they are facing and remain flexible to address needs presented by a crisis or disaster.

The literature available on leadership and emergency management offers various perspectives on leadership styles. Karaca, Kapucu, and Van Wart share how transformational leadership in an emergency management situation can drive the intellectual growth of employees.¹³³ Waugh and Streib describe the importance of leaders to embrace collaboration.¹³⁴ Wukich and Robinson believe meso-leadership is important for fostering cooperation between organizations.¹³⁵ A common theme shared by Waugh, Streib, Wukich, and Robinson is that leaders should develop and maintain relationships through collaboration and cooperation. Karaca, Kapucu, Montgomery, Van Wart, Waugh, and Streib highlight the value of transformational leadership and similarly aligned leadership styles to allow certain traits such as creativity to thrive. Alternatively, Leonard, Howitt, and Giles differentiate between leadership approaches that can be used during a routine emergency and a crisis emergency. Readers can conclude that the most ideal leadership approach may be based on the type of an emergency at hand.

¹³³ Karaca, Kapucu, & Van Wart, "Examining the Role of Transformational Leadership," 19-37.

¹³⁴ Waugh & Streib, "Collaboration and Leadership," 131-140.

¹³⁵ Wukich & Robinson, "Leadership Strategies," 41-59.

Additional Leadership Tools

In addition to leadership styles, other important tools include strategies and skills. *Strategy* is a conceptual approach to further advance one's career; *skill* is a way to mature the strategy to become actionable. Strategies include coordination and relationship building. According to an article by *Indeed*, relationship building “applies to connect with others and form positive relationships. In the workplace, relationship-building skills are essential for getting along with coworkers, contributing to a team and building an understanding between yourself and others.”¹³⁶

Skills include organizing, critical thinking, and networking. According to *Indeed*:

Building successful work relationships can also benefit from developing your networking skills. Meeting new people, exchanging ideas with other professionals and offering assistance to other business professionals can all help to boost your networking skills.¹³⁷

Although at times strategies and skills may seem interchangeable (e.g., relationship building and networking), a strategy can help prioritize the development of skills. This will ultimately propel a leader to be more effective.

As previously mentioned, Wukich and Robinson discuss meso-leadership. They indicate methods that meso-leaders embrace, including cooperation and coordination. Leaders can “(1) navigate networks,¹³⁸ (2) recruit allies, and (3) “develop and execute coordinated strategies for action in situations where no one else takes control.”¹³⁹ The

¹³⁶ “Relationship Building: Definitions and Examples,” *Indeed*, August 8, 2022. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/relationship-building-skills>.

¹³⁷ “Relationship Building: Definitions and Examples,” *Indeed*, August 8, 2022.

¹³⁸ Navigating networks is the ability to connect between different groups. Leonard, Howitt, and. Giles, “Crisis Management for Leaders Coping with COVID-19,” 52.

¹³⁹ Wukich and Robinson, “Leadership Strategies at the Meso Level of Emergency Management Networks,” 52.

leadership strategy to utilize cooperation and coordination enables the development of relationships, which fosters the inclusion of ideas.

Similar to Wukich and Robinson, William L. Waugh shares the significance of relationship building: “Leadership has to rest on relationships. Trust is the necessary ingredient in making cooperation and collaboration work . . . it is also easier to trust someone that has already demonstrated their trustworthiness.”¹⁴⁰

In addition to leadership strategies, Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan discuss nine important leadership behaviors, among which are team building, networking, developing and mentoring.¹⁴¹ The skills these authors identify are relevant to leaders because they can be developed over time and taken from practice and experience. Findings in my empirical work will discuss the significance of these behaviors.

An article titled “Emergency Management Leadership in 2030,” by Carol L. Cwiak, et al., breaks down 12 core competencies that will be needed by emergency management leaders by 2030, as identified during a FEMA Higher Education Program focus group. The article highlighted a few skills and attributes including team building, continual learning, and professional ethics¹⁴² These skills are arguably valuable to emergency managers because they strengthen relationships, focus on advancing oneself, and implement a personal moral standard.

¹⁴⁰ William L. Waugh, *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance* (NYC: Springer, 2018), 3601.

¹⁴¹ Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan, “What We Know About Leadership,” 493.

¹⁴² Carol L. Cwiak, Ronald Campbell, Matthew G. Cassavechia, Chuck Haynes, Lanita A. Lloyd, Neil Brockway, George O. Navarini, Byron E. Piatt, and Mary Senger, “Emergency Management Leadership in 2030: Shaping the Next Generation Meta-Leader,” *Journal of Emergency Management* 15, no. 2 (March/April 2017): 86-87. <https://doi.org/10.5055/jem.2017.0317>.

Wukich and Robinson, and Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan discuss the significance of the strategy of relationship building. Cwiak, et al., emphasize the importance of developing a skill to further strengthen team building, which ultimately leads to strengthening relationships. Emergency managers who utilize these competencies would be prepared to better support their community as well as connect with their peers in the emergency management industry. Findings in my empirical work will discuss the significance of these skills and attributes.

Women in Leadership Roles

Discrimination and unconscious bias are often barriers that limit the progress of women in leadership roles.¹⁴³ In her book, *Women and Leadership*, Deborah Rhode expands on the efficacy of leadership and the importance of balancing a variety of skills regardless whether they are associated with the male or female gender. Rhode states:

Most research reveals no significant gender differences. Leadership success generally requires a combination of traditionally masculine and feminine traits, including vision, ethics, interpersonal skills, technical competence, and personal capabilities such as self-awareness and self-control.¹⁴⁴

Additionally, Rhode wrote that double standards are often applied to women in leadership positions. For example, if a woman demonstrates a masculine leadership style (e.g., autocratic behavior), their likability may be in jeopardy.¹⁴⁵ Although research shows there are no major differences in efficacy between men and women in leadership positions, women often utilize a leadership approach that encapsulates their unique

¹⁴³ Deborah L. Rhode, *Women and Leadership* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2.

¹⁴⁴ Rhode, *Women and Leadership*, 6.

¹⁴⁵ Rhode, *Women and Leadership*, 11.

experiences and perspectives. Readers may argue that women have distinct leadership approaches and may utilize a combination of feminine and masculine traits. This also enables women to utilize various leadership traits when facing a specific situation.

James Burns expressed the idea that leadership typically encompasses masculine traits, especially the image of individuals in leadership positions. Over time, leadership traits demonstrated by women have been categorized as less-desirable qualities. As women are accepted as leaders, preconceived notions of leadership traits and qualities exemplified by women will eventually change. Burns argues:

Biological emphasis in the study of leadership is the assumption of male leadership, especially at the higher levels of power. Over the centuries femininity has been stereotyped as dependent, submissive and conforming, and hence women have been seen as lacking in leadership qualities. As leadership comes properly to be seen as a process of leaders engaging and mobilizing the human needs and aspirations of followers, women will be more readily recognized as leaders and men will change their own leadership styles.¹⁴⁶

Ultimately, traits typically identified as feminine or masculine are a social construct.

Cheryl de la Rey agrees with Burns about gender bias and leadership. In the article, “Gender, Women and Leadership,” de la Rey states: “Historically, the characteristics associated with good leadership have been traits and behaviours associated with masculinity.”¹⁴⁷ De la Rey builds on this idea by asserting that gender is typically ignored in the majority of literature on leadership unless it is specifically studied.¹⁴⁸ One might conclude that the lack of literature on the topic of women in leadership continues

¹⁴⁶ Burns, *Leadership*, 50.

¹⁴⁷ Cheryl de la Rey, “Gender, Women and Leadership,” *Agendas: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, no. 65 (2005): 7.

¹⁴⁸ De la Rey, *Gender, Women and Leadership*, 7.

to perpetuate gender bias, if only because not enough evidence is provided to combat the social construct of masculine and feminine leadership traits.

A study conducted by Alice H. Eagly and Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt, and discussed in “The Leadership Styles of Women and Men,” found that women use the transformational leadership style more frequently than men, which means women focus more on inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation.¹⁴⁹ This leadership style strongly favors encouragement and influence. These authors found that men use a transactional leadership style more than women. They state, “men exceeded women on the transactional scales of active management-by-exception,¹⁵⁰ passive management-by-exception,¹⁵¹ and on *laissez-faire* leadership.” These findings suggest that “male managers, more than female managers, (1) paid attention to their follower’s problems and mistakes, (2) waited until problems became severe before attempting to solve them, and (3) were absent and uninvolved at critical times.”¹⁵² A reader could conclude that the transactional approach may be seen to be more effective for an occupation that relies on structure, the ability to solve problems, and decision making.

Although the differences in the type of leadership styles, exemplified by men and women in “The Leadership Styles of Women and Men,” was small, the study suggested

¹⁴⁹ Alice H. Eagly, and Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt, “The Leadership Styles of Women and Men,” *Journal of Social Issues* 57, no. 4 (2001): 791. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00241>.

¹⁵⁰ *Active management-by-exception* is a leadership style which “Attends to followers’ mistakes and failures to meet standards.” See Alice H. Eagly, Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt, and Marloes L. van Engen, “Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-Faire Leadership Styles: A Meta-Analysis Comparing Women and Men,” *Psychological Bulletin* 129, no. 4 (2003): 571. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.4.569>.

¹⁵¹ The *passive management-by-exception* is a leadership style which “Waits until problems become severe before attending to them and intervening.” Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen. “Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-Faire Leadership Styles,” 571.

¹⁵² Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, “The Leadership Styles of Women and Men,” 793.

that the transformational leadership style was more effective than the transactional leadership style. Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt inferred reasons why women exceeded men when using the transformational leadership style. One is: “Women have to meet a higher standard than men to attain leadership roles and have to maintain better performance to retain these roles.”¹⁵³ Another is:

Female managers may encounter resistance if they proceed in the more traditional command-and-control leadership styles, and they opportunistically discover the advantages of the more interpersonally sensitive but inspirational type of leadership that is captured by measures of transformational leadership.¹⁵⁴

A reader may deduce that women who use leadership styles associated with men may need to combat opposition.

Crystal L. Hoyt reviewed a range of studies that demonstrate traits, styles, and effectiveness of women in leadership roles. Her findings contradict Rhode by showing there is little difference between the leadership styles used by men and women.¹⁵⁵

Although there is some minor disparity, women use different strategies than men to navigate due to challenges they encounter. Hoyt attributes stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination that continue to perpetuate gender bias in leadership.¹⁵⁶

Many women leaders have taken different pathways and utilized different tools to obtain an executive position. Hoyt also states: “Researchers would be advised to take lessons from women who have successfully navigated the labyrinth.”¹⁵⁷ The term

¹⁵³ Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, “The Leadership Styles of Women and Men,” 793.

¹⁵⁴ Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, “The Leadership Styles of Women and Men,” 793–794.

¹⁵⁵ Crystal L. Hoyt, “Women, Men, and Leadership: Exploring the Gender Gap at the Top,” *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 4, no.7 (2010): 488.

¹⁵⁶ Hoyt, “Women, Men, and Leadership,” 489–492.

¹⁵⁷ Hoyt, “Women, Men, and Leadership,” 493.

labyrinth is a metaphor that describes challenges women may encounter as they work toward achieving leadership roles. It has historical roots that depict an image of:

a complex journey that entails challenges and offers a goal worth striving for. Passage through a labyrinth is not simple or direct, but requires persistence, awareness of one's progress, and a careful analysis of the puzzles that lie ahead. . . . Because all labyrinths have a route to their center, it is understood that goals are attainable. But passing through a labyrinth is more demanding than traveling a straight path.¹⁵⁸

A labyrinth is a strong visual that addresses the many avenues one might encounter when meeting an objective, whether complicated, confusing, or difficult to navigate due to barriers and obstacles (e.g., social expectations).

Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carli argue that the term *labyrinth* supersedes the outdated term *glass ceiling*, which is a term used to describe women shattering barriers that prevented them from filling leadership positions. Eagly and Carli explain that *glass ceiling* is an antiquated term because women fill leadership roles. They state: "Women's rarity in powerful roles has most often been ascribed to the glass ceiling, but this explanation no longer fits. The glass ceiling metaphor conveys a rigid, impenetrable barrier, but barriers to women's advancement are now more permeable."¹⁵⁹ The authors provide various reasons why the glass ceiling metaphor is misleading. A few reasons include: "It fails to recognize the diverse strategies that women devise to become leaders," and "It precludes the possibility that women can overcome barriers and become leaders."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carli, *Through the Labyrinth: the Truth About How Women Become Leaders* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2007), ix-x.

¹⁵⁹ Eagly and Carli, *Through the Labyrinth*, 1.

¹⁶⁰ Eagly and Carli, *Through the Labyrinth*, 7.

Eagly and Carli use *labyrinth* as a more relevant term because, although women fill leadership positions, they may encounter additional barriers and challenges. The authors state:

For women who aspire to attain leadership, routes to this goal exist but can present both unexpected and expected twists and turns. . . . Thus, the labyrinth provides an encouraging metaphor for aspiring women and recognizing of the challenges that these women face.¹⁶¹

Indeed, my own research, undertaken for this thesis, was and is intended help rising female leaders in emergency management navigate more easily through the labyrinth in the emergency management industry.

¹⁶¹ Eagly and Carli, *Through the Labyrinth*, x.

Chapter IV

Methodology

The literature review herein suggests there is limited information about women in the emergency management field, and presents extant writings about how women have been able to fill executive positions in emergency management. But further research is needed in order to explore additional emergency management organizational policies that address boundaries, which continue to perpetuate and generate inequity for women.

Following my literature review, I conducted interviews with women in executive positions, and surveyed woman who were in the early stages of their careers, to collect information to fill the gaps noted earlier. These two approaches were chosen to obtain the perspectives of women working in emergency management who are at different points in their careers. These approaches helped identify if there were correlations, common themes, or differences between the two groups.

Semi-structured interviews allowed me to delve into individual experiences, including a participants' career trajectory and tools used to excel in her position. Virtual semi-structured interviews of established women leaders in emergency management were conducted between September 2022 and November 2022.

My survey was conducted via the online platform SurveyMonkey. It enabled me to collect general information about new and emerging leaders in the field.

Interviews

The established leaders interviewed are women who hold or have held executive positions in emergency management. These women are experienced individuals who have or had decision-making power to influence emergency management policy prior to, during, and after a disaster. Each participant embodies qualities of professionalism, credibility, and ethical values. The sample size of this group is 19.

Some structured questions asked during these interviews were:

“What were the circumstances that propelled you into a leadership position?”

“What are some of your expectations as an established leader?”

“What do you think is important?”

Additional customized follow-up questions were asked of interviewees to further explore structured interview responses. A full list of the structured interview questions is provided in Appendix A.

Once interviews were completed, the qualitative data collected from each respondent was sorted. Responses to each question were organized under the specific structured interview question. Follow-up question responses were incorporated under the relevant interview question. Data was then classified as either a main theme or a trend.

Additionally, responses that supported my research questions were also identified. Categories were then developed based on main themes and trends, and respondent comments were organized into these categories. The frequency of comments assigned to each category were then counted. The analyzed data was organized into tables to highlight findings.

Survey

In addition to conducting interviews, a survey was disseminated to individuals apart of the Big City Emergency Managers Emerging Leaders cohorts.¹⁶² These cohorts consisted of individuals who graduated from the program cohorts within the last five years (2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2021, and 2022-2023). Candidates for the program deemed to be rising leaders were identified by their executive leadership and managers to participate in the program. Program jurisdictions include the following cities: City of Boston, City of Chicago, City of Dallas, City and County of Denver, Harris County, City of Houston, City of Los Angeles, Miami-Dade County, Newark-Jersey City, City of New York, City of Philadelphia, County of San Diego, City and County of San Francisco, City of Seattle, and District of Columbia.¹⁶³

The purpose of the survey was to collect anonymous feedback from women regarding leadership and their experiences in emergency management. Recipients of the survey included all genders. Individuals who opted to complete the survey self-identified as women. The sample size of this group was 80. Out of this group, 39 responses were received; 3 from men and 36 from women. The three individuals who identified themselves as men were routed to the end of the survey. No additional information was collected from these individuals.

¹⁶² Big City Emergency Managers (BCEM) is an “independent, non-profit organization. Its participation has increased from 4 to 15 jurisdictions, representing over 20% of the nation’s population and 90% of the Urban Area Security Initiative Grant (UASI) funds that are allocated by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) annually.” Big City Emergency Managers, “Member Jurisdictions.” Accessed October 23, 2022. <https://bigcityem.org/member-cities/>.

¹⁶³ Big City Emergency Managers, “Member Jurisdictions.”

The survey included open-ended and multiple-choice questions. For example, one open-ended question was, “What are some expectations of women in emergency management who are new in their career?” Participants then wrote their own answers. An example of a multiple-choice questions was: “What are ways you are working to improve your leadership skills? (Select all the options that apply).” Participants then chose responses from a list:

- a. Education
- b. Trainings
- c. Mentorship
- d. Attend conferences
- e. Network
- f. Independent learning
- g. Observe colleagues
- h. Other (Open-ended comment).

The full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix B.

Once survey results were received and the survey was closed, the number of survey responses was counted. Respondents who did not attempt to complete the survey were removed from the survey sample. Response rates on each of the question responses were tallied. Quantitative data (e.g., pre-populated tables, graphs) and qualitative data (i.e., open-ended comments) were reviewed to identify themes, trends, and data of significance. Findings in survey data were organized in response to each survey question, response to support research questions, and results that aligned with a relevant interview question.

Chapter V

Interview Results

The interview process produced qualitative data regarding the career path and trajectory of established female leaders in the field of emergency management. I also sought information regarding gender-specific barriers the interviewees encountered, and their recommendations for future female leaders. Results are provided below.

Career Path and Trajectory

To explore opportunities that propelled women forward in their career toward attaining executive positions in emergency management, I addressed their career paths and trajectory. The results provide insights into women who did and did not start their career track in emergency management; it also explores the number of women who obtained public safety experience.

Among 19 respondents, 13 respondents indicated they did not start their career track in emergency management. This track pertains to initial educational background and entry into their early career experiences. The majority of interviews indicated that in fact there were no degree avenues available. One respondent noted: “I came into this industry from school not knowing what I wanted to do. At the time there wasn’t a degree path for emergency management, but there was a responder path.”

Another respondent indicated that she pursued another career path, which eventually led her into the emergency management field:

I came into emergency management in an indirect way. When I went to school there were no programs in emergency management and homeland security. I was a Communications major which has served me well. I didn't start looking into the emergency management industry...I taught a class on natural disasters then went on to do teaching work in emergency management.

The responses suggest that women were able to pursue a career in emergency management even though they did not have a public safety background.

Six of the 19 respondents indicated that they started their careers on the emergency management career track. This group consisted of graduate or undergraduate degrees the interviewees pursued, or jobs they entered in government, human services, and healthcare sectors.

Six of the 19 respondents identified their interest and passion as key factors that helped them enter the field. One respondent noted how her early interests fueled her desire to identify how she might pursue work in emergency management: "I got an undergraduate degree in government and history and took a class in disasters and risks because at that time there was no disaster management program or academic path to doing that. That's how I started and decided to find a job in disaster management."

Another respondent discussed how she identified her interest in the industry:

When I started, I wanted to go the pre-med track. . . . I was at the wrong school for what I wanted to do. . . . I [pursued] a public health degree. I started to get interested in social work. I did an AmeriCorps Program through the American Red Cross prior to [Hurricane] Katrina. . . . I soon after deployed to Florida to do disaster relief work. . . . I got that bug.

These comments suggest that by understanding their interests early on, these respondents were more easily able to pursue and create an emergency management career path despite the fact that the career path was not well established for those entering the field.

Out of the six respondents who started their career on an emergency management track, three have filled traditional public safety roles. One respondent commented on the view of the typical emergency manager: “We have a too-narrow perception of emergency management. There is an image of an emergency manager—they are retired first responders or responders adjacent trained in [Incident Command System] ICS. I don’t have that [experience].” This respondent suggested that public safety experience is not a necessary qualification for filling a leadership position and excelling in the emergency management field.

To further describe the career path of respondents without regard to whether or not they started their career path in emergency management, I delved further into influences that impacted their career trajectory. All 19 respondents identified factors that attracted them to the industry, which I have grouped into two categories: (1) personal, and (2) external. The personal category refers to personal influences such as emotion; the external category refers to peripheral influences such as experiences.

The findings shown in Table 1 suggest that factors that attracted established leaders to the emergency management industry are driven by an interest in helping people as well as by the type of work they would be doing.

Table 1: Factors that Attracted Established Leaders to the Emergency Management Industry

Comments (19 Respondents)

Categories	# of comments	Selected Examples
Personal	9	“I fell in love with the ability to help people” “I always wanted to do service work and help people”
External	12	“Through experiences, I experienced a love for the profession. I was breaking barriers through job assignments” “I got hooked because of issues that I saw helping survivors by doing debris management and public assistance...I saw problems that needed people to solve that may improve the survivor and first response experience” “I was asked to work in emergency management to support special needs” “I grew up around [Humanitarian Non-profit]...I worked in feeding and mass care. That was a part of my childhood”

Note: Each respondent comment has been tagged as one comment. One individual could have multiple comments. The comments in this chart highlight themes that recur in responses. The sum will not total 19 since respondents identified multiple factors that attracted established leaders to the emergency management industry.

To complement the factors that attract leaders to the emergency management field, all respondents shared elements that propelled them forward in their career and into executive roles. These elements can be grouped into four different categories such as self-advocacy, professional growth, experience, and networking.

Table 2 explores components that helped respondents to rise in their career. A large proportion of respondent comments highlight the importance of professional growth, experience, and networking. Respondents identified that professional growth opportunities were valuable because it helped them to become well-rounded and recognized. Moreover, respondents commented on how experience was able to diversify

their portfolio and helped to open up opportunities. Examples of such experiences include managing projects and running operations. In addition, respondents commented on how their network was able to endorse them and their work, which in turn led to growth and promotions. The strategy, effort, and work to take advantage of these components made the respondent background more robust contributing to building their credibility.

Table 2: Elements that Contributed to Propelling Women Forward in Their Career and Into Executive Roles

Comments (19 Respondents)

Categories	# of comments	Selected Examples
Self-advocacy	3	“If you believe in something and if there’s a chance, don’t let the first chance be the answer and advocate for yourself”
Professional Growth	6	“My leadership role in [Name of Organization] was not about networking. I stepped into this role because I kept volunteering for things and moved into a different position” “Be willing to learn. I said this my entire career. Have the willingness to learn anything new” “I explored different pathways”
Experience	8	“I got to do a bit of everything. I needed to know a bit of everything about what the public needed” “I took on more responsibilities...I was able to take on new things and enjoy program management” “If you are hungry, you will learn all by working on projects. I cut my teeth on becoming the best trusted [Name of Role] to solve a problem”
Networking	8	“In [Name of Organization], this was because of networking. Someone threw my name in and asked if I would be interested. That’s how I got my foot in the organization. Do good work and make an impact and get to know the team” “I would like to say I do believe the reason why I was propelled forward was because of relationships”

Note: Each respondent comment has been tagged as one comment. One individual could have multiple comments. The comments in this chart highlight recurring themes in responses. The sum will not total 19 since respondents identified multiple elements that contributed to propelling women forward in their career and into executive roles.

To dig deeper into the factors that influence success in addition to being asked about general factors and elements that impact career path and trajectory, respondents were specifically asked about leadership tools, personal leadership expectations, and support they can provide women in emergency management.

Leadership Tools

There were overarching themes of specific tools that helped propel women forward in their executive roles. These tools can be separated into two different categories: (1) general leadership tools, and (2) tools used to lead emergencies. Both types of tools are critical to succeed in the role of a female executive in emergency management.

All respondents identified tools that could be further grouped into three categories: styles, strategies, and skills. Styles are particular approaches one can take to lead; strategies are methods leaders can utilize; and skills are abilities that can be learned.

As shown in Table 3, the majority of respondents commented on strategies and skills as being more useful than styles. A recurring theme identified in strategies included working with others to provide perspectives and input to make decisions as well as take actions that demonstrated credibility. A recurring trend identified by respondents regarding skills pertains to communication. Respondents commented on how verbal, non-verbal, and listening skills are significant to success.

Table 3: Leadership Tools Women Utilize in Emergency Management
Comments (19 Respondents)

Leadership Tools			
Types	Categories	# of Comments	Selected Examples
General	Styles	2	“[Name of Class] gave me the ability to find out different supervisory styles about what the subordinate needs” “I use a management style and mindset that fits well with management and overall [agency] strategy”
	Strategies	6	“It’s important to think outside of the box as wells as figure out how to solve the problems” “Be a team player” “Demonstrate value”
	Skills	7	“Most helpful thing is to listen and to overcommunicate” “No is not the final word. How can you ask the word in a different way to get the answer you want. Goes back to what is important to the person you are asking and how they can understand the problem” “I focused on developing emotional intelligence”
Leading Emergencies	Styles	1	“I emulated leadership from [Name of Mentor]”
	Strategies	12	“There is great value in ground truthing and getting perspectives from other folks” “Not being afraid of risk. You may not always make right decisions. You need to go with your instinct and as you get more information don’t be afraid to make changes” “Need to be consistent and concise” “Can’t let them see you sweat... You need to have hard conversations because you’re

Leadership Tools			
Types	Categories	# of Comments	Selected Examples
			talking about life and death....Can't let peoples feeling get in the way" "Before every meeting I prepped. I made sure that I was prepared for conversation in the room" "Communication. Help your team to understand your vision of where you want to go and trust team to determine outcome and make happen" "Be able to explain message in multiple ways" "Know how to network well"
	Skills	7	

Note: Each respondent comment has been tagged as one comment. One individual could have multiple comments. The comments in this chart highlight recurring themes in responses. The sum will not total 19 since respondents identified multiple tools that women utilize in emergency management.

Leadership tools such as styles, strategies, and skills are tangible ways to establish credibility. To complement these tools, personal leadership expectations are useful to setting a standard for oneself.

Personal Leadership Expectations

Personal leadership expectations can contribute to establishing goals which lead to producing personal achievements and accomplishments. Eighteen of 19 respondents commented on personal leadership expectations. Their responses were grouped into six categories: relationship building, knowledge, communication, personal perception, personal accountability, and balance.

As shown in Table 4, a large portion of respondents commented on the significance of relationship building, personal perception, personal accountability, and balance. My findings suggest the importance of behaviors that can establish one's credibility.

The respondents are established leaders who used tools and personal leadership expectations to obtain an executive role. By sharing their experience and providing support, they can make a difference in the lives of women in emergency management. Finally, all respondents commented on ways they assist and support rising female leaders.

Table 4: Personal Expectations as an Established Leader
Comments (Respondents 19)

Categories	# of comments	Selected Examples
Relationship Building	6	“From a leadership perspective bring people along with you to be excited and engaged to where you want the organization to go and have them feel inspired about what you do” “Keep an open mind and being thoughtful of different perceptions and generations. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is not going away” “Collaborative and consultative”
Knowledge	4	“Good to have an understanding of the challenges in the community, what are the needs” “That I continue to learn”
Communication	2	“Listen to staff” “I want to bring the right attitude and energy to conversations as a leader because it was an effort on how people feel about work”
Personal Perception	7	“Professionalism” “Approachable”

Categories	# of comments	Selected Examples
Personal Accountability	5	“Always lead by example first and foremost. Be proponent of accountability and hold myself accountable” “Be your authentic self” “Always do what’s right, lead with ethics and morals no matter what relationships say. You need to answer for yourself and know you did the right thing”
Balance	7	“Give yourself more grace, let guard down and take a breath” “Being realistic about what you can accomplish and being okay with that...Having realistic expectations” “Staying balanced... Self-care is important and know when it’s time to go home or keep appointment. And know when to take a break...make sure those who work for me do the same and not feel guilty about it”

Note: Each respondent comment has been tagged as one comment. One individual could have multiple comments. The comments in this chart highlight recurring themes in responses. The sum will not total 19 since respondents identified personal expectations as an established leader.

Support

Supporting women (and other under-represented populations) in emergency management is vital to increase participation numbers. All 19 respondents commented on ways established female leaders can support other women in emergency management. Common trends that respondents highlighted as important are: mentorship and amplifying female voices.

Regarding mentorship, one respondent stated: “Offer to be a mentor to women rising in the profession. Women in Homeland Security group is great. Joining groups can build a support team and reach out when [one has] questions.” Another respondent shared how one can utilize mentorship: “Being a sounding board to create network that you can call and have a session to talk through issues. Have a personal board of directors of

people you can reach out to.” Another respondent commented on how there can be improvement on this critical way to build women up: “There needs to be a stronger system of mentoring. A formalized system of networking.” These comments suggest that established leaders who use mentorship to develop relationships can support the growth of other women in the industry.

Pertaining to supporting female voices, one respondent stated: “Amplify each other’s voices. Promote LinkedIn . . . listen to noted allies in the room and restate what she said.” Another respondent indicated: “We have to support each other in the room when we are together. . . . If an idea is expressed in a meeting, we need to acknowledge ‘That’s a great idea’ and help expand.”

These comments speak to the importance of women lifting up other female voices to help women take up space, strengthen competency, and validate their ideas. Although mechanisms to facilitate mentorship are sparse, it is important for individuals to actively create these human connections. Mentorship and actively lifting up other female voices can be powerful action vehicles to help advance women in emergency management.

Gender-Specific Barriers

Although various success factors contributed to providing opportunities for women to fill executive roles, 17 of 19 respondents commented on barriers they encountered, and how they overcame them. Common barriers include a lack diversity and inclusion in the workplace, social expectations related to motherhood, and micro-aggressions related to sexism. The findings in this section demonstrate that these barriers can be addressed.

Lack of Diversity and Inclusion

Many respondents remarked on how they often were the only woman in a meeting. One respondent commented on ways she demonstrated credibility in a room among men:

I would walk into meetings with [Name of Agency] and [Name of Agency] . . . I was the only female in those meetings. . . . There is the idea that I could not understand what needs to be done in a disaster because I wasn't a part of the fire or military. . . . [I] used personality, the ability to be heard and [found] ways to negotiate.

Another respondent commented on how she shifted her mindset on this issue:

“Ambition served me better than being angry, and it shifted my frame of thinking.”

These respondents' comments point to powerful techniques to fill a void in diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as shifting one's mindset to challenge and address this obstacle.

Social Expectations Related to Motherhood

A large proportion of respondents commented on societal expectations related to motherhood as being a potential barrier. Many respondents discussed how social expectations impacted their roles as an emergency manager. One respondent commented: “The woman more often is the caretaker and has responsibilities. . . . [It's] harder for a woman to deploy or have opportunities.”

Another respondent discussed her personal experience while pregnant and how she was able to maintain her role after returning from parental leave:

Folks were concerned about my health. No one asked me if I wanted to do something [related to work]. It's important to know how to navigate respectfully and let those women lead the conversation and not assume they can't do it because of a condition. . . . There will be leave involved and you will have to give things up. . . . Be prepared when you come back

from leave; it may be possible to not get things back. Some people will take advantage and take on something they want to do. See this as an opportunity to take on a new thing, to give you an opportunity to grow. Be open to growth when you come back. If there was one thing you loved, get what you loved back. Fight for it.

Such comments indicate that the nature of emergency management jobs is challenging for women due to structural barriers and perception related to social expectations.

Micro-Aggressions Related to Sexism

Another barrier identified by respondents is micro-aggressions related to sexism. Several respondents commented on interactions with male counterparts that resulted in perceptions of reduced credibility, likely done both purposefully and unintentionally. One respondent mentioned, “No one would say my name . . . and called me ‘darlin’.” Another respondent commented on how they were spoken over or her ideas were not acknowledged:

Men would talk over me and attention would turn to them. If I said something, they may have heard me but they didn’t listen or didn’t pay attention to me. A man would say the same thing next to me and it was a good idea. . . . I found over time a level of determination and confidence [and] a level of humility. Others saw me deliver and do the job. . . . Now I have influence.

These findings suggest that comments made in an effort to reduce credibility and make women feel uncomfortable can be overcome.

Another respondent proposed an alternative way to reframe sexist remarks: “[For example,] they make comments that ‘we have *a* woman on the board.’ I say, give me some ideas on who I can bring to the table.” This finding proposes a solution to combat a sexist remark and help to develop buy-in from other colleagues to diversify perspectives.

In addition to resources available in the workplace to support women, the data collected from these interviews show techniques and ways to reframe issues and barriers that relate to a lack of diversity and inclusion, social expectations, and sexism. These established leaders overcame these barriers and through experience provided recommendations to support rising female leaders in the emergency management industry.

Recommendations for Future Female Leaders

Established leaders recommend tools for women in emergency management. They also provide recommendations on how women can navigate gender adversity and/or inequality situations while growing into an executive role.

Tools

Similar to the tools established leaders utilized to propel their career trajectory forward, all 19 respondents identified tools for future female leaders. These tools are grouped into three categories: styles, strategies, and skills. Styles are particular approaches one can take to lead, strategies are methods leaders can utilize, and skills are abilities that can be learned.

Similar to the tools that established leaders use, the majority of respondents identified a common trend that upheld strategies and skills as a way rising female leaders can move forward in the emergency management field. Common strategies respondents commented on included ways to bolster one's credibility, and strengthening communication skills. Table 5 shows leadership tools established leaders identified as helpful for women in emergency management.

Table 5: Leadership Tools Identified by Established Leaders as Helpful for Women in Emergency Management

Comments (19 Respondents)

Categories	# of Comments	Leadership Tools
		Selected Examples
Styles	7	“Don’t lead like a man you admire” “Everyone needs to define leadership style...You need to find an authentic leadership personal style. Just figure out who you are and accept and use that to be successful” “I found that in this profession, women lean toward each other. Look for other people and women in the workplace and field that are doing a good job. Notice traits about them that [one] would want to emulate and get to know them. Be forthcoming to get to know them and be successful”
Strategies	26	“Be able to control emotions...Don’t get caught up with letting emotions getting in way. Be forward and honest. Be tactful to let people know what’s going on” “Be mindful when speaking up. [This] helps with credibility. Be the expert in things you are the expert in. Know when it’s ok to defer to Subject Matter Experts” “Be professional, but firm and consistent” “Have good working relationships with male leaders, but strategies they use are different. To get self in inner circle, need to introduce self and meet with strategic thinkers and leaders” “I think regardless of gender, having a network or champions. It is great when they are women...Networking, mentoring, and...have folks in your corner” “Find out what your passion is and follow your passion” “Don’t shy away from experience and take leadership roles when opportunities arise” “Women need to hear trust yourself, be prepared, receive feedback, but know what to throw out the window” “Stay true to self”
Skills	28	“Knowing how to act, react, and interact with people in space. This is driven by emotional intelligence...<i>Emotional Intelligence 2.0</i> is a good book on emotional intelligence” “Openness to data and information”

“You need to be able to speak with authority and sense of expertise”

“Take advantage of professional development courses”

Note: Each respondent comment has been tagged as one comment. One individual could have multiple comments. The comments in this chart highlight recurring themes in responses. The sum will not total 19 since respondents identified multiple tools they identified helpful to women in emergency management.

These leadership tools are powerful styles, strategies, and skills that can help propel rising leaders forward. To combat gender adversity and/or inequality there are other methods that could help women navigate potential challenges.

Navigating Gender Adversity and/or Inequality

When discussing potential barriers women might encounter working in this field, 13 out of 19 established leaders offered recommendations for how to navigate gender adversity and/or inequity. Common themes respondents commented on were organized into four categories: identify support system, pursue experiences, self-promotion, and advocate for diversity.

The findings in Table 6 demonstrate that a large proportion of respondents commented on the importance of identifying a support system, as well as pursuing key experiences. These recommendations are concrete ways women and future leaders can navigate gender adversity and/or inequality.

Table 6: Navigating Gender Adversity and/or Inequality

Comments (13 Respondents)

Categories	# of Comments	Selected Examples
Identify Support System	8	“[Find] mentors that are reflective of gender issues, background, or race can be helpful because people have experience dealing with issues...It’s important to find other female leadership, black leaders, and others who are champions of diversity who can bridge divides” “Find allies, mentors, and sponsors. None of us survive high powered jobs without this” “Find women who have broken through barriers”
Pursue Experiences	6	“Participate in committees, events” “Look for internships and volunteer opportunities. There are fellowships”
Self-Promotion	2	“Sit at the table and speak up” “Try to figure out how we are at the table. Can’t have an impact if you are not in the room” “Go for position you want. Even if you think you don’t fill all requirements”
Advocate for Diversity	2	“Advocate for diversity of thought and experiences in what you are doing”

Note: Each respondent comment has been tagged as one comment. One individual could have multiple comments. The comments in this chart highlight recurring themes in responses. The sum will not total 13 since respondents identified recommendations women and future leaders can navigate gender adversity and/or inequality.

Chapter VI

Survey Results

The survey I conducted as part of this thesis research included 35 individuals who identified themselves as being a part of emergency management. Some have held their positions for one to two years; others for more than 10 years. The majority of responses included individuals in the 6 to 10 year range (31.43%), followed by individuals who fell in the 3 to 5 year range (28.57%). The findings show that these survey participants likely had mid-career experience.

Sixteen of 33 respondents identified a number of leadership tools they thought were most helpful for women in emergency management. Among the 16 participants, their comments can be grouped into three categories: professional development, soft skills, and leadership skills. Table 7 indicates that the most important tool is soft skills, and my findings confirmed that soft skills are beneficial to an individual's approach.

Table 7: Leadership Tools

Organized by Participant Comments (16 Participants)

Categories	# of comments	Selected Examples
Professional Development	9	“Online learning, mentorship, webinars, networking with others” “I believe, as a woman, the most useful tools are the trainings and exercises we have the ability to participate in to further our knowledge in the field”
Soft Skills	26	“Adaptability, flexibility, conceptual (and tangible) organization, and the ability to stay grounded despite the hardships women in most industries, but especially ours, have to face” “Diplomacy, patience, interest in learning, and willingness to impart wisdom. Think in terms of partnership not competition. Humility and persistence will garner respect. It also helps if you are comfortable with public speaking and confident in your ability to solve problems” “Being collaborative and building coalitions” “Public speaking, training on body language”
Leadership Styles	4	“Transformational and participative leadership are the most helpful for women in EM” “Strong, direct leadership styles at first; but as experience grows you can soften your approach”

Note: The comments in this chart highlight recurring themes in responses. The sum will not total 16 since participants identified multiple leadership tools. Each survey participant comment has been tagged as one comment. One individual could have multiple comments.

Shedding light on the types of expectations that rising leaders deem important, 12 out of 33 individuals commented on expectations of women in emergency management who are new in their career. The expectations noted by 12 survey participants could be grouped into two categories: social expectations, and personal expectations. As Table 8 shows, the majority of survey participants identified personal expectations as significant. My findings suggest that personal expectations demonstrate credibility and help manage external perceptions.

Table 8: Expectations of Women in Emergency Management Who Are New in Their Career.

Organized by Participant Comments (12 Participants)

Categories	# of comments	Selected Examples
Social Expectations	2	“They will have a family” “Realistic expectations or society expectations? Realistic is that you will be a team player and collaborator. Society would also like you to dress well, have good hair and smile a lot while bringing the team together”
Personal Expectations	26	“Competence, professionalism, communication skills” “Make yourself available, no matter your personal circumstances” “Ability to adapt quickly and command a room, particularly in potentially uncomfortable situations. Calm under pressure, quick thinking, and creative problem solving are a few others. I think there is always an underlying expectation that you are compassionate as well”

Note: The comments in this chart highlight recurring themes in responses. The sum will not total 12 since participants identified multiple expectations. Each survey participant comment has been tagged as one comment. One individual could have multiple comments.

Leadership skills are applicable for rising leaders. Among 33 respondents, 16 individuals identified ways they are working to improve such leadership skills. There were eight categorical variables, and more than 50% of the responding individuals utilize education, training, attend conferences, network, conduct independent learning, and observe colleagues.

The findings in Figure 2 show the vast majority prioritize these methods to improve leadership outside of mentorship. The top three high ranking ways to improve leadership skills identified were training, education, and independent learning. A common trend under the “Other” category noted included real-world experience.

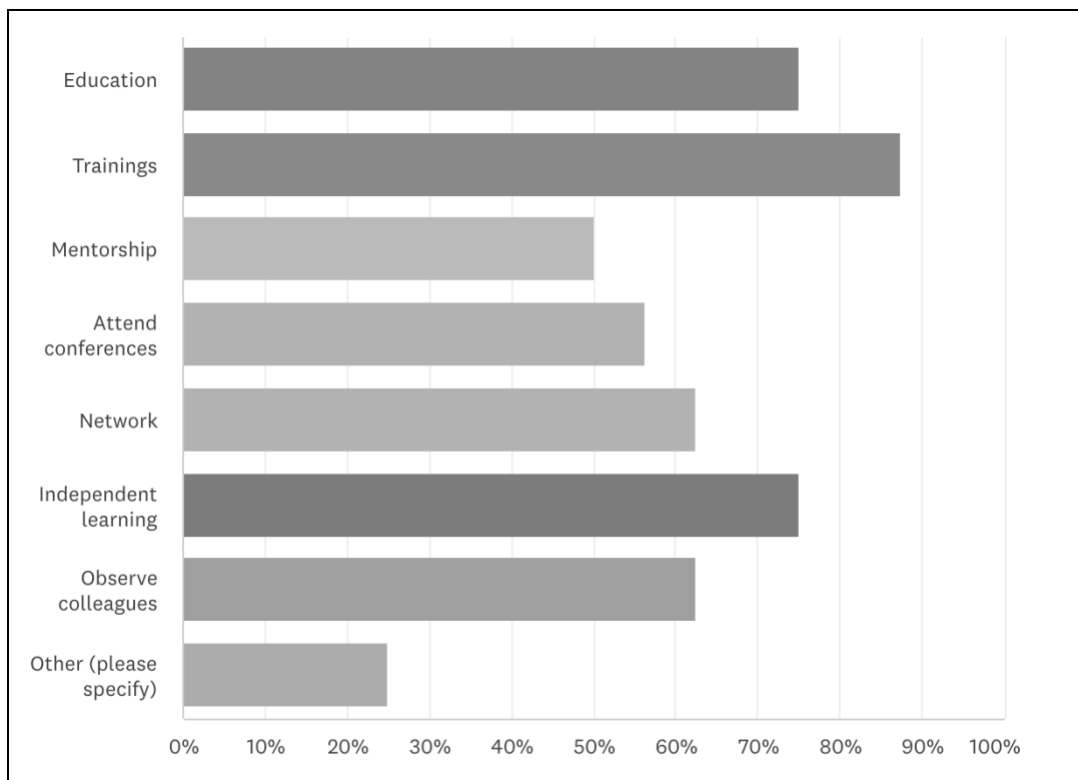


Figure 2: Ways Participants are Working to Improve Leadership Skills

Women, Leadership, and Emergency Management. (12 Participants)

To further build on leadership in rising leaders, 11 out of 33 individuals identified resources that inspire women to join the emergency management field or empower them to take on leadership positions. Responses from the 11 survey participants were coded in three different categories: representation, professional development, and relationships. Table 9 shows the proportion of participant comments are almost evenly distributed. Of note is that there are resources such as programs and organizations specifically directed to build and support women. Additionally, participants commented on the importance of seeing more women in leadership positions conducting emergency management work.

Table 9: Resources that Inspire Women to Join the field of Emergency Management or Empower Them to Take on Leadership Positions.

Comments (11 Participants)

Categories	# of comments	Selected Examples
Representation	4	“Seeing women represented in press conferences, social media, webinars, industry conferences is empowering and inspiring” “Seeing and hearing someone like themselves represented”
Professional Development	3	“Women in Homeland Security professional organization” “HERicane program for young women”
Relationships	2	“The relationships one makes is 100% the key to everything in this field. My opportunities have come from either having to directly ask for them (sometimes several times) or knowing the right people” “Creating these groups on LinkedIn and other sources of media to work together [and] empower ourselves is incredible and really helpful”

Note: The comments in this chart highlight recurring themes in responses. The sum will not total 11 since participants identified multiple resources. Each survey participant comment has been tagged as one comment. One individual could have multiple comments.

Regarding professional development, 14 of 33 participants commented that there is a need for more resources to support future female leaders in emergency management.

Figure 3 illustrates that 11 out 14 respondents (78%) identified a need for more professional development resources.

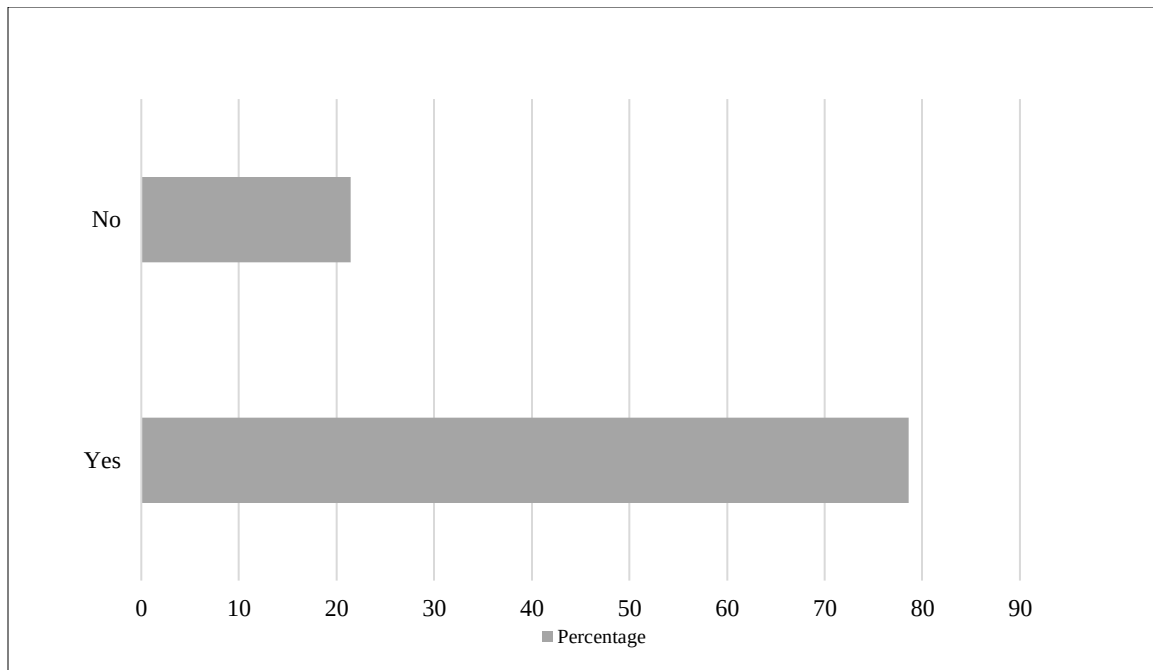


Figure 3: Need for More Professional Development Resources to Support Future Female Leaders in Emergency Management.

To complement professional development resources, participants responded positively to external factors that further support women. Among 33 participants, 16 commented on whether they feel supported by other women in emergency management. Figure 4 shows that 10 of the 16 survey participants (63%) noted that they feel supported by other women in emergency management. The remaining 6 of the 16 (37%) either sometimes or do not feel supported.

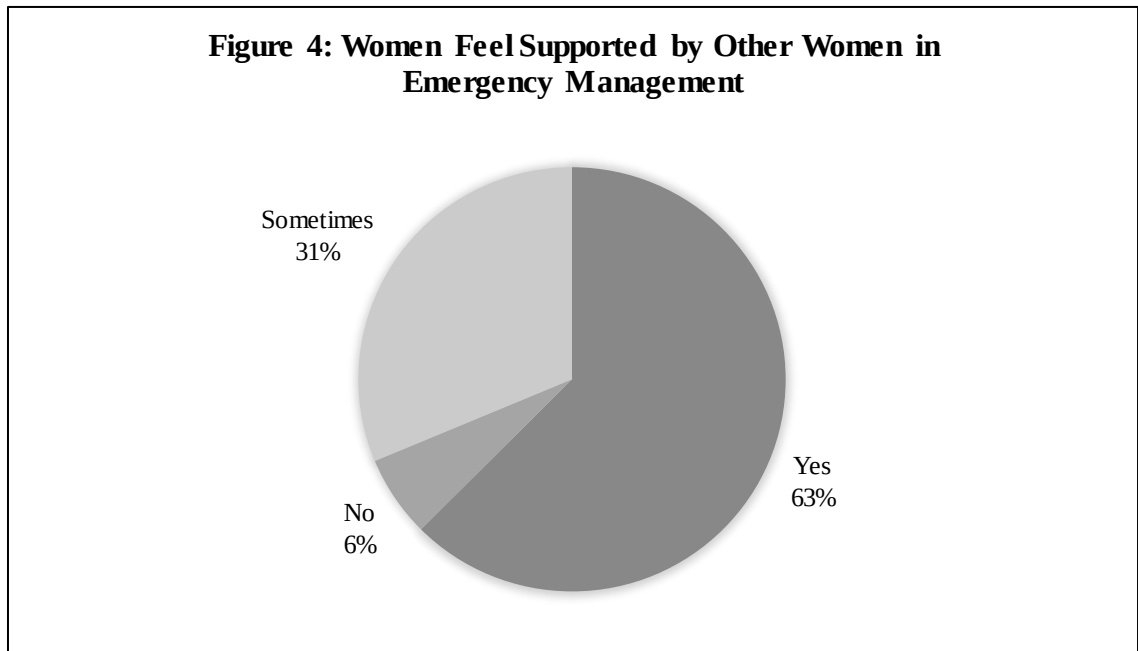


Figure 4. Women Feel Supported by Other Women in Emergency Management.

Addressing gender-related barriers, 16 of 33 participants shared their personal experiences in their career. As shown in Table 10, the situations participants offered include imposter syndrome,¹⁶⁴ gaslighting,¹⁶⁵ social expectations/limitations,¹⁶⁶ sexism,¹⁶⁷ stereotyping, and exclusion because they were part of a public safety organization.

Additionally, when providing answers about barriers encountered, out of 73.33% responses, respondents noted whether these barriers impacted their confidence and

¹⁶⁴ According to Merriam Webster dictionary, *imposter syndrome* is “a psychological condition that is characterized by persistent doubt concerning one’s abilities or accomplishments accompanied by the fear of being exposed as a fraud despite evidence of one’s ongoing success.” “imposter syndrome.” Accessed February 11, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/imposter%20syndrome>.

¹⁶⁵ According to Merriam Webster dictionary, *gaslighting* is “the act or practice of grossly misleading someone especially for one’s own advantage.” Accessed February 11, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gaslighting>.

¹⁶⁶ Social expectations and limitations are defined here as pertaining to motherhood.

¹⁶⁷ According to Merriam Webster dictionary, *sexism* is “prejudice or discrimination based on sex.” Accessed February 11, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sexism>.

interest in remaining in emergency management. The majority, 42.86% indicated no impact; 28.57% said yes, barriers did impact them; 21.43% said barriers sometimes impacted them; and 7.14% indicated they preferred not to answer. See Table 10 for findings.

Table 10: Percentage of Women Who Experienced Gender-Related Barriers.
Organized by Participant Comments (16 Participants)

Responses	Percentage
Expressed that they have encountered barriers related to gender	73.33% (11 out of 15 respondents)
Expressed that they have not encountered barriers related to gender	26.67% (4 out of 15 respondents)

To further expand on building rising leaders, 11 out of 33 participants commented on ways established female leaders in emergency management can support emerging leaders. The expectations from these 11 survey participants have been organized into three different categories such as mentorship, teach, and change culture.

Table 11 shows that the majority of participants indicate that mentorship and teaching are ways that established female leaders in emergency management can support emerging leaders. See Table 11 for findings below.

Table 11: Ways Established Female Leaders in Emergency Management Can Support Emerging Leaders.

Organized by Participant Comments (11 Participants)

Categories	# of comments	Selected Examples
Mentorship	7	“Intentional and organized mentorship programs. Network associations. Women in leadership townhalls/virtual education” “Providing guidance and mentorship is always a good way to support a new female emergency management employee”
Teach	7	“Be open--give talks, presentations, schedule coffee hours. Share your true experiences and challenges especially as they relate to personal life and work life balance” “Classes in college that are women driven. One of the best classes I ever took in college while in undergrad at [Name of University] was Women in Disasters. It was taught by a female professor ... and the class coincidentally happen to be all female students! ...This class and experience made me confident in starting my career in EM” “Camps like HERicane that empower us and empower young girls (8-12 grade) to learn about EM and maybe join in the future”
Change Culture	1	“Help change the leadership culture in Emergency Management. Ensure when female staff are subjected to demeaning behavior, unfair pay, and lack of support that it is addressed”

Note: The comments in this chart highlight recurring themes in responses. The sum will not total 11 since participants identified multiple resources. Each survey participant comment has been tagged as one comment. One individual could have multiple comments.

To further address any gaps not identified in the survey, seven of the 33 total survey participants shared some final thoughts or comments. The majority of comments discussed mentorship and the need for more active role models. One respondent mentioned how important it is for all women to support women: “While women in

positions of leadership need to help the female EM staff, it is also important that all levels of women support each other.” Another respondent noted the importance of seeing rising leaders as integral participants in the field: “There are amazing women in [emergency management]. However, most of the conferences, webinars and trainings have males in the speaking roles. It is time to elevate the voices of women in this field.”

The data collected from interviews and the survey provided insight on information deemed important by established leaders and rising leaders. Analysis is provided in the next chapter, which compares findings and further addresses questions proposed by this thesis.

Chapter VII

Analysis

This thesis addresses the following research questions:

- What propelled women forward in their careers to attain executive positions in emergency management?
- Why is it important for women to fill leadership positions?
- What barriers did established leaders overcome?
- What leadership tools can be utilized by women in emergency management?
- How can these leadership tools help women both rise to and be effective in leadership positions in emergency management?

My initial purpose for this study was to identify valuable information shared by established leaders to provide insight to rising female leaders about how they could grow in the emergency management industry. The results of this research identified various themes and trends that expand on career path and trajectory, barriers, leading to recommendations for future leaders.

Career Path and Trajectory

To address the primary research question, I focused first on career path and trajectory. The women in my interviews confirmed that it is possible to have an executive role in the emergency management industry despite not having a public safety background.

Regarding trajectory, there are various elements, tools, and personal expectations that contribute to building established leaders and propelling established leaders forward in their career. Established leaders identified such elements as professional growth, experience, and networking. This reinforces Morrow and Enarson's view on how critical it is for women to utilize networks.¹⁶⁸ These elements require strategy, planning, effort, and work by an individual, which contributes to making one's background more robust and build valuable connections.

Strategies and Skills

The tools that established leaders identified as important are strategies¹⁶⁹ and skills¹⁷⁰ can be decided by individuals and then learned. They can also be sufficiently powerful to influence and make positive changes. For example, a leader may prioritize working on her communication skills and building relationships. Strengthening communication skills and strategizing on how to network, creates stronger bonds in a team and facilitates the generation of alternative perspectives. I hypothesize that these strategies and skills are important for women seeking to fill leadership roles.

Compared with established leaders, rising leaders identified soft skills (e.g., public speaking, working with a team) as the most helpful to women in emergency management. In contrast with established leaders, rising leaders considered strategies such as staying true to oneself, establishing a network of champions, and developing

¹⁶⁸ Morrow and Enarson, "Hurricane Andrew through Women's Eyes," 16-17.

¹⁶⁹ Strategies are techniques and actions women can apply to their work to receive positive outcomes.

¹⁷⁰ Skills are capabilities that can learned.

positive working relationships with male counterparts to be more effective in helping them excel in their careers.

Women currently in emergency management can support the development of rising leaders by helping them identify useful strategies and methods. Leaders also can help rising leaders identify strategies that match their own leadership style. Authors Bill George, Peter Sims, Andrew N. McLean, and Diana Mayer¹⁷¹ and Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan¹⁷² views on authentic leadership align with the findings of this thesis, and reinforce the importance of identifying one's own leadership style.

Personal Expectations

Established leaders who were part of my research identified relationship building, personal perception, personal accountability, and balance as important to personal expectations. Establishing realistic personal leadership expectations can positively influence interpersonal perceptions. By establishing such expectations, leaders can build trust and credibility, especially as they embrace their own authentic self.

Additionally, the emergency management industry continues to evolve. With the growth and popularity of emergency management degrees, women can more easily obtain the requisite elements and tools, and establish personal expectations needed to help build their career. These opportunities could potentially eliminate barriers that could slow or obstruct career growth.

¹⁷¹ Bill George, Peter Sims, Andrew N. McLean, and Diana Mayer, "Discovering Your Authentic Leadership," *Harvard Business Review* 85, no. 2 (February 2007): 129.

¹⁷² Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan, "What We Know About Leadership," 134.

Gender-Specific Barriers

Next, I focused on gender-specific barriers, which include lack of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, social expectations related to motherhood, and micro-aggressions. Potential solutions to addressing these barriers include: identifying mentors and allies who can support thoughts and ideas that champion rising leaders' voices; establishing a support system; and identifying ways to incorporate work-life balance. Rising women leaders should recognize issues, utilize organization mechanisms already in place such human resource departments, and address issues immediately.

The majority of rising leaders indicated that they have encountered gender-related barriers in their career. This remains a similar trend between established leaders and rising leaders. There is a need for personal and external factors to address and eliminate such barriers. If these are not addressed this issue will persist.

Recommendations for Future Leaders

Thirdly, I discussed recommendations for future leaders. Established leaders shared tools and ways to navigate gender adversity and/or inequality. Key themes identified in the data showed that strategies and skills are recommended for rising leaders seeking to grow further in their career. Networking and mentorship opportunities were identified as valuable because they establish connections that can contribute to professional growth and build support.

Although there are different types of leadership styles, a network and mentor can help rising leaders identify their own authentic leadership style which can help drive their passions and establish credibility. Additionally, developing skills can provide rising leaders with knowledge and aid in building confidence.

Rising leaders identified the importance of improving leadership skills through the use of training, education, and independent learning. They suggested that rising leaders should reprioritize their focus on building their networking and mentoring skills.

One way established leaders said they could support rising leaders was through mentorship. Most of the rising leaders shared that they do feel supported by other women in emergency management, and that establishing and sustaining these relationships can be beneficial. In particular, established female leaders should make an effort to mentor women in emergency management because it helps expand the presence of more women in the field and into executive roles. This ties into Sarah Bradshaw's point about the importance of increasing the visual presence of women.¹⁷³ Women can facilitate that visibility of females both in the office and on social media.

While conducting this study, I found that the literature about the contributions of women in emergency management is limited. Data collected during my study is presented here in an effort to help diminish this gap. Additionally, my data provides information about how established leaders obtained executive roles. Their insights were valuable for giving rising female leaders insights about how they can continue to develop in the emergency management field.

Future research could highlight and expand on the work established leaders do in emergency management especially during emergencies. Such research would also help to increase the number of women in emergency management programs at universities.

¹⁷³ Bradshaw, *Gender, Development and Disasters*, 83-84.

Chapter VIII

Conclusion

This thesis addressed the opportunities that propel women forward in their career, the importance of women filling leadership positions, examples of barriers overcome by established leaders, and leadership tools to help women rise to and be effective in leadership positions in emergency management. It is my goal that this research will add to the (limited) information on the subject of women in the emergency management industry, as well as provide insights about how women should fill executive positions in the field, and shared insights from rising female leaders as to how they achieved success.

The emergency management industry can be a fast-paced and demanding field. Based on my findings of barriers encountered by women in the field, further research is needed to explore additional emergency management organizational policies, to address structural barriers that continue to generate and perpetuate inequity for women. As the emergency management field changes, there are many opportunities for individual agencies and organizations to prioritize this effort.

The female experience in emergency management is unique. In the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, the Assistant Director of Civilian Defense from 1941 to 1942 and a leader in humanitarian efforts: “You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every

experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. . . . You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”¹⁷⁴

This study shows that perseverance, individual work to identify strategies and develop skills, and learning from established leaders enables more women to become rising leaders who are able to fill executive roles in emergency management. The worth of women in this industry is incredibly valuable, and it is imperative that rising leaders pave the way for the next generation of women in emergency management.

¹⁷⁴ Eleanor Roosevelt, *You Learn By Living* (New York: Harper, 1960), 29-30.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Can you briefly tell me about your career path?
 - a. What attracted you to a career in emergency management?
 - b. What were the circumstances that propelled you into a leadership position?
2. Leadership tools (styles and strategies):
 - a. What are the tools that contributed to your success in leading responses to emergencies?
 - b. What leadership tools do you think are the most helpful for women in emergency management?
3. Were there any barriers related to your gender that you encountered in your career?
 - a. How did you overcome them?
 - b. Were there ways in which you could not?
4. What are some of your personal expectations as an established leader related to leadership? What do you think is important?
5. What are ways that established female leaders can support other women in emergency management?

6. Women/Future Leaders:
 - a. What are ways women/future leaders within the emergency management industry can navigate gender adversity and/or inequality?
 - b. Are there tips you would want to share with women/future leaders in emergency management?
7. Is there anything you would like to share with me that we have not discussed today?

Appendix B
Survey Questions

1. What is your gender?*
- a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other (Please specify)
2. How many years have you been a part of emergency management?
- a. 1-2 years
 - b. 3-5 years
 - c. 6-10 years
 - d. More than 10 years
3. What leadership tools (styles/strategies) do you think are the most helpful for women in emergency management?
- a. [Open-ended Comment]
4. What are some expectations of women in emergency management who are new in their career?
- a. [Open-ended Comment]
5. What are ways you are working to improve your leadership skills? (Select all the options that apply).
- a. Education
 - b. Trainings
 - c. Mentorship
 - d. Attend conferences

- e. Network
 - f. Independent learning
 - g. Observe colleagues
 - h. Other (Please specify) [Open-ended Comment]
6. Are there resources that inspire women to join the field of emergency management or empower them to take on leadership positions?
- a. [Open-ended Comment]
7. Is there a need for more professional development resources to support future female leaders in emergency management?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 7A. If yes, can you provide examples?
- a. [Insert Open-ended Comment]
8. Do you feel supported by other women in emergency management?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
9. Have you encountered barriers related to your gender in your career so far?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. If yes, what were they?
- 9A. If you selected yes, to the question above, have these barriers impacted your confidence and interest to remain in the emergency management industry?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

10. What ways can established female leaders in emergency management support you as a future leader?

- a. [Open-ended Comment]

11. Do you have any final thoughts or comments that you would like to share that has not been addressed in this survey?

- a. [Open-ended Comment]

Appendix C

Interviews Conducted

Aird, Nancy, (Data Research Specialist, Homeland Security – EM Center of Excellence), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2022. Accompanied by another interviewee.

Alexander, Sara, (Director of Crisis Management, Ally), in discussion with the author, October 21, 2022

Bartis, Melanie, (Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator, Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management), in discussion with the author, October 7, 2022.

Black, Donna, (President, International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)/Fire Chief, Town of Duck), in discussion with the author, November 22, 2022.

Bray, Jackie, (Commissioner, New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services), in discussion with the author, November 21, 2022.

Carli, Lorraine, (Vice President of Outreach and Advocacy, National Fire Protection Association), in discussion with the author, December 8, 2022.

Carroll, Mary Ellen, (Executive Director, San Francisco Department of Emergency Management), in discussion with the author, November 23, 2022.

Crerar, Linda, (Director, Homeland Security – Emergency Management Center of Excellence), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2022.

Criswell, Deanne, (Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), December 2022. Ms. Criswell was interviewed in her personal capacity, and her comments do not necessarily represent those of her agency or the United States.

Edwards, Frances, (Professor and Director of the Master of Public Administration Program, San José State University; previously served as Director of Emergency Preparedness for the City of San José), in discussion with the author, October 7, 2022.

Farrell, Christina, (First Deputy Commissioner, New York City Emergency Management Department), in discussion with the author, October 28, 2022.

Hughey, Erin, (Director of Global Operations, Pacific Disaster Center – PDC Global), in discussion with the author, November 18, 2022.

Mayer, Curry, (Director, Seattle Office of Emergency Management), in discussion with the author, November 1, 2022.

Moore-Merrell, Doctor Lori, (United States Fire Administrator, United States Fire Administration), in discussion with the author, November 15, 2022.

Nalls, Sharon, (Assistant Director/Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator, City of Houston Office of Emergency Management (Retired)), in discussion with the author, November 8, 2022.

Parks, Carol, (General Manager, City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department) in discussion with the author, October 11, 2022.

Perkins, Cathie, (Director, Pinellas County Emergency Management), in discussion with the author, October 18, 2022.

Phillips, Samantha, (Director, IEM), in discussion with the author, November 28, 2022.

Speranza, Carrie, (Director of Emergency Management Industry Solutions, ESRI/Second Vice President-Elect, International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM)) in discussion with the author, November 9, 2022.

Tierney, MaryAnn, (Regional Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency Region III) in discussion with the author, November 22, 2022.

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