

## BOOK REVIEWS

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Gerald E. Klonglan, Charles L. Mulford and Caroline S. Faisal; *Problem Solution and Effectiveness: A Systems Analysis of Local Coordinators*; Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, Sociology Report No. 111, 1973. 61 pages.

Charles L. Mulford, Gerald E. Klonglan and Joseph P. Kopachevsky; *Securing Community Resources for Social Action*; Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, Sociology Report No. 112, 1973. 45 pages.

Charles T. Griffin, Charles L. Mulford and Gerald E. Klonglan; *An Analysis of Operating System Effectiveness: Focus on the Behavior of Local Coordinators*; Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, Sociology Report No. 102, 1972. 38 pages.

When natural or man-made disasters occur, those living in the affected community turn to formal organizations for leadership in coordinating recovery activity. To have a rapid and efficient emergency response formal organizations must develop and demonstrate a high degree of organizational effectiveness. It is to this issue that these three monographs are addressed.

A series of sociological studies of civil defense have been conducted by the above authors at Iowa State University. While the series has dealt with a range of topics, the monographs under review focus on problems of organizational effectiveness. *Problem Solution and Effectiveness* and *Securing Community Resources for Social Action* are part of a three part series dealing with organizational effectiveness.\* The third monograph under considera-

tion looks at role behavior of civil preparedness coordinators and how it affects organizational effectiveness.

Success in any organized activity is dependent upon effective problem solving. Klonglan, et al., conceptualize civil defense agencies as open social systems which must solve four survival problems: problem with resources – adaptation; problems with local government – integration; problems with the public – goal attainment; and problems in general – latent pattern maintenance. The authors isolate and identify variables which affect the coordinator's ability to solve problems. A mailed questionnaire to 478 local coordinators comprise the sample and data source. Although impossible to give a detailed summary of all findings in this short review, one is of particular interest. The key factor affecting problem solving is "horizontal consensus", referring to an agreement between local government officials and civil defense agencies regarding emergency preparedness activities and goals. Based on these findings and others, practical suggestions are given to improve problem-solving activities.

Utilizing the same data source, Mulford et al. approach organizational effectiveness from the point of securing needed community resources. Four independent variables: organizational resources, individual coordinator characteristics, characteristics of jurisdictions, and environmental status were developed to help explain six different procurement strategies. The six strategies are divided into three primary and three auxiliary strategies. This review will focus on the three auxiliary strategies which are: *cooptation*, i.e., absorbing others into your own organization; *constituency*, i.e., creation of a dependency relationship; and *elite representation*, i.e., the placement of

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\**Profiles on Coordinators Effectiveness*, not discussed here, treats organizational effectiveness in terms of goal achievement.

organizational members on the boards of other organizations. Several findings which this reviewer found of interest are: (1) organizations that possess adequate resources seek to make other organizations dependent upon them (constituency strategy); (2) if an organization has low community status a cooptation strategy is more likely employed; and (3) if a coordinator lacks local support an elite representation strategy is often used.

A somewhat more ambitious project of constructing a causal model to predict the post-disaster role performance of local coordinators is developed by Griffin et al. Their sample consists of 59 coordinators in four states. They found that increased rank given to local coordinators in emergencies had the greatest causal effect on their disaster role performance. Another finding showed a causal link between certainty and role performance. Role performance tends to be high when coordinators are certain of role expectations.

Social scientists, particularly those interested in complex organizations, will find these monographs relevant. However, each has methodological flaws. Klonglan et al. employ a representative sample from four states and utilize parametric statistical measures of correlation and regression. However, it is not clear that all of their variables are of high enough level to warrant such analysis. Mulford et al., using the same sample which now becomes a national random sample of 478,

employ non-parametric statistical measures — chi square and contingency coefficients. With an N of 478 it would be hard *not* to find everything significant using chi square. Just because something is statistically significant does not make it theoretically significant!

While their attempt at developing a causal model is commendable, Griffin et al. again encounter the same statistical pitfall. Here we have a purposive sample of 59 coordinators from four states and the use of path analysis — correlation and regression analysis typically requires a larger sample. Given the information available, there is little evidence that many of the statistical assumptions are met. Many analytical benefits can be achieved with quantitative techniques; however, the present studies have not solved the accompanying problems. However Griffin et al. do a fine job of developing generalizations and reviewing formal organizational literature and relevant disaster research. Unfortunately, the other two studies totally ignore previous disaster research.

In summary, those involved in disaster related organizations and those concerned with the more theoretical dynamics of organizational response should find these reports of interest. These reports represent the beginnings of a more quantitative approach to understanding organized behavior in a crisis context.

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