

2015

## Exploring crisis management challenges in destination management organizations

Michelle Renee Scarpino Johns  
*University of Wollongong*

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Scarpino Johns, Michelle Renee, Exploring crisis management challenges in destination management organizations, Doctor of Philosophy thesis, School of Management, Operations and Marketing, University of Wollongong, 2015. <https://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/4431>

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**Faculty of Business**

**School of Management, Operations, and Marketing**

**Exploring Crisis Management Challenges in  
Destination Management Organizations**

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**Bachelor of Arts, Speech Communications**

**Master of Science, Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences**

**Master of Science, Economic Integration**

**This thesis is presented as part of the requirements for the  
Award of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
of the  
University of Wollongong**

**March 2015**

## ABSTRACT

Characterized as integrated and open systems, tourism economies are highly susceptible to external factors due to the number and diversity of stakeholders involved. The alarming rise of global crises, coupled with the capacity of each crisis to severely impact a range of tourism organizations and a variety of other stakeholders (Ritchie, 2009), has led tourism scholars and professionals to take a more rigorous approach toward addressing this issue through *tourism crisis management* (TCM). TCM is essentially crisis management for the tourism industry.

Literature in TCM has steadily increased in both scope and frequency since 2001 (Mair, Ritchie & Walters, 2014). Earlier studies in TCM have been, to a great extent, theoretically derived rather than based on empirical findings. More recent studies in TCM are closing the practical knowledge gap; however, a vast number of these studies have focused on natural/physical disasters with less than a quarter examining, for example, political or malevolence crises (Mair *et al.*, 2014). Further, the majority of TCM frameworks proposed to date emphasize the macro-level (destination, region or nation), are still quite broad, and are not tailored to specific organizations such as destination management organizations (DMOs). DMOs play a unique gatekeeper role in tourism communities and have, in light of recent crises, begun devoting attention and resources to efforts that will help safeguard and aid the survival of their destinations as a whole (Blackman, Kennedy & Ritchie 2011). In this respect, the degree to which current theoretical TCM models are aligned with organizational strategies such as striving for *organizational resilience* may be of interest for tourism scholars and practitioners endeavoring to enhance DMOs' planning and adaptive capacities. Organizational resilience (OR) is understood as the ability of organizations to adjust and maintain basic and desirable functions under challenging or straining conditions generated by disruptive, disaster or crises events (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld 1999; Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; Edmondson, 1999). This study posits OR strategies, particularly, *organizational resilience management* (ORM) can be of considerable use in extending the depth and breadth of TCM in the context of DMOs.

Bearing this in mind, this thesis explores the conceptual and practical application of TCM and ORM among resilient local level DMOs having survived one or more crises. To begin, literature in TCM and OR is reviewed and used to develop a novel OR-based TCM framework. Based on this framework, several search questions and sub-questions surrounding the stakeholders and practices central to DMOs' crisis management strategy; DMOs' roles in crises, and the factors influencing adoption of those roles. Empirical testing of the TCM-ORM framework was conducted by exploring the dynamics of TCM as implemented by DMOs in response to actual crises. Historical events and past experiences have been noted for their ability to contribute to the creation of new

knowledge and inform future practices (Wang & Ritchie, 2012), thus DMOs' past crisis experiences were selected as a suitable context in which to conduct this research.

The research questions presented are investigated through an exploratory study utilizing a qualitative case study approach. Empirical insights are derived from examining 14 in-depth semi-structured interviews across nine U.S. DMOs and four crisis management plans from among those DMOs. The research is grounded in established qualitative research principles (Yin, 2009) and sought to derive theoretical insights from the rich descriptions of DMOs' lived crisis experiences.

The findings of this study revealed 11 key stakeholder groups DMOs address or are accountable to in their crisis management directives, as well as seven practices DMOs use in order to make sense of and guide their TCM strategy. This research also revealed six distinct roles DMOs assume during crises, two of which (knowledge boundary spanner and knowledge broker) were previously identified as important in the extant crisis management literature. Several factors emerged as having the capacity to influence DMOs' role adoption and thus approach to TCM. Further, based on the findings of this study, DMOs' resilient response in crisis events is exhibited through adaptive capacity and planning behaviors incorporated in their TCM approach. Cases presenting multiple crisis experiences implemented additional adaptive capacity and planning behaviors in their TCM approach following the first crisis, remaining resilient in the wake of the second.

Several important contributions are made as a result of this research. Theoretical contributions include conceptualization of DMOs' key stakeholder relations as 'family' relationships in which DMOs exist and perform in multiple family member roles (e.g. parent, sibling and child) simultaneously. Factors influencing family relationships were also identified and elaborated and included, for example, parenting styles, DMOs' ability to foster strong stakeholder relationships, and foundational practices employed in TCM. This research also presented four new roles DMOs undertake in TCM at the destination level as well as an elaboration of the factors influencing adoption of those roles. Perhaps the most significant contribution of this thesis, is creation of an empirically-grounded TCM-ORM framework tailored to DMOs. From a practical perspective, the TCM framework offers recommendations for destination managers and other tourism professionals in preparation for future crises. Recommendations for future research are provided, e.g. exploring the influence of key employees' crisis leadership styles on DMOs' crisis management; examining codification vs. personalization strategies for knowledge creation among DMOs with knowledge-based roles in TCM, as well as, analyzing the barriers or facilitators of stakeholder collaboration and stakeholder engagement in TCM across and between crisis types.

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my daughter, Alivia. You are my greatest gift, my greatest accomplishment and my greatest joy in this life. I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Mae Porter, without whose strength and unwavering support I would have never made it through this journey.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Ulrike Gretzel for her *infinite* patience and guidance throughout this process. I am truly honored to have been able to work alongside her as her student, colleague, and now friend. I will be forever grateful for the adventure you offered me to pursue this PhD in Australia, and for teaching me the true meaning of ‘baptism by fire’. I would also like to acknowledge my secondary advisor, Dr. Brent Ritchie for his willingness to take on the challenge of overseas advising, for his guidance, encouragement and insightful discussion.

I would like to acknowledge the University of Wollongong and the Faculty of Business for providing me a scholarship and the extraordinary opportunity to pursue a level of educational accomplishment that I have dreamt about since childhood. The knowledge and Australian friends and experiences I have gained will be treasured for a lifetime. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the destination management organizations and individual interviewees who freely gave of their busy time to provide insights for this research, and without whose cooperative spirit this research would not have come to fruition. It was a pleasure speaking with each one of you.

David Johns, I am so deeply blessed by your ever-present love and support of me as a mother, partner and friend. I am truly humbled by your strength and inspired by the spiritual growth we have found together through the completion of this thesis. Our journey has only just begun.

Jonathan and Jennifer Daugbjerg, Katrina and Tony Lyth, Emily Rios, LaDonna Calhoun, Susan O’Connell and Robert White, your unfailing love and emotional and practical support are beyond what words can describe. Thank you will never be enough. All of these people have carried me when I was weak, encouraged me when I was low, and rejoiced with me when I persevered. My gratefulness is and will always be immeasurable.

I would also like to acknowledge several very important women who helped keep me sane, made me smile and let me know every day I was stronger than I thought. Thank you Maghan, Heather, Rachael and Bonnie. Last but certainly not least, I would like to acknowledge that I am but a servant, and that I am grateful that all things are possible through the Lord, my God and his son Jesus Christ.

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## **LIST OF SPECIAL NAMES OR ABBREVIATIONS**

COC	Chamber of Commerce
CVB	Convention and Visitors Bureau
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DMO	Destination Management Organization
DRC	Disaster Research Center
EDA	U.S. Economic Development Administration
FEMA	U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IS	Information Services
IT	Information Technology
NTO	National Tourism Organization
OR	Organizational Resilience
ORM	Organizational Resilience Management
TCM	Tourism Crisis Management
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
U.S.	United States
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background to the Research

In the wake of the last decade the tourism industry has had to realize just how severely financial crises, crashing housing markets, political unrest and natural disasters can affect everything from market conditions to local power supply. Media today consistently highlights these events, painting the world we are living in as ever more crisis prone. Unfortunately, there appears to be some basis for this perception since the number of crises has, in fact, increased in recent years (OFDA, 2013). For example, among natural and physical disasters, identified as a type of crisis within this research, the seventh, eighth and third largest earthquakes ever have all occurred inside the last 10 years, 2011, 2010 and 2004 respectively. Add to this hurricanes, tsunamis, and floods, and there is even more evidence crises of this nature are on the rise. Figure 1 shows the estimated damage in U.S. dollars caused by reported natural disasters from 1975 to 2012. Noy (2009) suggested the observed increasing prevalence of disasters may also be driven by advances in detection technology and media reporting. Either way, we are living in a world where people read and hear about disasters frequently and are perpetually on edge, an emotional state that can significantly influence people's negative perceptions of safety at home and when they travel.

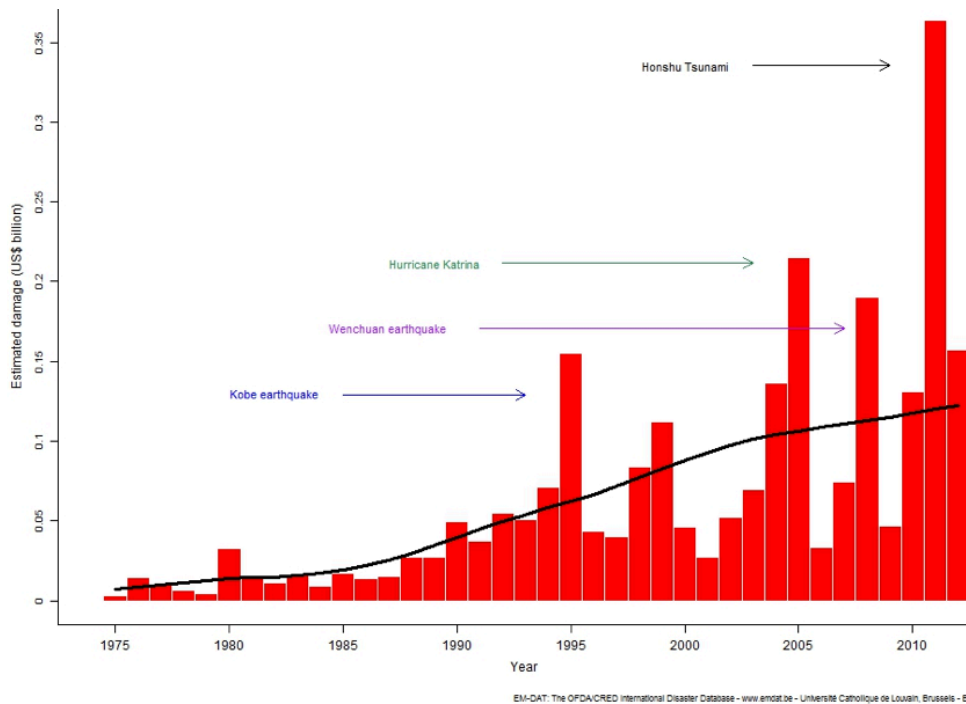


Figure 1. Estimated Damage (U.S. \$billion) Caused by Reported Natural Disasters 1975-2012

Source: OFDA/CRED – International Disaster Database (2013).

Further, the vulnerability of tourist destinations, and subsequently tourists to natural disasters is suggested to be higher due to the fact that a number of destinations are high-risk exotic locations where events such as hurricanes, avalanches and volcanic activity are common, e.g. Thailand, Hawaii, and the Himalayas (Drabek, 1995; Murphy & Bayley, 1989). In addition to the concern and impact surrounding natural and physical disasters, tourism destinations are susceptible to multiple other forms of crises including, for example, hijacking and terrorism. Lehrman (1986) suggests this is predominately due to the fact tourists can be considered “soft targets”, especially during times when increased security measures make traditional targets (politicians, embassies, etc.) more difficult to access. Cities or tourist attractions known to have a high concentration of tourists such as New City or Disneyworld (Anaheim, Orlando, Paris or Hong Kong) maybe seen as ideal locations to unleash terrorism plans. In addition, tourists’ vulnerability to crises can be significantly heightened given they are not embedded in the communities they visit, in turn leading to little or no access to relevant information and, versus residents, less knowledge of their surroundings (Burby & Wagner, 1996; Drabek, 1992, 1994; Pizam, Tarlow & Bloom 1997; Tarlow, 2014). The impact of varying types of crises has had vast and far-reaching effects on countless tourism communities, especially when taking into consideration the nexus-effect of tourism systems, where stakeholders are so interdependent that a crisis for one actor creates a spillover effect for numerous others (Beirman, 2002; Ritchie, Crofts, Zehrer & Volsky, 2013; Frankel & Schmukler, 1996; Neumayer, 2004).

#### **1.1.1. Defining Tourism Destinations and their Management**

In the past century, the concept of tourism has evolved tremendously. Tourism has played a vital role in the global economy, accounting for more than 10% of the global GDP and up to 11% of the GDP in OECD countries (OECD, 2010). A complex phenomenon, tourism is characterized by deep social, economic and cultural transformations linked to major processes of change such as globalization, technological development and changes in organizational structure. Acting as a multiplier, tourism generates growth in economic sectors by contributing added value and strengthening the ability to motivate development in other economic activities by extension (Cabugueira, 2005).

Tourism scholars have posed varying but relatively similar conceptualizations of a tourism destination. Leiper’s (1979) model of a destination describes a place the consumer travels to temporarily, creating a tourism flow (demand) in both time and space. This conceptualization paved the way for development of the destination demand and supply perspectives and the introduction of a specific entity to promote the destination through connecting the supply and demand aspects of tourism while maximizing the use of destination resources (Pike, 2008). Hu and

Ritchie (1993:26) suggest tourism destinations be seen as “a package of tourism facilities and services which, like any other consumer product, is composed of a number of multi-dimensional attributes”. Buhalis (2000) contends destinations are *amalgams of tourism products*, offering an integrated experience to consumers. Similarly, other scholars define destinations from a tourist perspective as products that can be further conceptualized as market specific spatial entities (Hall, 2000; Kaspar, 1995; Leiper, 1995; Pechlaner, 1998). This concept bodes well with a number of tourism scholars who see destinations as a set of products, services, and natural and artificial attractions that draw tourists to a specific place (Leiper, 1995; Pechlaner, 2000). Each definition prescribes to a degree that tourism destinations are dynamic multi-component, multi-functional systems. As a complex system, a large collection of activities and factors must be managed simultaneously for tourism to be successful and sustainable. This has much to do with the fact that tourism destinations comprise and serve multiple stakeholders- addressing the broad range of wants and needs of tourists and tourism-related businesses, government agencies, as well as the resident community and other local non-tourism businesses and industries (Howie, 2003). Due to the number of players and components required for the system to run, much less run smoothly, a disturbance to any part of the system makes disruption to the system as a whole inevitable.

Destination governance, while often projected as synonymous with destination management (Bieger, 1996; Flagestad & Hope, 2001; Pechlaner, 1998) or destination planning (Heath & Wall, 1992; Inskeep, 1991; Tschiederer, 1980), tends to focus more on the means to achieve the identified ends or ‘how’, where as destination planning and management are primarily concerned with the objectives, or the ‘what’. Governance of destinations often includes overlaps, intersections, and points of contact with regional governance, corporate governance, and political governance (Beritelli, Bieger, Laesser, 2007; Pechlaner, Raich, & Kofink, 2011; Pechlaner et al., 2012 ; Raich, 2006 ; Ruhanen, Scott, Ritchie, & Tkaczynski, 2010). In this context, the destination is viewed as a spatial competitive unit where coordination between players (e.g. tourism stakeholders and authorities) is achieved through adaptation, negotiation, majority decision, and hierarchical decision.

Franch and Martini (2002:5) posit destination management as the “strategic, organizational and operative decisions taken to manage the process of definition, promotion and commercialization of the tourism product [originating from within the destination], to generate manageable flows of incoming tourists that are balanced, sustainable and sufficient to meet the economic needs of the local stakeholders involved in the destination”. From this perspective, destination management is an imperative part of each destination’s livelihood. Destination management can be seen from both an institutional approach, which considers managing authorities with their decision-making authority and their capacity to give instructions (Tschurtschenthaler, 1999), and a functional



approach focusing more on organizing, planning, and controlling destinations. Because distinct destination types have emerged, for example, community— numerous autonomous tourism businesses operating in a decentralized fashion vs. corporate— destinations dominated by one or few powerful, usually corporate actors (Flagestad & Hope, 2001), management and coordination of the various elements and actors at each destination has become critical, particularly with respect to the community approach. Historically, destination management has been the responsibility of distinct organizations called destination management organizations.

### **1.1.2. The Fundamentals of DMOs**

Destination management organizations (DMOs) in the U.S. are typically not-for-profit organizations that represent a specific destination by aiding its long-term economic development through implementation of a travel and tourism strategy (DMAI, 2014; Smith, 2005). The U.S. is also known to have Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), at times viewed as interchangeable for DMOs, however, CVBs are not-for-profit organizations primarily funded at least in part by their local governments, usually through a portion of hotel occupancy taxes. This is very different from another well-known destination entity but not as common, the destination management company (DMC). DMCs offer professional services in for example, the design and implementation of special events, activities, tours, transportation and program logistics, for each customer at a price (DMAI, 2014). DMOs, however, lead marketing efforts, facilitate coordination among stakeholders, and at times engage in political lobbying to strengthen the destinations' tourism economy (Smith, 2005).

Historically, also known as destination *marketing* organizations tasked with developing an image that would position their destination in the marketplace as a viable or prime option for visitors and meetings (Gartrell, 1988, 1993), a rising number of DMOs have been forced to push through their previously 'marketing-minded' boundaries to become destination *management* organizations with an increased scope of responsibilities that better supports competition on a global level. Although the term management implies control, tourism scholars often argue very few DMOs have either the mandate or resources to effectively manage their destination (Leiper, 2008). DMOs can be somewhat limited in what they can undertake and achieve in terms of management when several important practical and logistical issues are routinely managed by local authorities (e.g. car parking, street cleaning, waste removal, crowd control and environmental issues) (Page & Hall, 2003). Frequently, however, DMOs' management activities depend upon the legislative or political frameworks established to guide each DMO. Fyall (2011:345) argues, "Unless all elements are owned by the same body, then the ability to control and influence the direction, quality and development of the destination poses very real challenges".

Irrespective of these frameworks, however, DMOs are known to act as catalysts and facilitators for the realization of tourism developments, branded by some as "destination developers" (Presenza, Sheehan, & Ritchie, 2005). These notions suggest a major shift or expansion in both definition, roles and responsibilities of the DMO. DMOs' purview must now go far beyond marketing to include other activities essential to the success of tourism in a destination from a sustainable and competitive perspective (Presenza *et al.*, 2005). According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003:63), DMOs are increasingly responsible for visitor management, inflow and outflow of information, human resources development, resource stewardship, access to finance and venture-capital and crisis management, hence the 'M' in DMO should be more about management than marketing. Based on Destination Marketing Association International's conceptualization of a destination, DMOs' destination management (and marketing) should be a proactive, visitor-oriented approach focused on economic and cultural development of a destination and that strives to balance and integrate the interests of visitors, service providers and the community (DMAI, 2008). Prideaux and Cooper (2003) suggest the pace at which destinations develop will be influenced by DMOs' ability to work closely and productively with both private and public sector stakeholders. It is pertinent to acknowledge each DMO's destination management approach will be contingent on a number of internal and external factors, including for example, organizational size and structure as well as the characteristics of sociocultural, political and economic systems in which they are embedded.

With regard to organizational structure, DMOs often exist as branches or responsibilities of industry associations or government agencies, for example, Chambers of Commerce (COCs) or Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs). DMOs can range from being a government department or a division of a government department, to a quasi-governmental organization (e.g. government corporation or agency), a joint public/private agency to a not-for-profit membership-based organization (e.g. COC) or in some cases a private non-profit or for-profit organization. The type of organization a DMO is has significant bearing on numerous aspects relating to the DMO's ability to perform effectively and successfully. Most often, the largest aspect influenced by organization type is its funding or the ability to get more funding in times of need, particularly during or following a crisis. For example, government-run DMOs seeking a general budget increase for crisis planning or emergency funding in the aftermath of a crisis could face a great deal of bureaucratic red tape leading to a lengthy or futile endeavor, especially when other governmental agencies or departments are vying for the same funds. Conversely, privately funded DMOs or joint public/private DMOs are likely less restricted in terms of budget and other funding options, such as private loans.

The choice to create ‘free-standing’ DMOs can be based on state-level directives, destination characteristics (e.g. destination size, structure of local government or number of tourism businesses involved) or at times a combination of both. DMO type commonly varies, yet their intrinsic and unique role as a facilitator and intermediary among tourism stakeholders and between tourism stakeholders and other industries, government agencies and specialized organizations remains relatively similar (Aalbers, Dolfsma & Koppius, 2004; Blackman & Ritchie, 2009; Cross, Parker, Prusak & Borgatti, 2001; Hystad & Keller, 2006; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Ritchie, 2009;). The World Tourism Organization (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2007:2) had this to say of destination management and DMOs:

*“Destination management calls for a coalition of many organizations and interests working towards a common goal. The Destination Management Organization’s role should be to lead and coordinate activities under a coherent strategy. They do not control the activities of their partners but bring together resources and expertise and a degree of independence and objectivity to lead the way forward. It follows that DMOs must develop a high level of skill in developing and managing partnerships. Though DMOs have typically undertaken marketing activities, their remit is becoming far broader, to become a strategic leader in destination development.”*

This statement implies effective destination management is the key to addressing a plethora of issues that arise in contemporary tourism, including disruptive events such as crises. Not surprisingly, at the turn of this millennium scholars argued there was a lack of research on crisis phenomena in the tourism industry (Faulkner, 2001). Specifically, the impacts and responses to such events at both industry and organizational levels had yet to be explored. The increasing occurrence of crises and their exhibited as well as potential impact on tourism on multiple levels (local, regional, national and global) has led crisis management to the forefront of current tourism research.

### **1.1.3. U.S. Tourism and DMOs**

The United States has in the better part of the last decade suffered catastrophic losses of life, property and capital due to a wide range of crises. The more prominent of these crises include, for example, physical or natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, earthquakes and oil spills, as well as economic and political crises such as a major recession, acts of foreign and domestic terrorism, and laws or policies that directly or indirectly affect DMOs and their tourism economy. Governing structures and stakeholder groups at the local level are for the most homogenous across the U.S. Thus, DMOs at this level often maintain similar roles in the management and development of their destinations. At the same time, significant topographical changes across the U.S. means DMOs’ approach to destination development and, for example,

stakeholder management, must still tailored to the unique attractions and activities that suit each destinations' culture and offerings.

Given travel and tourism's consistent and significant role in the U.S. economy, with a direct contribution of US\$450.2bn (2.7% of total GDP) and approximately 5,434,500 U.S. jobs (3.8% of total employment) in 2013– forecasted to rise to US\$671.5bn (3.0% of total GDP) by 2024 (WTTC, 2014), the need to explore crisis events harnessing the capacity to destroy, hinder, alter or in some cases boost tourism economies proves a useful exercise towards ensuring the longevity and future growth of the U.S. tourism economy. Consistently ranking as one of the top tourism destinations in the world, U.S. DMOs are familiar with identifying and implementing organizational and competitive strategies for successful destination development (Evans, Fox & Johnson, 1995). However, to what degree these strategies address and prepare for the potential considerable affects of U.S. and global crises on their local tourism economies is not well understood. Thus, gaining new knowledge on the manner in which resilient U.S. DMOs are cleverly and successfully able to negotiate different types of crises will be of significant benefit towards understanding and enhancing DMOs' general adaptive capacities both in the U.S. and across the globe.

## **1.2. Research Problem, Research Questions and Major Areas of Exploration**

Presently, research and published material focusing on both conceptual and praxis issues in crisis management in tourism are still quite limited. The UNWTO's recent proposal (UNWTO, 2010) to restructure emergency management in tourism through a more integrative approach, exemplifies the significant advancement of crisis management efforts in the tourism industry. The UNWTO's efforts withstanding, much of the literature in this area continues to highlight the destination level with little attention to individual tourism organizations and crisis stakeholders involved. If recent crises have taught us anything, it is that lack of information, communication and responsibility in this environment has the power to significantly affect businesses and organizations at all levels and in different ways (Marra, 1998; Ulmer, 2001; Williams & Treadaway, 1992). This thesis adopts a view of crisis management defined as the ongoing systematic effort organizations carry out in an attempt to identify and prevent potential risks and problems, to control those problems that do occur with the goal of minimizing damages and maximizing opportunities, and to take into account learning, planning and training activities for both the organizations and as well as their stakeholders (Santana, 2004; Wang & Ritchie, 2010). Effective crisis management requires efficient organizational management practices coupled with successfully managing key stakeholders. Within the context of tourism, stakeholder management is generally known to fall under the purview of destination management organizations.

Events and trends affecting the tourism industry are becoming more complex and fast-paced. As a result, many DMO managers and executives are finding it increasingly difficult to manage change and to determine the impact certain events are likely to have on the destination, their stakeholders and on the DMO itself (Pechlaner & Fuchs, 2002). As previously discussed, this is often due to the role DMOs play in coordinating varying interests and objectives among their stakeholders, which ultimately must converge to support the marketed image, sustainability (King, McVey, & Simmons, 2000) and development of the destination. Coordination among stakeholders can become even more complex in crisis situations due to the diverse range of stakeholders (existing and emergent) involved and the already largely fragmented nature of the tourism industry.

While considerable progress from both theoretical and practical points of view have been made in what is now known as tourism crisis management (TCM) research, very few studies in this domain are focused at the organizational level, and even fewer have examined the role key tourism organizations such as DMOs play in negotiating crisis events (Blackman & Ritchie, 2011; Ritchie, 2009; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; Sönmez, Apostolopoulos, & Tarlow, 1999). Until recently, the majority of TCM research focused predominately on DMOs' important role in crisis communication and recovery marketing activities, e.g. addressing negative media (Henderson, 2002, 2007) and diversification of destination products and markets (Ladkin, Fyall, Fletcher & Shipway, 2008). Shifting from that platform, a rising number of studies have begun to argue DMOs' role in crises should be seen as having less to do with recovery *marketing* and more to do with recovery *management* particularly under the umbrella of knowledge management (Blackman, Kennedy & Ritchie, 2011). Given that a broad range of tourism and crisis stakeholders must work together to integrate varying fields of knowledge in order to develop and implement effective TCM strategies and actions, knowledge brokers or knowledge boundary spanners, who operate as intermediaries between these entities, play a significant role in facilitating the movement of ideas and knowledge by bringing people and diverse communities of practice together and enabling them to create and share new ideas (Blackman & Ritchie, 2011; Ritchie, 2009). Despite DMOs' more recent labelling as knowledge brokers, studies that investigate the factors that influence DMOs' capacity to perform in such a role remain sparse at best.

DMOs are exposed to powerful external drivers from both their macro- and micro-environments. In turn they must create, change or adapt strategies to remain competitive, seize new opportunities, and mitigate negative impacts, such as crises (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman, & Scott, 2009; Gretzel, Fesenmaier, Formica, & O'Leary, 2006; Pike, 2008). DMOs' distinct role in the tourism industry implies their responses and actions to such environments affect far more than their own immediate organizational interests and survival, and should thus strongly consider and reflect the interests of the stakeholder groups they serve and support. Interestingly, our understanding of the

elements that influence DMOs' capacity to successfully negotiate the strategies undertaken to address these issues, particularly disruptive events such as crises, from an organizational- or community-focused stance, is extremely limited. This research views tourism crisis management as an organizational strategy employed by tourism organizations to negotiate crisis events. Given the majority of the literature in crisis management in tourism is focused on the macro-level (e.g. industry sectors) and not the micro-level (e.g. organizational), predominantly overlooking central figures in the tourism system such as DMOs, research is needed to uncover the dynamics of DMOs' crisis planning, response and recovery as well as the context in which those activities take place. Thus the first central research question posed is:

How and why do destination management organizations engage in tourism crisis management? (RQ 1).

Based on the discussion and issues surrounding DMOs' crisis experiences and the applicability of current tourism crisis management strategies to those experiences (as presented in Chapter II), this research also established three research sub-questions in relation to the first central research question. These three questions are:

RQ 1a: How do DMOs' roles in crisis events influence their crisis management approach?

RQ 1b: What key factors influence DMOs' role selection in crisis management?

RQ 1c: What stakeholders and practices are central to DMOs' crisis management approach?

Additionally, the manner in which DMOs could align broader organizational management strategies, such as organizational resilience management to help address the issues emanating from these macro- and micro-environments is of particular interest and is currently under-researched. Research in *organizational resilience*, the ability of organizations to adjust and maintain basic and desirable functions under challenging or straining conditions generated by disruptive, disaster or crises events (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; Edmondson, 1999; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld 1999), has been acknowledged as a critical foundation towards addressing a variety of crises. Organizational resilience management (ORM) is a form of strategic management with a focus on organizations' situational awareness, keystone vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity in a complex, dynamic and interconnected environment (McManus, 2007). It is an increasingly adopted approach used by organizations to address unforeseen disruptions by becoming and remaining organizationally resilient. This could imply, for example, DMOs acquiring a better understanding of how crises affect resource management, including which resources are still needed, new ones to be acquired, and how staff can be reallocated or take on multiple roles in the different stages of a

crisis (Scarpino & Gretzel, 2014), all of which can also depend greatly on DMO size and structure. Another potentially useful organizational resilience dimension includes the concept of scanning to planning, requiring DMOs to become and remain vigilant about their awareness of what is going on in their environment and about exactly who, both within and outside their organization, possesses important knowledge and skills that are critical in addressing crisis events.

Numerous DMOs across the globe have exhibited a resilient nature in survival of a multitude of different types of crises, yet little knowledge has been gleaned from their experiences and TCM practices in order to provide direction for other DMOs and the inevitable crises they will face in the future. Furthermore, the degree to which ORM was included in DMOs' past crisis experiences and if and how they could be used in the future to complement DMOs' TCM efforts is also unknown. Thus, there is a great need to evaluate TCM strategies under the organizational resilience domain in order to offer a more practical, holistic and proactive view of TCM that can be expected to aid in safeguarding the longevity of DMOs, their stakeholders and ultimately the tourist destination. In this respect, the second central research question posed is:

How can organizational resilience management be used to expand or complement DMOs' crisis management strategy? (RQ 2).

Based on the above research questions this study of tourism crisis management and organizational resilience among U.S. DMOs rests on three main platforms: the growing prevalence of crisis events, their significant impact on local tourism communities and the need for practical and effective crisis management strategies, increased interest in DMOs' implementation of crisis management strategy as an organization- and community-focused activity and, the amplified use of organizational resilience strategy to underpin, expand or compliment other organizational strategies such as crisis management.

### **1.3. Justification for this Research**

This research is important from theoretical and practical perspectives for DMOs, tourism organizations in general as well as non-tourism crisis stakeholders. From a theoretical perspective, it responds to an identified need to explore the theory of organizational resilience in TCM, and to explore the applicability of current TCM research through a multiple-case qualitative study in a new research setting focused at the organizational level. From the perspective of industry practitioners and policy makers, this research is justified because the increasing prevalence of crises and their significant impacts on tourism organizations and communities from both negative and positive standpoints suggests a significant need for practical guidance as to how crises should

be approached and managed. These theoretical and practical justifications are discussed in further detail below.

***Theoretical justifications.*** At present much attention is being lent to crisis phenomena in tourism. Empirical investigations, however, of key stakeholders and vehicles utilized in negotiating crisis management activities are relatively limited within the extant literature and appear to focus to a great extent at macro-level entities and issues, remaining severely underdeveloped with respect to micro-level tourism stakeholders. Interpretations of TCM strategy and models for strategy formulation in TCM are mostly prescriptive, lack depth and commonly adopt a one-size fits all approach. This is of particular concern for tourism scholars given the increasing prevalence of crises and their devastating effects to local level tourism businesses and tourism economies as a whole. These gaps in the research suggest further development of TCM could benefit from the deeper understanding generated by qualitative enquiry as to how local tourism organizations actually approach management of different crisis phenomena. Despite the rising number of qualitative studies in this arena, the majority of research comprises descriptive single case studies, lacking cross-comparisons and focusing predominately on response and recovery efforts, ultimately limiting our ability to contribute new knowledge to this field (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Becken, Mahon, Rennie, & Shakeela, 2014; Becken, Wilson, & Hughey, 2011; Floyd & Pennington-Gray, 2004; Pennington-Gray, London, Cahyanto, & Klages, 2011; Pennington-Gray, Thapa, Kaplanidou, Cahyanto & McLaughlin, 2011; Walters, Mair & Ritchie, 2015). Thus, better understandings of the issues, processes and participants that more holistically shape effective TCM strategy across crises by resilient DMOs and subsequently resilient tourism destinations are needed in order to advance the knowledge boundaries of TCM literature and practice (Ritchie, Mair & Walters, 2014).

Simultaneous to the growing interest in tourism crisis management, scholars outside the tourism field have actively engaged in organizational resilience research as a means of addressing disruptive events such as crises. Thus far several foundational and process models (Gibson & Tarrant, 2010; McManus, 2007; Mintzburg & Waters, 1985; Northouse, 2012; Resilience COI, 2009) and a measurement tool (Stephenson, 2010) have resulted from this body of literature. To date, few researchers (Biggs, 2011) have explored how the concept of organizational resilience could be used to expand or complement TCM strategies. Specifically, no research has investigated if unique organizations such as DMOs could benefit from the ability to design each stage of their crisis strategy (i.e. prevention and planning, strategic implementation, and resolution, evaluation and feedback) based on broader resilience dimensions intended to support their long term organizational and thus destination stability.



Consequently, from a theoretical perspective, the opportunity to explore organizational resilience strategy as a means to enhance the effectiveness of crisis management in tourism is justified two-fold. First, a contribution of the conceptualization of organizational resilience within the scope TCM in a new setting (i.e. the micro or local level) is provided and extends the current body of tourism research. Secondly, through qualitative enquiry into the DMOs' roles in crisis management with respect to TCM practices and stakeholders, new knowledge is gained that allows for evaluation of the application of a conceptual framework. This conceptual framework suggests DMOs coordinate and collaborate with various stakeholders (Hystad & Keller, 2008; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005) through distinct crisis management roles such as knowledge brokers or boundary spanners (Aalbers *et al.*, 2004; Blackman & Ritchie, 2009, 2011; Hargadon, 1998, 2002) while integrating day-to-day tasks and central practices that in turn help establish specific organizational crisis practices that guide development and adaptation of their TCM strategy. Further, this conceptual framework also seeks to identify factors thought to have significant influence on DMOs' crisis role selection and overall TCM approach, e.g. type of crisis being experienced, environmental context, institutional characteristics as well as knowledge absorption and organizational learning from past crisis experiences (Blackman & Ritchie, 2008; Paraskevas *et al.*, 2013; Pforr & Hosie, 2009; Ritchie, 2004). The prefix behind this framework is that each component (i.e. key stakeholders, central practices, crisis roles, institutional characteristics etc.) directly contributing to DMOs' TCM strategy will exist in an environment unique to a particular crisis event, and will to a degree, control DMOs' pursuit of those components and subsequent TCM approach, ultimately influencing the usefulness of organizational resilience management in TCM. The knowledge emanating from this study compliments the predominance of macro-level, case-specific tourism crisis management studies with a novel empirically-grounded framework of organizational resilience in crisis management for DMOs.

***Practical justifications.*** From a practical perspective, this research is justified by the need for greater insights into how DMOs, key organizations in the tourism system, have survived crises through successful implementation of a formal or informal crisis management strategy and the specific elements that have influenced their ability to do so. The thesis also offers practical guidance as to how DMOs can weave TCM with ORM to provide a better foundation toward pursuing more efficient and effective crisis management strategies. Moreover, by applying ORM processes and activities to the implementation of TCM, DMOs will be able to reduce the constraints and potential inefficiency of implementing overlapping yet disconnected organizational strategies that negatively impact their capacity and performance in crisis events. Finally, crisis stakeholders, such as the Red Cross, may benefit from new knowledge regarding the capacity, goals and directives of DMOs in crisis events, further shedding light on the degree to which DMOs may be useful during crises.

#### 1.4. Purpose, Objectives and Contribution

The **purpose** of this research is to explore DMOs' approaches and implementation of crisis management, and to identify if and how organizational resilience management may be a useful strategy in complementing crisis management by DMOs. The main **objectives** of this research are:

1. To expand the theoretical knowledge of crisis management in tourism research;
2. To offer theoretical and practical insights into the use of organizational resilience management for crisis management in tourism;
3. To conceptualize an empirically grounded (based on past crisis experiences) and more comprehensive approach toward addressing crises than that offered through previous theoretical crisis management frameworks, and;
4. To, through the presentation of such a new TCM-ORM framework tailored to DMOs, provide DMOs the opportunity to benefit from the ability to better address each stage of the crisis lifecycle (i.e. prevention and planning, strategic implementation, and resolution, evaluation and feedback).

Specifically, this research **contributes** towards expanding our knowledge in the following areas:

- Broadening our understanding of what is considered a crisis as perceived by DMOs;
- How DMOs at the local (city/regional) level have negotiated crises in the past;
- The *practices and stakeholders* involved in DMOs' crisis management;
- Identifying which organizations or entities are perceived as important by DMOs in helping manage crises;
- The role(s) DMOs play among tourism stakeholders and crisis stakeholders in crisis events;
- What factors influence DMOs' role adoption in crisis management, and;
- The manner in which organizational resilience management can be used to enhance crisis management in tourism.

These contributions lead to theoretical and practical insights and recommendations for tourism professionals and crisis management stakeholders as well as tourism researchers.

#### 1.5. Methodology

Because this research explored crisis management experiences in the context of local level DMOs, it adopted an interpretivist paradigm. Selection of this paradigm led to the use of a case study research epistemology and ontology, and the selection of a qualitative methodology. Specifically, descriptive multiple-case research (Yin, 2009) was chosen to investigate DMOs' approaches and implementation of crisis management strategy. This paradigm, methodology, and research strategy

combination was purposefully selected for its ability to accommodate the investigation of cross-case comparisons (Yin, 2009) needed to derive general insights grounded in rich, lived experiences.

A case study design was selected because this study deals with DMOs' crisis experiences and their role in TCM. Thus, each case could not be considered without its contexts, i.e. the crisis and the organization, and more specifically the type of crisis and type of DMO. It was in these settings that dynamic practices and stakeholders involved in DMOs' crisis management approaches emerged/evolved, and DMOs either succumbed to or were able to overcome the crisis. It would be impossible to provide a true depiction of DMOs' experiences without considering the context within which it occurred.

The methodology included thematic analysis of discourse from 14 semi-structured interviews with DMO key personnel across nine DMOs. Individuals were selected by the DMO on the basis of their knowledge of the DMO's response during specific crisis events and their willingness to participate in the research. The duration of interviews ranged from 13 minutes to 1.5 hours with an average of 37 minutes. Four organizational documents in form of a crisis management plan from four different DMOs, also analysed using thematic analysis, were used as secondary data sources. Interview data was transcribed, analyzed and managed with the assistance of Transana qualitative data analysis software. This research followed established procedures for case study methodology (Yin, 1993, 2009), multiple-case research design (Hyde 2000; Yin 1993) and hybrid thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008).

The methodological approach adopted in the study resulted in credible findings concerning U.S. DMOs' crisis experiences. Specifically, the results of this research incorporate: a) identification of 11 key stakeholder groups; b) seven foundational organizational practices DMOs employ in TCM; c) six prominent crisis roles DMOs and a number of factors believed to influence adoption of those roles. From these knowledge contributions, analytical generalizations and theory development were pursued leading to the development of new conceptual frameworks relating to DMOs' relationships with key stakeholders; DMOs' sensemaking in crisis events, the roles DMOs' adopt and the factors influencing role adoption, as well as the manner in which ORM is useful for enhancing TCM by DMOs.

## **1.6. Delimitations and Limitations of Scope**

This study is interested in the experiences of U.S. DMOs at the local level because it is believed DMOs at this level maintain a more intimate relationship with local (at destination) stakeholders and emergent crisis stakeholders, and are one of the key entities responsible for crisis planning,

response and recovery efforts for a specific destination. Thus, this research does not seek to include state and national level DMOs. Given the main focus of this study is placed on identifying the stakeholders and practices that contribute to DMOs' ability to successfully survive/negotiate crisis events, it was imperative this study focus on DMOs having actually experienced a crisis and that could provide an accurate and comprehensive account of that experience.

Based on the objectives of this research as outlined above, this study focuses on DMOs' experiences across different types of crisis from a predominately managerial standpoint, and further how these issues relate to the most current TCM framework (at the time of the study), as well as how DMOs' TCM strategy could be more effective if underpinned by an organizational resilience strategy. Thus, this study is not interested in exploring the personal crisis experiences of DMO employees outside the scope of the DMO's organizational crisis management response. It is important to highlight this study purposefully explores the responses of different types of DMOs' in terms of, for example, size, funding and visitor and industry characteristics to different types of crises, i.e. natural/physical disasters, mega-damage, political or malevolence thus the case study selection procedure is reflective of this goal, and does not purposefully attempt to capture DMOs based on any other criteria.

It is also important to mention a number of limitations and key assumptions. Situated in an interpretive paradigm, the present research uses an exploratory, descriptive multiple-case study approach (Yin, 2009:55-57) within a case study strategy to evaluate and identify patterns among the findings from participating DMOs. The research design is not intended to support statistical generalizations. However, analytic generalizations may be drawn within the scope of the conceptual foundation, participating DMOs and crisis phenomena explored. Additionally, this study sought the opinions of key personnel, of which the majority included CEOs, Presidents, VPs or managerial staff, and assumes they spoke for their DMO. Therefore, the research is limited to the extent that the opinions of other management and staff persons affecting the actions or decisions of each organization may not be fully represented. While it is reasonable to assume the opinions of other staff influence DMOs, it is also reasonable to assume, for example, CEOs are responsible for the ultimate direction of their organization and can knowledgeably reflect the crisis experience of the DMO.

## **1.7. Overview of Thesis**

This thesis seeks to investigate the crisis management experiences of DMOs and the context in which DMOs' crisis management approach is situated. This research also seeks to examine if and how the findings from these experiences can shed light on the use of organizational resilience

theory, particularly organizational resilience management (Stephenson, 2010) as complementary theoretical base on which to position TCM frameworks geared at DMOs. The thesis consists of six chapters including this introduction chapter. The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter II provides the theoretical background of this thesis and also summarizes the important findings of previous research relevant to this thesis. This chapter also provides definitions and a general typology of crises and stakeholders. Overviews of how organizations' respond to crises in general, existing TCM frameworks, and an organizational resilience management framework are presented. Chapter II also sets forth the conceptual frameworks on which the descriptive multiple-case study component of this research is conducted.

Chapter III describes the overall method used in this thesis. It outlines the study context, research design and briefly explains the multiple case study approach, including procedure, sampling strategy and the analysis conducted. Additionally, attention to the credibility, reflexivity and subjectivity of this research is addressed.

Chapter IV presents the findings of this thesis in relation to the stated objectives and research questions of this study. The chapter describes the manner in which the data are displayed or reported, followed by profiles and within-case findings for each of the nine DMOs and important cross-case comparisons.

Chapter V provides a theoretical discussion of the findings of this study and presents an adapted TCM-ORM framework based on the results of this research. Chapter VI presents the theoretical and practical implications of this study, further reflects on the limitations of the study and outlines directions for future research.

## **1.8. Summary**

Chapter I set out the research foundations of this thesis, including the background, research problems, aim, objectives and expected contributions of this research. The U.S. was identified and justified as the research context. The research was justified in terms of theoretical and practical perspectives. The methodology was briefly discussed and justified; limitations and delimitations of scope for this study were acknowledged and justified.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the research foundations introduced in Chapter I, this chapter critically reviews literature relevant to the overarching research problems in TCM and OR.

#### 2.1. Defining Crisis and Crisis Typology

Selbst (1978) describes crisis as “any action or failure to act that interferes with an organization’s ongoing functions, the acceptable attainment of its objectives, its viability or survival, or that has a detrimental personal effect as perceived by the majority of its employees, clients or constituents” (as cited in Faulkner, 2001:138). Looking at the definitions of crises presented in Table 1, one could deduce time is of the essence, both in terms of response time and recovery time, crises are often unexpected, and that they have the capacity to produce both negative as well as positive outcomes for an organization. Interestingly, there continues to be some debate on the difference between a crisis and a disaster. This is likely due to the fact that many of the features attributed to crises are also applicable to disasters (Faulkner, 2001), leading to confusion as to the distinction between the two. Faulkner (2001) proposed the distinction between ‘crisis’ and ‘disaster’ should be in the extent to which the situation is attributable to the organization itself, or can be described as originating from outside the organization. Thus, a *crisis* describes a situation “where the root cause of an event is, to some extent, self-inflicted through such problems as inept management structures and practices or a failure to adapt to change”, while a *disaster* can be defined as “when an enterprise is confronted with sudden unpredictable catastrophic changes over which it has little control” (Faulkner, 2001:136). One could argue, however, these definitions blatantly ignore external, pro-longed, and predictable influences that affect organizational processes, practices and resources. For example, national recessions, periods of terrorism or social unrest, as well as rumors spread about an organization or its employees all have the capacity to severely disrupt and threaten an organization’s existence. Even though external to the organization, these events would not be referred to as disasters (e.g. Global Financial Crisis).

Still, other scholars state “disasters can be described as unpredictable catastrophic change that can normally only be responded to after the event, either by deploying contingency plans already in place or through reactive response” (Prideaux, Laws & Faulkner, 2003: 478). From an emergency planning perspective, Hills (1998) describes disasters as sudden and overwhelming events that occur for a limited duration in a distinct location.

Table 1. A Comparison of Crisis Definitions

<i>Author</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<b>Herman (1972)</b>	Crisis is characterized by three dimensions: high threat, short decision time, and an element of surprise.
<b>Fink (1986)</b>	Crisis is an unstable time or state of affairs in which decisive change is impending – either one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome or one with the distinct possibility of a highly desirable and extremely positive outcome.
<b>Brewton (1987)</b>	Crisis should have some or all of the following features: severe disruption of operation, increased government regulation, negative public perception of the company, financial strain, unproductive use of management time, and loss of employee morale and support.
<b>Reilly (1987)</b>	A crisis implies elements of magnitude, the need for taking action, and the necessity of a timely response.
<b>Shivastava &amp; Mitroff (1987)</b>	Corporate crises threaten a company's most important goals of survival and profitability.
<b>Darling (1994)</b>	What defines a crisis in international business depends on a number of variables: the nature of the event; importance of the issue to foreign and US governments; impact on other firms and industries; how many and how quickly people inside and/or outside of a particular firm need to be helped or informed; who and how many individuals need interpretation of the events, and how accessible those people are; how much interaction with the media is necessary; what the media choose to emphasize; who and how many people need emergency care; how much the organization needs to assert control and demonstrate that it is capable of responding; and how quickly the firm needs to respond. A crisis may also be defined by feelings of panic, fear, danger or shock.
<b>Soñmez <i>et al.</i> (1994)</b>	Any event, which creates negative publicity and the period of time after a disaster occurrence, which lasts until full recovery is achieved, and pre-disaster conditions resume.
<b>Keown-McMullan (1997)</b>	Contrary to popular opinion, a crisis is not always bad or negative for an organization. A crisis could, therefore, be considered as a turning. To qualify as a crisis, the entire foundation of an organization or business must be threatened. The idea of urgency and the speed with which decisions must be made are key components.
<b>Beeton (2001)</b>	Crisis occur at all levels of tourism operations with varying degrees of severity, from much publicized environmental, economic and political disasters through to internally generated crisis events such as accidents and sudden illness.
<b>Prideaux <i>et al.</i> (2003)</b>	Crisis can be described as the possible but unexpected result of management failures that are concerned with the future course of events set in motion by human action or inaction precipitating the event.
<b>Laws and Prideaux (2006)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An unexpected problem seriously disrupting the functioning of an organization or sector or nation.</li> <li>2. A general term for such problems.</li> </ol>

Source: Adapted from Ritchie (2009:5).

Whereas the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) (UNISDR, 2004:338, 2009:13) defines disaster as,

*A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community/society to cope using its own resources. A disaster is a function of the risk process. It results from the combination of hazards, conditions of vulnerability and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce the potential negative consequences of risk.*

According to Coombs' (1999) conceptualization, crises can range from small-scale organizational issues such as sexual harassment, staff challenges/breakdowns, malevolence and organizational misdeeds to external factors like natural disasters (tsunamis, earthquakes, floods and fires). This research adopts Coombs' approach to defining crises, where disasters can be understood as a type of crisis (see Table 2.).

Table 2. Typology of Crises, their Characteristics and some Examples

<i>Type of crisis</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<b>Externally-influenced</b>		
<b>Natural or physical disaster</b>	When an organization or destination is damaged as a result of the weather, 'acts of God', human influence or a combination of the above. Examples include earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, avalanches, fires, bad storms or biosecurity threats or technological hazards. May be as a result of natural processes such as climate change, deforestation, forest burning or pollution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Foot and Mouth Outbreak 2001</li> <li>• Hurricane Hugo, Katrina and Rita</li> <li>• European floods</li> <li>• Katherine flood (Australia)</li> <li>• Austrian Alps avalanche</li> <li>• Icelandic volcanic ash cloud</li> <li>• Freeway, bridge or building collapse due to natural causes or human error</li> </ul>
<b>Political</b>	Severe disruption or hardship as a result of wars, civil war, coups, terrorism, riots and political and social unrest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gulf War, 1991 and Iraq War 2003</li> <li>• Fiji coups</li> <li>• Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia</li> <li>• British handover of Hong Kong to China, 1997</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	Ranging from international recession, regional currency crisis to national recession and monetary crisis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stock market crash 1987 and slow down after 9/11</li> <li>• Asian economic crisis</li> </ul>
<b>Malevolence</b>	When an outside actor or opponent employs extreme tactics to express anger toward the organization or destination to force the organization or destination to change. Examples include product tampering, kidnapping, terrorism and espionage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basque separatist group, ETA bombings campaign in Spanish resorts</li> <li>• Muslim extremist attacks in Egypt, 1990s to force government change</li> </ul>
<b>Megadamage/technological</b>	When the accident causes significant environmental damage through human or mechanical error. Examples include oil spills and radioactive contamination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chernobyl</li> <li>• Exxon Valdez</li> <li>• Deepwater Horizon oil spill 2010 (BP oil spill)</li> </ul>
<b>Internally-influenced</b>		
<b>Stakeholder Challenges</b>	When the organization or destination is confronted by discontented stakeholders. The stakeholders challenge the organization because they believe it is not operating in an appropriate manner and does not meet their expectations. Examples include boycotts, strikes, lawsuits, government penalties and protests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unofficial strike by British Airways check-in staff 2003</li> <li>• Qantas strike, 2011</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational misdeeds</b>	When the management takes action, it knows will harm or serve to discredit or disgrace the organization in some way. Examples include favoring short-term economic gain over social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bribery or price fixing</li> <li>• Enron, Worldcom</li> </ul>



	values, deliberate deception of stakeholders and illegal acts of management.	
<b>Workplace violence</b>	When an employee or former employee commits violence against other employees on organizational grounds. Examples include killing or injuring co-workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual harassment by staff</li> <li>• Rape or violence against hotel guests</li> </ul>
<i><b>Externally or Internally-influenced</b></i>		
<b>Rumors</b>	When false information is spread about an organization or its products. The false information hurts the organization's reputation by putting it in an unfavorable light. Examples include rumors linking the organization to radical groups or stories that their products are unsafe or contaminated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rumors of second terrorist attack after American Airlines plane crashes on 9/11</li> </ul>

*Source:* Adapted from Ritchie (2004: 28-29) modified after Coombs (1999: 61-62) and Hall and O'Sullivan (1996).

This research focuses on crises resulting from external factors that have the ability to cause the most damage to DMOs, existing and emergent stakeholders and the tourism destination as a whole. This is because dealing with issues such as workplace violence and challenges is often a normal part of strategic management in contrast to crisis management where the organization is concerned with tackling negative incidents that affect the viability of the organization or destination. For the purpose of this research, I have identified large-scale (i.e. requiring mobilization of resources) externally-influenced crises as those crises under the natural/physical disaster, political, economic, malevolence or megadamage/technological categories.

### **2.1.1. Organizational Response to Crisis**

Early management theories assumed organizations were relatively stable and thus did not provide strong theoretical foundations for coping with change and crises (Booth, 1993). Scholars slowly began to address issues revolving around organizational change; however, the scope of their work was limited to coping with gradual or to some degree predictable change, rather than dealing with sudden changes that might test an organization's ability to cope, such as change resulting from a crisis. Dynes and Quarantelli (1968) were among the first to study and develop a typology of organizational responses to crises, rooted in the premise "organizational mobilization, recruitment of personnel and operational problems of adapting to radically changed environmental conditions" could be examined best by separating different groups likely to respond to disasters (Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977:27). Combining behavioral and organizational theories to derive the so-called Disaster Research Center (DRC) typology, Dynes and Quarantelli categorized organizational 'tasks' as either regular or non-regular, i.e. observed as normal and part of daily routine, and designated 'structures' used to

accomplish those tasks as old or new, i.e. functioning before a disaster or implemented after it occurred. The typology outlines four types of organizations that exist in the context of a crisis; established, expanding, extending and emergent (Figure 2). Structural change is engaged when an organization takes on new or modified tasks in which constituent organizations have little to no previous experience or authority (Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968). From this perspective, the transition from an established to expanding organization could include, for example, new personnel, creation and implementation of new procedures, or a temporary change in internal hierarchy/authority based on immediate needs and expertise. In comparison to established organizations with a previously defined role in disaster, emergent organizations, organizations not existing prior to a crisis are in themselves a resilient response or ad hoc solution to a problem. The DRC typology is useful in that it helps reflect on where DMOs may be positioned in terms of behavior and response. At first glance, DMOs could be seen as extending organizations, performing certain non-regular tasks in order to aid established, expanding and emergent organizations, however, based on more recent research by Blackman and Ritchie (2009) DMOs' classification as expanding organizations is more suited due to the fact that existing DMO stakeholders commonly expect DMOs to perform certain roles in crisis response.

Structure		Tasks	
		Regular	Non-Regular
	Old	<b>Type 1: Established</b> Already established and have a specified role to play in responding to the disaster, such as the police and fire service	<b>Type 3: Extending</b> Not expected to respond to disasters but they perform non-regular tasks using their existing structures
	New	<b>Type 2: Expanding</b> Organizations such as the Red Cross that are expected to be involved in the response and perform business-as-usual tasks but transform structurally (i.e. they expand)	<b>Type 4: Emergent</b> Characterized by both a new structure and the performance of non-regular tasks. These emergent organizations do not exist prior to the disaster

Figure 2. The Disaster Research Center Typology of Organised Behaviour in Disaster

*Source:* Dynes & Quarantelli (1968: 419).

In 1995, Quarantelli expanded the typology based on studies observed by the DRC. The revised typology proposed different types of emergence exhibited by both emergent and non-emergent organizations. Certain organizations were able to expand their ability to respond to disaster without altering their structure or core business (Quarantelli, 1995). Each and every organization is unique and likely faces different challenges in fulfilling their role in disaster situations. Taking Quarantelli's typology into consideration, crisis management frameworks in tourism that recognize not only different types of organizations in these situations, but are also tailored to guide specific organizations such as DMOs in crisis responses, will be of particular use. The following section provides an

introduction to the current literature in tourism crisis management for destinations and addresses the need to better understand the multifaceted role DMOs play in managing crises.

## **2.2. Tourism Crisis Management**

Crisis management in tourism is still a relatively new area of interest compared to, for example, tourism marketing or destination management. Literature in this arena is broadly based on the study of the impacts and responses to negative events ranging from natural disasters to political crises in the tourism industry. Over the years, scholars have examined more closely the disaster and crisis lifecycle (Faulkner, 2001; Fink, 1986; Roberts, 1994), slowly integrating research on tourism businesses and tourism organizations, as well as key non-tourism crisis stakeholders (e.g. local law enforcement or humanitarian aid organizations) (Hall, Timothy & Duvall, 2012; Hystad & Keller, 2008).

Tourism systems research, previously preoccupied with the *macro*-level, has in more recent years turn the spotlight toward the composition and advancement of research in tourism systems at the subnational or *micro*-level. Increasingly acknowledged as one of the most basic levels for knowledge building and practical application among economic sectors, micro-level tourism systems allow more freedom in observing and fine-tuning system components, further enabling competitive advantages critical to attaining economic stability and addressing disruptive or crisis events. A wide range of new tourism products and processes are being provided by increasingly *interdependent* organizations, suggesting tourism can be understood as a *functional system* (i.e. set of interrelated items reaching common goals). Respectfully, a wealth of attention has been devoted to the elaboration of general systems theory among economic sectors (Lundvall, 2002; Prideaux, 2000; Rigby, 2001), with more attention to the services sector in the past decade. The theoretical foundation of the tourism system is said to have originated as far back as Wolfe (1964) and Leiper (1990), who were among the first to boldly acknowledge that despite thinking at the time, tourism was more than merely an ‘industry’ but “... a system of major components linked together in an intimate and interdependent relationship” (Gunn, 1994).

It is not surprising based on our understanding of the complexity of tourism systems, that formulation of a tourism-specific crisis management research arena appears to have developed predominately from the inapplicability of more generic crisis management theories to holistically address the intricacies of individual tourism industries’ crisis responses, as well as crisis planning and recovery capabilities across crisis types.

For example, tourism versus non-tourism businesses (heeding general crisis management plans) are likely to experience extended difficulties in successfully negotiating the intermediate to resolutions

stages of a crisis due to tourists' negative perceptions of destination image. Examples include the decline in hotel occupancy and vacation rentals following the 2010 BP Gulf oil spill in the U.S. (Ritchie, Crotts, Zehrer & Volsky, 2013) as well as tourists' concerns with beach and guest house safety following the March 2011 Japanese tsunami (Muskat, Nakanishi, Blackman, Ritchie, & Campiranon, 2015; Rittichainuwat, 2013). The higher number of micro to small enterprises lacking the resources and capabilities to aid a more rapid recovery is also a serious concern for tourism economies Cassedy (1991). Further, changing media landscapes has emphasized the impact of social media in terms of monitoring and responding to tourists' crisis-related perceptions of destinations, which is of particular concern for DMOs and tourism businesses (Liu, Pennington-Gray & Klemmer, 2015). Moreover, the magnitude and reach of certain crisis events and their capacity to divert tourism flows away from not only the destination directly experiencing crisis, but nearby cities, regions or countries as well (Cavlek, 2002), can have a dramatically negatively impact on neighboring tourism economies, their tourists and local communities (Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006). For example, the Arab uprisings in specific areas of the Middle East has forced many Middle Eastern countries' DMOs and marketers to employ aggressive media strategies to abate the negative perceptions of their destinations in order to bring back tourists (Avraham, 2015).

As if dealing with spill-over effects from neighboring destinations were not enough, a large number of U.S. DMOs struggle on a daily basis to be recognized for their involvement in tourism and community development projects, much less crisis management planning or strategy at the local level. While some DMOs are an integrated part of community planning, others are still looking for their seat at the "development table" with city/county governance and planners (Gretzel, Fesenmaier, Formica & O'Leary, 2006), creating additional challenges for DMOs to effectively design and implement TCM plans. Further, the degree to which each DMO could be involved in its community crisis management plans or include the community in its own may depend on local tourism governance structures. For example, if the DMO were to function as a council-led network governance structure versus a participant-led community network or a local tourism organisation-led industry network, as is often observed with Australia DMOs, it would likely influence not only funding and thus budget for TCM plans, but dictate to whom the DMO is accountable to during crisis events (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010).

Tourism crisis management (TCM) research has been increasingly recognized as an essential foundation for assisting the tourism industry and crisis stakeholders in learning from past experiences and developing strategies for avoiding and coping with similar events in the future. Santana (2004:308) defines TCM as the "ongoing and extensive effort organizations put in place in an attempt to understand and prevent crises and to effectively manage those that occur, taking into account each and every step of their planning and training, activities, the interest of their stakeholders". The 1980's

saw a number of scholars exploring a range of issues surrounding crisis management in tourism (D'Amore & Anuza, 1986; Drabek, 1995; Lehrman, 1986; Pizam & Mansfield, 1996; Pottorff & Neal, 1994; Scott, 1988; Sonmez, 1998). The majority of TCM studies appears to focus on reactive response and recovery efforts, with a limited number highlighting, for example, a proactive strategic planning approach (Ritchie, 2004, 2009; Ritchie, Bentley, Koruth & Wang, 2011). This remains a concern, especially considering natural hazards and emergency planning have long since concentrated on reduction and readiness strategies. At its core, TCM literature commonly explores the nature and effect crises have on a destination's economy and tourism community, and the actions that can be taken to help mitigate or nullify negative impacts surrounding crisis events.

### **2.2.1. Theoretical Foundations and Gaps in TCM Research**

Originally, one of the main reasons so little progress had been made in advancing our understanding of tourism and crises was the slow development of theoretical and conceptual frameworks required to underpin the analysis of this phenomenon. Scholars have in recent years proposed several models and frameworks to address this deficiency (De Sausmarez, 2004; Hystad & Keller, 2008; Ritchie, 2004), many of which are based on Faulkner's seminal work in 2001 on the first tourism disaster management framework. Major global crises such as '9/11', the Bali bombings, the Foot and Mouth Disease and SARS outbreaks, as well as several natural and physical disasters destroying thousands of homes and businesses, motivated scholars to use Faulkner's framework as a stepping stone to pursue similar avenues of interest revolving around TCM. One of the most frequently cited models includes Ritchie's (2004) tourism crisis and disaster management framework (Figure 3). This framework was introduced with the goal of presenting a more strategic approach to crisis and disaster management, including proactive pre-crisis planning through strategic implementation, evaluation and feedback.

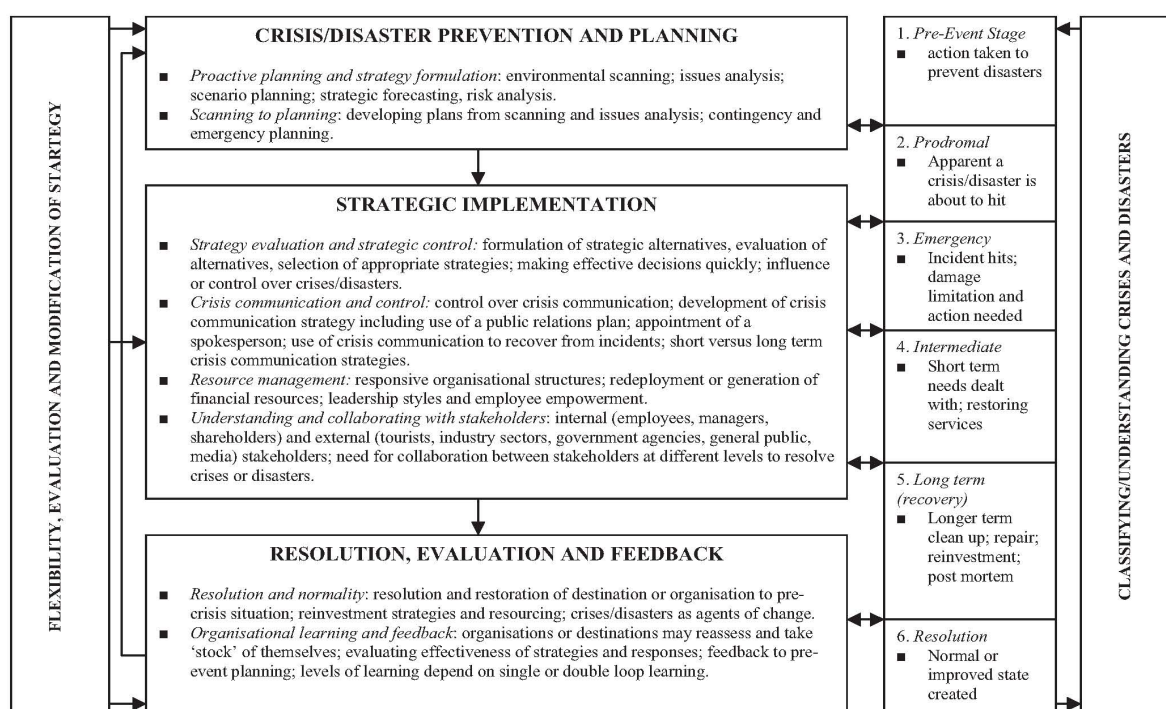


Figure 3. Crisis and Disaster Management: A Strategic and Holistic Framework

Source: Ritchie (2004: 674).

An expansion of tourism's earliest disaster and crisis management framework by Faulkner (2001), Ritchie's framework briefly touches on several main categories, e.g. crisis communication and resource management, but gives little indication of the entities that should be involved in these areas. Stakeholders are mentioned in the framework, but as-is, it would be difficult for any specific tourism organization to take concrete actions with any one particular stakeholder group based on the level of direction provided in the model. DMOs seeking to implement TCM strategies could greatly benefit from a more elaborate framework that addresses their actual roles. Ritchie's framework does, however, prove to be a very useful platform on which to position organizational resilience management in TCM, as discussed further in Section 2.3. The evolution and key contributions of crisis management models to date are outlined in Table 3. In general, TCM strategies often fail to exercise flexibility and to integrate and describe strategic planning processes, detailed contingency plans and organizational learning (Evans & Elphick, 2005; Faulkner, 2001; Ritchie, 2008, 2004). The shortcomings of these frameworks or models has left scholars concerned with their applicability, particularly in regards to five key areas: unpredictability of tourism crises and disasters; models being too prescriptive/linear; models assuming a 'one-size-fits-all' approach; and, models discounting cultural context and the realities of small businesses (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012).

Table 3. Tourism Crisis and Disaster Management Models

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>Faulkner (2001)</b>	Tourism disaster management framework	Identifies responses to each phase of the disaster process. A prescriptive approach with an emphasis on contingency planning, but does not account for organizational resources.
<b>Henderson (2003)</b>	Stages in airline crisis management	Compresses Faulkner's first three phases into one component, the 'event'. In so doing, recognizes the difficulties posed by rigid planning.
<b>Ritchie (2004)</b>	A strategic and holistic management framework	Proposes responses to three main phases: prevention/planning, strategic implementation, evaluation/feedback, but emphasizes risk analysis.
<b>De Sausmarez (2004)</b>	Representation of the main steps in developing a national crisis management policy	Proactive approach involving the formation of a crisis plan, which involves assessing value of the tourism sector risk assessment, monitoring of indicators, and examining potential for regional cooperation.
<b>Page <i>et al</i> (2006)</b>	Potential crisis response model for an influenza pandemic	Consists of the actions and approaches to the pre-crisis, crisis and recovery stages, through emphasis on scenario planning.
<b>Carlsen &amp; Hughes (2007)</b>	Crisis recovery marketing strategies	Compilation of guidelines from Beirman (2003) and issued from WTO (2005) and PATA (nd).
<b>Hystad &amp; Keller (2008)</b>	Stakeholder roles within a destination tourism disaster management cycle	Suggests roles of emergency organizations, tourism organizations and tourism businesses throughout the stages of a disaster but implicitly assumes co-operation between stakeholders.
<b>Tew <i>et al.</i> (2008)</b>	Model of crisis management planning and implementation	Incorporates public brand management and internal management with pre-crisis planning and response, though emphasis on pre-crisis planning.
<b>Paraskevas &amp; Altinay (2013)</b>	Crisis signal detection process	Proposes a three-stage framework for crisis signal detection consisting of signal scanning, capture and transmission to the crisis response center. Explores the significance of signal detection in crisis management practice and the challenges faced in each of these three stages.
<b>Beirman, Ritchie &amp; Campiranon (2014)</b>	Transnational crisis management response network in tourism	Examines Pacific Asia Travel Association's establishment of a Rapid Response Taskforce (PRRT) to better facilitate monitoring crisis events; developing and delivering training programs to manage tourism risk and crises and; responding and managing major transnational crises in the Asia-Pacific. Conceptual diagram of PRRT and collaborating associations are delivered.

*Source:* Adapted from Speakman & Sharpley (2012: 3).

Based on the literature, contemporary crisis management models aim to provide guidance to destination managers and planners prior to, during and following a crisis event. From Faulkner's (2001) six-phase disaster lifecycle to Ritchie's more comprehensive disaster and crisis management approach, each framework has made a significant contribution to tourism in expanding our understanding of the dynamics and potential participants involved in crisis events. Speakman and Sharpley (2012:68) posit the "extent to which these models more generally represent realistic, practical responses to crisis situations is limited by a number of factors", elaborating further on five key limitations to these models as listed below:

1. Unpredictability of tourism crises and disasters
  - The identification of potential or predictable crises is problematic and, thus, scenario planning may be expensive, time consuming and, ultimately, fruitless (de Sausmarez, 2004).
2. Models are prescriptive/linear
  - False assumption that all crises pass through a number of consecutive phases
  - Tendency to offer 'a series of remedial steps' without appreciating the true complexity of the situation and the dynamic and complex network of relationships involved in the tourism system.
3. Models take 'one-size-fits-all' approach
  - Generic nature of the majority of tourism crisis models diminishes their capacity to directly relate to individual segments of the industry and the varying types of crises or disasters.
  - Different crises have different effects and recovery times and necessitate different recovery strategies, thus limiting the usefulness of one individual crisis model for all.
  - Unique crises require a unique set of responses.
4. Models discount cultural context
  - Tourism is a multi-cultural industry, thus when a crisis occurs, the context differs by culture, organizational style and political structure' (Mistilis & Sheldon, 2006)
  - Different approaches to crisis management will be evident in different cultural and geographic settings, thus limiting the applicability of models based on a particular worldview.
5. Realities of small businesses
  - Research demonstrates small tourism businesses possess neither the time nor resources to plan for crises (Cioccio & Michael, 2007).



- Many small businesses assume responsibility for crisis planning and management lay elsewhere, hence their planning for crisis situations was non-existent (Hystad & Keller, 2008).

Speakman and Sharpley (2012) sought to identify if the limitations of contemporary crisis management models described above manifested in practice in Mexican tourism authorities' response to the 2009 AH1N1 influenza or "swine flu" outbreak. They were also interested to know whether an alternative TCM approach, following the principles of chaos theory, was reflected in or might have facilitated tourism authorities' response in this case. Their findings suggest the limitations of crisis management models were indeed clearly evident in the AH1N1 outbreak case, calling into question the ability of existing crisis management plans to address tourism-related crisis events.

Similar to Speakman and Sharpley's work with TCM and chaos theory, resilience management in organizations presents itself as another promising platform on which to expand or compliment the known gaps in TCM research.

### **2.2.2. Underlying Management Fields of Inquiry**

This section locates the current research on DMOs' crisis management experiences within underlying fields of management sciences inquiry: organizational behavior, stakeholder management, knowledge management and organizational learning. Although these fields are not identified as underlying fields across all crisis management theories, more recent research in TCM (Anderson, 2006; Blackman & Ritchie, 2009; Henderson, 2002; Wayne & Carmichael, 2005) highlights their usefulness towards expanding our understanding of the dynamic components of managing crises among tourism organizations. This section shows that TCM has complex overlapping relationships with other fields of organizational science inquiry. An integration of these fields into the conceptual framework of this research is presented in Section 2.4.

**Organizational Behavior.** The study of organizational behavior has traditionally been divided into three levels, individual, group and organizational. Organizational behavior has in recent years been viewed as an integrative model consisting of five major components, organizational mechanisms; group mechanisms; individual characteristics; individual mechanisms, and; individual outcomes (Colquitt, Lepine & Wesson, 2009) (Figure 4). Although this research is focused towards organizational culture and organizational structure and the elements that comprise these mechanisms, it is useful to understand how these components are linked to group mechanisms and micro-level or individual components in order to better situate organizational crisis management outcomes as well as potential deficiencies in DMOs' TCM plans.

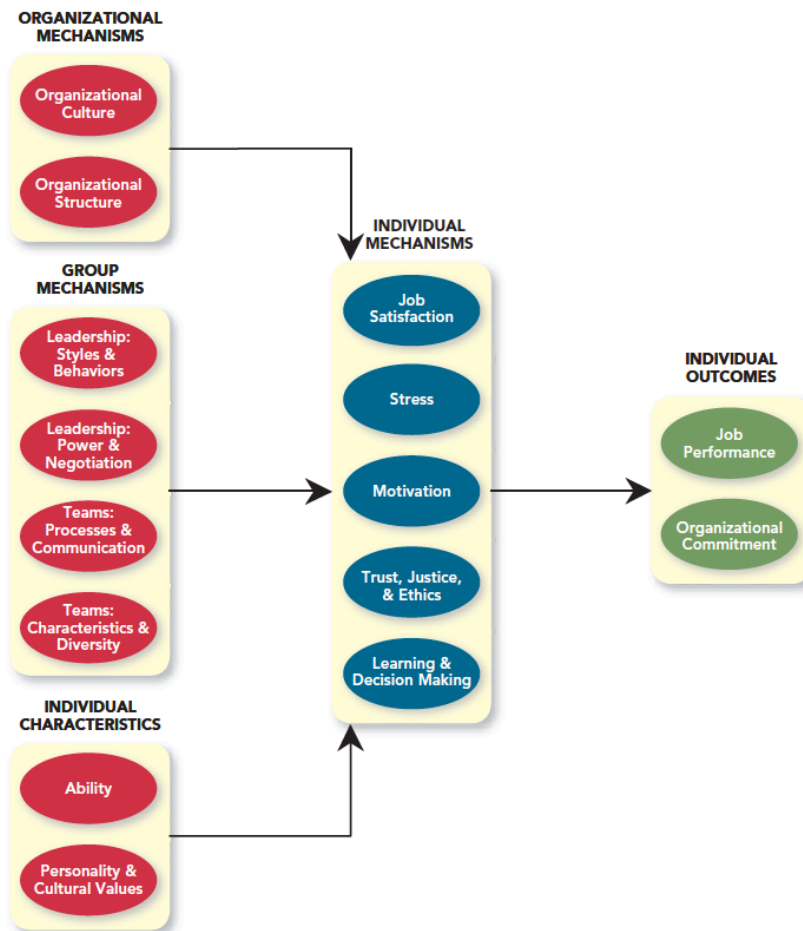


Figure 4. Integrative Model of Organizational Behavior

Source: Colquitt, Lepine & Wesson (2009:9).

This research explores DMOs' behavior at the organizational level in TCM in terms of the specific roles DMOs assume across various stakeholder groups. From a general destination management perspective, DMOs have been known to take on vastly different roles based on a variety of factors including: the presence of a CVB or Visitor Center separate from the DMO; access to private or public funds; the goals and desires of tourism stakeholders and community residents as to the direction of tourism development, as well as; the strengths and weaknesses of regional, state or national tourism organizations (NTOs). For example, the extent to which NTOs market specific destinations and provide additional industry resources could decrease or completely change DMOs' core directives. Gartrell (1998:8), a seminal author in the field of destination marketing broadly defines DMOs' role as the "selling of cities" where each DMO must coordinate and homogenize independently diverse constituent elements in order to develop an image that will position their cities in the marketplace as a viable destination for meetings and visitors. Gartrell (1994) identified the following activities as central to DMOs' general roles/strategic directives:

- Coordination of the many constituent elements of the tourism sector (including local, political, civic, business, and visitor industry representatives), so as to achieve a single voice for tourism;

- Fulfilment of both a leadership and advocacy role for tourism within the local community that it services. The DMO should be a visible entity that draws attention to tourism so that residents of the destination understand the significance of the visitor industry;
- Helping to ensure the development of an attractive set of tourism facilities, events and programs—and an image that will help position and promote the destination as one that is competitive in the experiences it offers;
- Assisting visitors through the provision of visitor services such as pre-visit information, and additional information upon arrival;
- Serving as a key liaison to assist external organizations, such as meeting planners, tour guides or service providers for tourists.

Similarly, Morrison, Bruen, and Anderson (1998) claim DMOs function in five fundamental ways, as:

- an economic driver generating new income, employment, and taxes contributing to a more diversified local economy;
- a community marketer communicating the most appropriate destination image, attractions, and facilities to selected visitor markets;
- an industry coordinator providing a clear focus and encouraging less industry fragmentation so as to share in the growing benefits of tourism;
- a quasi-public representative adding legitimacy for the industry and protection to individual and group visitors; and,
- a builder of community pride by enhancing quality of life and acting as the chief flag carrier for residents and visitors alike.

Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan envision DMOs' roles more closely related to that of an advocate for the people, suggesting DMOs "...work towards enhancing the well-being of destination residents to do everything necessary to help ensure that visitors are offered visitation experiences that are at a minimum highly satisfactory, and where possible, highly memorable; and while doing so, to ensure the provision of effective destination management and stewardship" (2010:573). Tourism literature to date illustrates a wide range of roles and functions DMOs fill, from classic marketing/promotion activities to broader responsibilities revolving around development and management of a destination and coordination with a wide variety of tourism stakeholders (Fyall, Garrod & Wang, 2012; Morgan, 2012; Morrison, 2013; Morrison, Bruen & Anderson, 1998; Timur & Getz, 2008).

Numerous studies have explored DMOs' roles outside of crises, for example, within the scope of social responsibility and sustainable destination development practices (Morgan, 2012; Pennington-Gray & Thapa, 2004); stakeholder management (Timur & Getz, 2008); event management (Getz, 1997, 2008), and; intermediation and networking (d'Angella & Go, 2009; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). Thus far only a smaller number of studies have examined DMOs' roles within the context of crisis, for example, as pre-event/prodromal stage ensure a balanced allocation of resources throughout the destination and facilitate stakeholder access to finance for investments regarding security and crisis management tools (Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007) or as boundary spanners/knowledge brokers in the long-term recovery and resolution stages (Blackman, Kennedy & Ritchie, 2011; Blackman & Ritchie, 2008, 2009; Scarpino & Gretzel, 2012)

More recent studies in TCM have identified DMOs as knowledge brokers and knowledge boundary spanners (Aalbers *et al.*, 2004; Blackman & Ritchie, 2009, 2011; Hargadon, 1998, 2002), highlighting their existence as important players in managing crises, not only because tourists are often relatively more affected by such events, but also because DMOs possess intricate knowledge of local tourism infrastructure and resources (e.g. accommodation for emergency response teams) and have established communication channels and media relations (Becken & Hughey, 2013). A stark contrast from previous perceptions of DMOs acting mostly alone and ultimately forgoing vital opportunities to create change through pooling of resources and continuous knowledge exchange across organizational boundaries (Gretzel *et al.*, 2006), the roles DMOs are thought to play today reflect a critical capacity to facilitate collaborative/integrative links between tourism businesses and national and local authorities and emergency services (Beirman, 2003; Pforr & Hosie, 2009). While re-conceptualizations of DMOs' roles in crisis appear logical given global technological advances and an increased awareness of the DMOs' general capacity and repertoire of resources, empirical research into DMOs' roles in crisis remains limited. One of the greatest underlying issues related to the advancement of DMOs' success in crisis management is understanding what is important from a theoretical perspective but also learning what is possible and actually happens in practice.

Intrinsically linked to DMOs' destination management and ability to assume certain roles are the DMOs' institutional properties. Institutional properties include, for example, organization type (public vs. private); external structure and position within that structure; tourism territory; physical presence at the destination and in other locales globally; size and internal structure; type and amount of funding received, as well as access to various resources. Until now, the majority of research in TCM has focused more broadly on the institutional properties of tourism businesses with respect to crisis recovery within one crisis type. Research exploring DMOs' roles in TCM coupled with their institutional properties is non-existent. Similar to destination management, however, it is anticipated that the roles DMOs assume are intrinsically linked to the behavior, capacities and needs of their

stakeholders. Given DMOs are increasingly aware of the central role they play in managing, directing, providing information to and creating knowledge with a diversity of stakeholders in calm times as well as during crises, a review of the literature in stakeholder management in general and for DMOs in TCM is provided.

***Stakeholder Management (Stakeholder Theory).*** The traditional view of a stakeholder lies within shareholder theory rooted in the shareholder's perspective. The main principles of stakeholder theory are embedded in classic management literature on inter-organizational relationships and organization theory. Thus, according to Andriof and Waddock (2002) this literature includes Barnard's (1938) work on the functions of the executive and the dynamic of cooperative behavior in formal organizations; March and Simon's (1958) thoughts on inter-organizational conflict; Cyert and March's (1963) discussion on behavioral theory of the firm and other firms in its environment; Thompson's (1967) extension of that train of thought in examining the behavior of firms with respect to external (environmental) uncertainties; and Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) look at the external control of organizations. Of particular relevance within the scope of DMOs and crisis, is the work of Pfeffer and Salancik, who argue organizations are not only not self-sufficient but instead must rely on the support of other organizations or groups (outside of shareholders) within their environment. Keeping to this theory, Pfeffer and Salancik also maintain dependence on another organization or group is dictated by the degree to which they have a concentration of, and discretionary control over, certain resources. For DMOs in crisis, this could easily extend to humanitarian or government aid organizations.

Levine and White (1961) provide yet another stream towards understanding stakeholder theory via stakeholder relations and the potential for cooperation through their work examining community health and welfare agencies. In their discussion of voluntary cooperation and social exchange theory, Levine and White claim when objectives can be aligned, organizations may rationally choose to cooperate or engage in exchanges, which include "any voluntary activity between two organizations which has consequences, actual or anticipated, for the realization of their respective goals or objectives" (1961:588, cited in Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005).

Other scholars (Brenner & Cochran 1991; Evan & Freeman 1993; Hill & Jones 1992; Jones 1995) posit "a new theory of the firm" and offer a more descriptive and prescriptive outlook of stakeholder theory in which the purpose of the firm is to coordinate stakeholder interests. Some discrepancy, however, exists in determining how this coordination takes place. Quarantelli (1988) claims, from a conceptual standpoint, coordination has different meanings with some organizations viewing coordination as merely informing other groups of what they will be doing, while others still see it as the centralization of decision-making in a particular agency or among key officials. Further, the

question of whether stakeholders are working with one another in collaboration defined as “the action of working with someone to produce or create something” or in cooperation defined as the “process of working together to the same end” (Oxford Concise Dictionary, 2013) or both, continues to be explored. Wood and Gray define collaboration as “...a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engaged in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (1991:146). The concept that organizations are autonomous or independent, and that they engage in action on an issue-specific basis, can easily be seen as applicable in the context of tourism, particularly in DMOs’ interaction with tourism stakeholders to accomplish common destination development and branding goals. However, in times of crisis, the applicability of this notion becomes questionable, as “using shared rules, norms, and structures” is not always possible when dealing with existing much less emergent stakeholders.

Freeman defines a stakeholder as “any individual, group or organization who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of an organization’s purpose or objectives” (1984:46), whereas other scholars take a narrower view, identifying stakeholders as only those with very measureable direct economic links to the organization (Cochran 1994). Shankman (1999) includes virtually all of society as stakeholders, while still other scholars fall in between these visions (Clarkson 1995). Starik (1994:90) summarizes a wide-range of definitions in the following statement:

There may be numerous levels of specificity as to what the term “stakeholder” means, depending on what the user is referring to. The range appears to be bounded in this case, on one end, by those entities which can and are making their actual stakes known (some- times called “voice”), and, on the other end, by those which are or might be influenced by, or are or potentially are influencers of, some organization or another, whether or not this influence is perceived or known

Given stakeholder groups have varying interests and relevance to and among each other; several scholars (Carroll 1989; Clarkson 1995; and Freeman 1984) have found it advantageous to differentiate stakeholders as either primary or secondary. Carroll (1996:76) defined primary stakeholders as having a “formal, official or contractual” relationship with an organization. Secondary stakeholders are defined as those who influence or affect, or are influenced or affected by the organization, but are not engaged in transactions with the organization (on a routine basis) and are not essential for its survival (Clarkson, 1995:106–107). Savage, Nix, Whitehead and Blair (1991) argue understanding each stakeholder’s potential to threaten the organization is of critical importance, and that the capacity, opportunity, and willingness to do so is predicted to be a function of the stakeholder’s relative power and its relevance to a particular issue dealt with. Savage *et al.* (1991:63) also maintain it is equally important to “understand each stakeholder’s potential to cooperate with the organization, where the potential for cooperation is a function of a willingness to cooperate, predominately driven by stakeholder dependence on the organization.” Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) expand this theory by

combining the concepts of power, urgency, and legitimacy to create a typology for analyzing stakeholder salience, where the most salient stakeholder would have an urgent (time sensitive) claim against the organization, the power to enforce its will on the organization, and be perceived as legitimate in exercising its power.

**Tourism/DMO Stakeholders** – Within the tourism literature, Hystad and Keller propose “any individual, business, or organization with an interest in the success of tourism, and who has the potential to become involved in tourism disaster planning, can be considered a stakeholder” (2008:160). Drawing on Savage *et al.*’s threaten/cooperate framework as the foundation for their work, Sheehan and Ritchie (2005) conducted an insightful study with North American DMO CEOs. The results of their study yielded identification of 33 stakeholder groups in what appears to be the most comprehensive list among the published literature (Table 4). Although some ambiguity exists as to exactly who is included in certain stakeholder groups, for example, what entities if different from those listed comprise the “hospitality industry” or is it viewed as an amalgamation of several stakeholder groups? The salience of each stakeholder group to the DMO was also noted and can be observed in Figure 5.

Table 4. Stakeholders Identified as Salient to DMO

Hotels/Hotel Association
City/Local Government
Regional/County Government
Attractions/Attraction Association
State/Provincial Tourism Department
Members
Board of Directors/Advisory Board
Convention Centre/Banquet Facilities
Community/Citizens/Residents
Restaurants/Restaurant Association
Chamber of Commerce
University/College
Local Economic Development Authority
Sponsors
Airlines
Federal Government
Hospitality Industry
Media
Public Facilities
Regional CVBs
Tourists
Advertising Agency
Arts/Arts Association
Destination Management Company
Meeting Planners
Non-Tourism Industry
Other Policy Makers in Area
Parks Department
Recreational
Retail Stores/Association
Travel Companies/Association
Volunteers

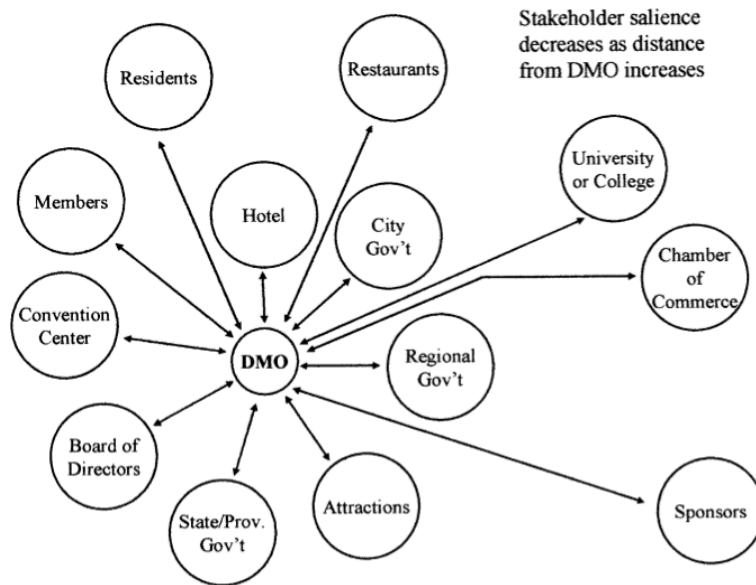


Figure 5. A Stakeholder View of the DMO

Source: Sheehan &amp; Ritchie (2005: 728).

Special interest groups (e.g. environmental, resident or humanitarian organizations), a group previously identified as a key stakeholder in community tourism planning (Jamal & Getz, 1995), was not specifically identified by CEOs to be among those groups capable of affecting the accomplishment of their organizational objectives. Sheehan and Ritchie suggest this may be a reflection of the infrequency of influence exerted by special interest groups relative to other identified primary and secondary stakeholders. This is not necessarily the case in the context of a crisis event, where special interest groups are more prevalent and their vested interest in supporting or cooperating with a DMO could prove extremely beneficial during different stages of the crisis lifecycle. The dynamics of the relationships between DMOs and special interest groups has yet to be fully explored and would be of particular interest in the context of tourism crisis management. For example, are humanitarian aid organizations recognized as key stakeholders in crises prior to the event, or is inclusion and engagement with these organizations predominately done on a reactionary or ad hoc basis?

Recent research in TCM has categorized stakeholder groups as existing or emergent/ad hoc stakeholders (Scarpino & Gretzel, 2014). Existing stakeholders are businesses, organizations (local, regional, or national) or individuals with a vested interest in promoting or providing tourism activities, services or products at a specific destination, similar to those mentioned by Hystad and Keller (2008).



This may include, for example, national DMOs, hotel industry associations, travel agents, tour operators or local government or local law enforcement. Emergent stakeholders are viewed as businesses, organizations (local, regional, or national) or individuals that form ad hoc relationships with DMOs or are required to significantly strengthen an existing relationship with the DMO in a collaborative effort to manage crisis events. This may include for example, FEMA and the Red Cross, as well as local hospitals, local government and local law enforcement and emergency response agencies. These cross-sector partnerships are based on immediate or temporary needs. Due to the impromptu and non-permanent nature of these relationships, DMOs may be confronted with additional challenges when trying to obtain or distribute information and resources among these stakeholders due to, for example, a lack of information or familiarity with emergent stakeholders' organizational structure, needs, goals and responsibilities. Local law enforcement or transport agencies can fall into either the existing or emergent stakeholder category depending on the nature and degree of their current relationship with the DMO. Nonetheless, it is expected DMOs are required to effectively handle their relationships with both existing and emergent stakeholders in order to successfully manage crisis events.

From a destination management perspective, DMOs appear intimately aware of their existing primary and secondary stakeholders and have some degree of awareness as to their threat/cooperation capacity (Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010; d'Angella & Go, 2009; Morgan, 2012; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005, 2007; Timur & Getz, 2008) which in the event of a crisis is extremely useful on multiple fronts. Once stakeholders are identified, analyzed, and prioritized, management may develop and employ appropriate strategies to guide interaction with them (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2007:65). However, additional concern revolves around DMOs' identification and awareness of emergent or potential emergent crisis stakeholders, and how DMOs should account for these entities in their crisis management plans. If we are to follow the suggestion of numerous scholars in using differentiation as a basis for identifying and implementing appropriate management strategies (Starik 1994), DMOs' realization of their existing and emergent stakeholders is imperative, and would provide organizations a cornerstone in designing more effective crisis management strategies. In the words of Sheehan and Ritchie (2005:714), "...all are not equal—so it is incumbent for management of an organization to [identify and] prioritize them and focus their efforts accordingly". Hardy, Wickham and Gretzel's (2013:348) more recent study on 'neglected' stakeholder groups, "those whose existence has not been identified by decision makers or those whose characteristics have not yet been ascertained", sheds light on stakeholder mapping and analyses that inadvertently overlook/underestimate the interests of stakeholder groups and the power and empowerment of those groups to ultimately compromise achievement of tourism outcomes predominately due to the inability of existing stakeholder management approaches to incorporate and respond to the neglected group.

Depending on the type of crisis and length of time DMOs are aware of its impending arrival, DMOs may or may not have time to adequately map and analyze pertinent stakeholder groups to be included in their TCM approach. Hardy *et al.* advocate for a hybrid stakeholder analysis approach combining normative and classical stakeholder management with the addition of an iterative cycle to allow for inaccuracies in stakeholder identification or for abrupt changes in tourism landscapes. The applicability of such an approach for DMOs negotiating crises with emergent stakeholder groups is unknown but shows promise in providing latitude in potentially unforgiving crisis environments. Based on Pearson and Mitroff's suggestion (1993:50), DMOs would be wise to begin their assessment and identification of pertinent stakeholders in crisis by asking themselves three key questions:

1. Which stakeholders affect crisis management?
2. Which stakeholders are affected by crisis management?
3. How can the stakeholders be systematically analysed and anticipated for in any crisis?

Based on a longitudinal study on a forest fire disaster, Hystad and Keller (2008) devised a model (Figure 6) that outlines the roles of stakeholders at the local destination level, to demonstrate the importance of coordination between primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders before, during and after a disaster. Collaboration was required between not only tourism organizations (e.g. NTOs, DMOs and industry associations) and tourism businesses, but also between those groups and emergency organizations. It is important to note emergency organizations are labeled primary stakeholders before and during a disaster, while tourism organizations and businesses are suggested to take the lead role after the disaster. Hystad and Keller's findings echoed the previous sentiments of Fyall and Leask (2006:51) who suggest collaboration among stakeholders at a destination in any context will depend heavily on DMOs' ability to "act as a strong unifying force that is able to bring all component parts of the destination together and develop the wider destination in its entirety."

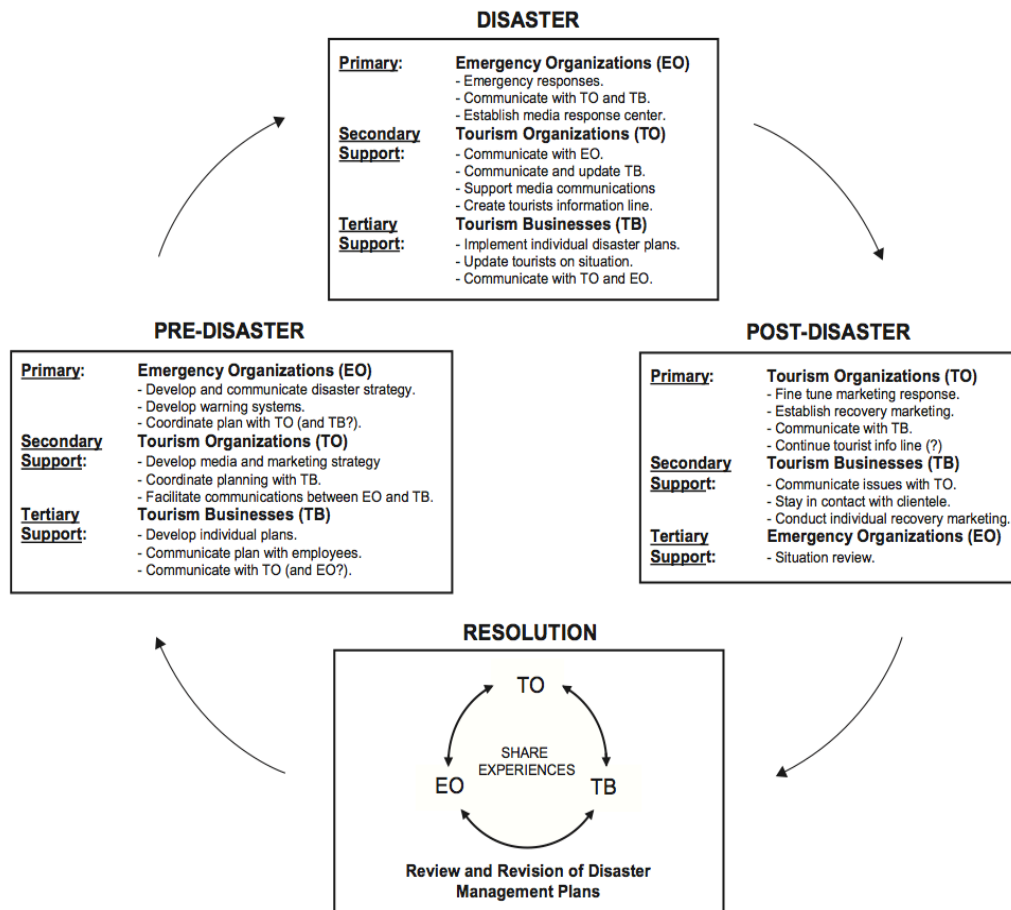


Figure 6. Stakeholders' Roles within a Destination Tourism Disaster Management Cycle

Source: Hystad & Keller (2008: 159).

The model is extremely useful in helping conceptualize the different players and their relative standing in stages of disaster; however, it does not speak to those players involved in other types of crises, such as political, malevolence or megadamage. While the type and magnitude of a crisis will determine the impact it has on each stakeholder, impact is inevitable. For example, the 2013 shooting at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) caused a domino effect in the travel and tourism industry beginning with flight, bus, and private car delays, cancellations and re-routings, and hundreds of thousands of hotel, dining and a host of other tourism and leisure services being affected. This is not to mention the thousands upon thousands of tourists at the airport who sat helplessly affected by the tragedy from anywhere between several hours to several days. LAX (and probably many other airports) had to make immediate changes to airport security measures, and to find a way to accommodate and care for grieving airport personnel. In the event of large-scale crises, such as 9/11, the relentless political unrest in Egypt, or what seems to be a string of never ending natural disasters in the Asia Pacific, e.g. Super Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, the impacts are felt by both external and internal stakeholders, as well as special interest groups, and at times stakeholders in other industries. This is not shocking, given the interrelationship and magnitude of dependency between

groups in the tourism system. Schneider (1995) argues government should be involved in disaster situations for a number of reasons:

1. Disasters can cause severe and obvious social problems.
2. They can become highly politicized issues, for which public figures are willing and able to respond to citizens' needs.
3. In many situations, the disaster victims have little control over the scope and severity of the event and require help.

Social problems, highly politicized and publicized issues, and helpless victims are commonplace across a plethora of crises, not just disasters. Thus, an argument for government involvement (at all levels) as well as community involvement could be made. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is a cabinet department of the U.S. federal government created in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and whose primary responsibilities include protecting the United States and its territories. The DHS encompasses seven government agencies including the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Transportation Security Administration, the U.S. Secret Service and, in particular, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) who handles emergency preparedness and response. DHS also oversees nine other government divisions/offices. Given the rising number of U.S. domestic crises in just over the past decade, a more than sizeable redirection of funds has been allocated toward this branch of government. DHS is said to work in the 'civilian sphere' to protect the U.S. by preparing for, preventing, and responding to domestic emergencies, chiefly terrorism. Exactly what DHS deems a crisis or disaster is still unclear, but FEMA's presence has been observed at both large and small tourism destinations following crisis events.

In addition to DHS, a host of other crisis stakeholders are ready and willing to assist destinations with crisis response and recovery efforts. The most notable of these are humanitarian organizations such as the American Red Cross, CARE, Salvation Army and International Research Committee (IRC), who provide aid and logistical assistance. Oloruntoba (2005) states coordination among relief organizations is crucial for planning, damage assessment, public information management, and appeals and donations management.

In summary, DMOs have a great diversity of stakeholders and even more in the context of crisis management. Some may be pillars of support, while others pose a constant threat. The TCM literature to date offers little empirically-based identification of DMO stakeholders, especially with regard to different crisis types. It also provides limited insight to DMOs' actualization of these stakeholder relationships during crises and their preferred management strategies for addressing relational and operational issues. Over the years a number of TCM frameworks have been devised to address issues

such as this, outlining the various players, resources and needs of tourism organizations during crisis events. However, the extent to which these models accurately reflect the tourism industry and tourism organizations is still evolving today.

***Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning in TCM.*** The significance of knowledge management has been acknowledged more frequently throughout the tourism literature, particularly in relation to destination management (Xiao & Smith, 2007); innovation and tourism product development (Hjalager, 2002; Weidenfeld, Williams, & Butler, 2010); successful hotel management (Bouncken & Sungsoo, 2002); gaining a better understanding of tourism networks and systems (Cooper, Baggio, & Scott, 2010); and to enhance TCM efforts (Blackman, Kennedy, & Ritchie, 2011). Cooper (2006) suggests tourism organizations should at least consider adopting knowledge management practices that will help combat the rising number of crises in an increasingly globalized economy that is already pushing stagnant tourism organizations to pursue more competitive organizational strategies in order to survive. This notion is echoed by Paraskevas, Altinay, McLean and Cooper (2013:130) in their statement “the survival of organizations is no longer dependent upon their tangible resources but rather in the management of intangible knowledge capital”.

Developing relevant yet adaptable strategies that manage both knowledge and knowledge flows will better exploit the benefits of tacit and explicit knowledge (Hansen, Nohria, & Tierney, 1999; (Jasimuddin, Klein, & Connell, 2005; Schulz & Jobe, 2001)) for DMOs looking to improve their crisis management capabilities. Commonly employed strategies include, personalization and codification where knowledge is shared at an interchange between and among individuals or organizations. This could include for example, in-person or ICT brainstorming sessions, storytelling or perhaps a best practices database. Personalization traditionally focuses on human resources and communication processes between and among individuals, whereas codification is centered on both collection and organization of knowledge, e.g. via organizational documents, policy etc. (Johnson & Lundvall, 2001:4). Given both strategies are often employed simultaneously in organizations, how organizations configure their knowledge management structures so the right knowledge gets to the right person or stakeholder group at the right time is often a chief concern (Edvarsson, 2008; Stonehouse & Pemberton, 1999). This could be especially troubling for DMOs facing crises, when the rapidity at which relevant knowledge is identified and applied or delivered can be vital to the creation or implementation of TCM directives by themselves and key stakeholder groups.

In examining the concept of knowledge-based management systems in TCM (Racherla & Hu, 2009) as a means through which to address DMOs’ potential concern, it is useful to first consider crisis knowledge managed from either a resource-based view (Grant, 1996; Kraaijenbrink, Spender, & Groen, 2010; Von Krogh, 1998) or knowledge-based view (Kogut & Zander, 1996; Nickerson &

Zenger, 2004; Von Krogh, 1998). The former suggests looking at the resources a DMO has in place (i.e. specific directives, policies or procedures) to support knowledge creation and exploitation (Von Krogh, 1998). The knowledge-based view instead concentrates on knowledge as the “organization’s key strategic resource” and as a “set of competencies and repositories of knowledge which, when leveraged, transferred and subsequently exploited, enables them to effectively create and disseminate knowledge” (Paraskevas *et al*, 2013:134). From this perspective DMOs’ knowledge-based management approach would in part be subjective to its several organizational and environmental factors, e.g. organizational leadership, internal structure and mechanism for crisis communications (Stonehouse & Pemberton, 1999) and the dynamics of the interpersonal relationships among employees in the organization (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Based on a hybrid resource-based and knowledge-based view, Paraskevas *et al*. propose crisis knowledge exists in four main formats: procedural, behavioral and third party knowledge as well as in learned ignorance, and that further, each of these crisis types is actualized through multiple strategies and processes, e.g. sharing via codification or personalization. Additionally, knowledge-based management systems would need to accommodate both institutionalized crisis knowledge flows as well as emergent crisis knowledge flows.

Based on the evolution of knowledge management studies in the TCM thus far, knowledge-based management systems expected to function in the midst of crisis and/or with crisis-specific inputs must address, balance and marry a large number of components in order to be effective. Although crisis leadership and crisis culture are noted as influential factors on crisis knowledge management frameworks, to what degree those factors are derivatives or drivers of DMOs’ general position towards knowledge management and their role in facilitating knowledge flows remains at this point unknown. Weick (2001) proposed the way knowledge is managed within an organization is key to its resilience; however, parallel to DMOs’ approach to knowledge management is its disposition towards organizational learning and its capacity to feed knowledge management systems.

Literature in organizational learning has been known to lack consistency in definition and approaches likely due to its broad applications across different fields of research (Crossan, Lane, & White, 1999; Prang, 1999). Frequently used definitions in the field of management include Argyris and Schön (1978:313) view of organizational learning as the “process by which organizational members detect errors or anomalies and then correct them by restructuring organizational ‘theory-in-use’”. This definition was followed by two widely used organizational learning models; “single-loop learning” when mismatches or problems are created or they are solved by changing actions, but underpinning facts are not explored or questioned; and double-loop learning which focuses on correcting mismatches through investigation and subsequent change in both the governing variables and current organizational actions in an effort to create new knowledge. Levitt and March (1988:320) posit

organizational learning is the process of “encoding inferences from history into routine behavior” where routine can be understood to include rules, regulations, procedures, strategies, cultures, beliefs, paradigms. Although terminology varies, the concept of organization is often clearly rooted in the idea of learning from experiences that will lay a foundation and pathways for changes in the actions and behaviors of an organization and its employees.

Despite its potential usefulness in improving crisis management strategies through the generation of new knowledge, few scholars have fully explored the applicability of organizational learning to TCM (Blackman & Ritchie, 2008; Pforr & Hosie, 2009; Ritchie, 2004). According to Ritchie (2004) the degree to which an organization is interested in learning from a crisis incident coupled with its organizational culture, will be an indication of the organization’s learning capability. Blackman, Kennedy and Ritchie (2011) discuss DMOs’ roles as knowledge brokers and boundary spanners among tourism stakeholders in TCM, emphasizing double-loop learning and doubting as a means of facilitating the transfer, translation and transformation of knowledge across boundaries. Although, interest and resulting studies in organizational learning in TCM has increased in the last several years, the tourism literature is still lacking empirically findings as to the learning mechanisms, practices and position tourism organizations and more specifically DMOs adopt to effectively learn from crisis situations.

Based on the discussion and issues presented in Sections 2.1 and 2.2, six aspects are provided in relation to the first central research question, How and why do destination management organizations in the United States engage in tourism crisis management? Although qualitative exploratory research under the scope of this study does not necessitate development of detailed hypotheses or propositions (Baxter & Jack, 2008), these six aspects are outlined to help refine the direction and scope of the study and to aid in forming the foundation for a conceptual framework (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Stake, 1995). Thus, with the aforementioned in mind and without detracting from the exploratory nature of this study, the six aspects are:

RQ 1a: How do DMOs’ roles in crisis events influence their crisis management approach?

- DMOs’ roles in crisis will closely mirror that of a knowledge broker or boundary spanner, allowing activities common to these roles to guide their engagement with key stakeholders in their crisis management strategy.

RQ 1b: What key factors influence DMOs' role selection in crisis management?

- DMOs' adoption of certain roles in crisis management will be influenced by its institutional characteristics and environmental context.
- DMOs' adoption of certain roles in crisis management will be influenced by the type of crisis experienced.
- DMOs' adoption of certain roles in crisis management will be influenced by their ability to learn from past crisis experiences.

RQ 1c: What stakeholders and practices are central to DMOs' crisis management approach?

- The stakeholders involved in DMOs' crisis management will include local, state and federal governments, tourists, residents, tourism businesses, other tourism associations, the board of directors and DMO staff.
- The practices involved in DMOs' crisis management will focus on, coordinating crisis response efforts among stakeholders, developing and maintaining knowledge management systems and clear communication pathways among stakeholders, and post-intermediate stage organizational learning.

### **2.3. Organizational Resilience**

Widely debated, the term resilience is thought to have been first used within the scope of ecology, physics and psychology (Manyena, 2006). Holling's seminal work *Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems* describes resilience as, "...a measure of persistence of systems and their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables" (1973:14). Organizational resilience (OR) is most often thought of in terms of adjustment of capacities or abilities or the "...ability to survive, and potentially even thrive, in times of crisis" (Seville, Brunsdon, Dantas, Le Masurier, Wilkinson, & Vargo, 2008:18). Other relevant definitions include: the capacity to adjust and maintain desirable functions under challenging or straining conditions (Weick *et al.*, 1999; Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; Edmondson, 1999); the dynamic capacity of organizational adaptability that grows and develops over time (Wildavsky, 1998); the ability to bounce back from disruptive events or hardship (resilience on a more primary level is commonly understood as simply the ability to *bounce back* (Coutu, 2002; Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003)),



and the ability to recover from disruptive events (Mitroff & Alpasan (2003). Resilience from an organizational perspective, however, emphasizes flexibility, maintenance, and adaptability; thus, resilient organizations adapt and are highly reliable (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007), which enables them to manage disruptive challenges (Durodie, 2003).

OR has also been associated with community or collective resilience. Holling's (1973) proposes systems have two distinct properties: resilience and stability. Resilience determines the ability of systems to absorb shocks or changes, whereas stability is the capacity of systems to return to a state of equilibrium following disturbance. Numerous studies have revealed communities rely on organizations to plan for, respond to and recover from disturbances. Interestingly enough, the same communities frequently expect organizations to continue providing luxury and critical services, e.g. power, transport, first aid, food, water, internet and cellular service etc. even in the midst of a crisis (Chang & Chamberlin, 2003). McManus, Seville, Vargo and Brunsdon argue OR directly contributes to the "speed and success of community recovery following a crisis event" (2008:82).

Contemporary literature has also closely linked OR with sustainable competitive advantage (Hamel & Valikangas, 2003), something of rapidly increasing importance from a tourism destination perspective. Stoltz (2004) advocates OR is the key to developing a sustainable strategic plan whose results are better than those of their competitors. Starr, Newfrock and Delurey (2003:3) also link OR with organizations' ability to be competitive in their comment,

*"A resilient organization effectively aligns its strategy, operations, management systems, governance structure, and decision-support capabilities so that it can uncover and adjust to continually changing risks, endure disruptions to its primary earnings drivers, and create advantages over less adaptive competitors."*

### **2.3.1. Organizational Resilience Management and Crisis**

Within the scope of crisis management, the concept of resilience was established by the United Nations with the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 during the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005. The Hyogo Framework emphasized risk reduction, identifying risks and enhancing early warning systems, building a culture of safety and resilience, reducing underlying risk factors, and strengthening disaster preparedness and response capabilities (UNISDR, 2005). Based on Starr *et al.* (2003) and the capacity for DMOs to play a significant and dynamic role (i.e. manager, coordinator, boundary spanner) in crisis events, Scarpino and Gretzel (2014) theorize DMOs would be wise to adopt the mindset of resilient organizations, starting by aligning strategy, operations, management systems, governance structure, and decision-support

capabilities with pre-existing and future practices in tourism crisis management. This exact issue is addressed in their resilience-based crisis management framework tailored towards DMOs.

Research now suggests organizations can respond to disruption and uncertainty in different ways that exhibit varying levels of resilience:

- They centralize internal controls (Pfeffer, 1978);
- they adapt (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; Webb, 1999);
- they learn (Carroll, 1998; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005); and,
- they are creative (Kendra & Wachtendorf, 2003).

### 2.3.2. Theoretical and Practical Foundations of Organizational Resilience Management

The theory of organizational resilience emphasizes flexibility, maintenance, and adaptability, and is often seen as an organization's "...ability to survive, and potentially even thrive, in times of crisis" (Seville, Brunsdon, Dantas, Le Masurier, Wilkinson, & Vargo, 2008: 18). Literature in resilience management has slowly but steadily increased in recent years, revolving predominately around what is understood as an organization's situational awareness, keystone vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity in a complex, dynamic and interconnected environment (McManus, 2007). In 2010, Stephenson posed an OR management framework adapted from McManus' (2007) Relative Overall Resilience model. Stephenson's model identified two dimensions, adaptive capacity and planning, which are measured by thirteen indicators as shown in Table 5. The theory behind the model suggests businesses that adopt organizational resilience practices render themselves less vulnerable to disruptive events. Stephenson's model was introduced as a guideline for organizations in general and not with a specific type of organization in mind.

Table 5. Organizational Resilience Model

	Indicator	Definition
Adaptive Capacity	Minimisation of Silo Mentality	Minimisation of divisive social, cultural and behavioral barriers, which are most often manifested as communication barriers creating disjointed, disconnected and detrimental ways of working.
	Capability & Capacity of Internal Resources	The management and mobilisation of the organization's resources to ensure its ability to operate during business-as-usual, as well as being able to provide the extra capacity required during a crisis.
	Staff Engagement & Involvement	The engagement and involvement of staff who understand the link between their own work, the organization's resilience, and its long term success. Staff are empowered and use their skills to solve problems.
	Information & Knowledge	Critical information is stored in a number of formats and locations and staff have Access to expert opinions when needed. Roles are shared and staff are trained so that someone will always be able to fill key roles.
	Leadership, Management & Governance Structures	Strong crisis leadership to provide good management and decision making during times of crisis, as well as continuous evaluation of strategies and work programs against organizational goals.
	Innovation & Creativity	Staff are encouraged and rewarded for using their knowledge in novel ways to solve new and existing problems, and for using innovative and creative approaches to developing solutions.

	Devolved & Responsive Decision Making	Staff have the appropriate authority to make decisions related to their work and authority is clearly delegated to enable a crisis response. Highly skilled staff are involved, or are able to make decisions where their specific knowledge adds significant value, or where their involvement will aid implementation.
	Internal & External Situation Monitoring & Reporting	Staff are encouraged to be vigilant about the organization, its performance and potential problems. Staff are rewarded for sharing good and bad news about the organization including early warning signals and these are quickly reported to organizational leaders.
Planning	Planning Strategies	The development and evaluation of plans and strategies to manage vulnerabilities in relation to the business environment and its stakeholders.
	Participation in Exercises	The participation of staff in simulations and scenarios designed to practise response arrangements and validate plans.
	Proactive Posture	A strategic and behavioral readiness to respond to early warning signals of change in the organization's internal and external environment before they escalate into crisis.
	Capability & Capacity of External Resources	An understanding of the relationships and resources the organization might need to access from other organizations during a crisis, and planning and management to ensure this access.
	Recovery Priorities	An organization wide awareness of what the organization's priorities would be following a crisis, clearly defined at the organizational level, as well as an understanding of the organization's minimum operating requirements.

Source: Stephenson (2010: 245) adapted from McManus (2007).

To explore the second research question, How can organizational resilience management be used to expand or complement DMOs' crisis management strategy?, an initial conceptual framework was developed as a lens through which to view TCM and ORM as outlined in the extant literature. This conceptual framework is presented as a preliminary melding of two pivotal frameworks, TCM and OR. Using Ritchie's (2004) disaster and crisis management framework (Section 2.2.1; Figure 3) as a basis to position organizational resilience management in TCM, the conceptual framework presented weaves task and timing stages of crises with dimensions and components of organizational resilience management in effort to facilitate and aid crisis management processes (Table 6). Specifically, the framework proposes cross sections where organizational resilience management strategy could be used in expanding or complimenting TCM strategy. The extent to which each cross-section is applicable to DMOs' actual crisis management strategy is assumed to be heavily influenced by DMOs' *actual* crisis management strategy, emanating from the first research question of How and why do destination management organizations in the United States engage in crisis management? Together the two research questions and the two conceptual frameworks discussed provide the platform for data collection and analysis, the analysis and interpretation of the subsequent research findings, and the discussion and responses offered as an outcome of this work.

Table 6. Theoretical Framework - Tourism Crisis Management and Organizational Resilience Management. X = DMO employs activities under this indicator.

		TOURISM CRISIS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK							
		PLANNING & PREVENTION		STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION				RESOLUTION, EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK	
		Proactive Planning and Strategy formulation	Scanning to planning	Strategy evaluation and strategic control	Crisis communication and control	Resource management	Understanding and collaborating with stakeholders	Resolution and normality	Organizational learning and feedback
ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE DIMENSIONS	PLANNING	Planning Strategies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Participation in Exercises	X	X			X		X
		Proactive Posture	X	X			X		X
		Capability & Capacity of External Resources	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Recovery Priorities	X				X	X	X
		Minimisation of Silo Mentality	X		X	X	X		X
	ADAPTIVE CAPACITY	Capability & Capacity of Internal Resources	X	X		X	X	X	
		Staff Engagement & Involvement	X		X	X		X	X
		Information & Knowledge	X	X	X	X			X
		Leadership, Management & Governance Structures	X		X	X		X	X
		Innovation & Creativity	X				X		X
		Devolved & Responsive Decision Making	X		X	X	X		X
		Internal & External Situation Monitoring & Reporting	X			X	X		X
		Pre-Event	Prodromal	Emergency	Intermediate	Long-term (recovery)	Resolution		
		ANATOMY OF A CRISIS							

## 2.4. Conceptual Framework

Figure 7 presents the conceptual framework of this research. Previous research in TCM indicates DMOs are required to coordinate and collaborate with a plethora of stakeholder groups (Hystad & Keller, 2008; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005), e.g. tour operators, hotels, restaurants, local law enforcement and government, in their day-to-day activities as well as while pursuing distinct crisis management roles, such as knowledge brokers or boundary spanners (Aalbers *et al.*, 2004; Blackman & Ritchie, 2009, 2011; Hargadon, 1998, 2002) across types of crises. Thus, the framework presented suggests DMOs' engage in crisis management through their relationships with key stakeholder groups, in specific crisis roles, that together with DMOs' general functions help establish a set of core organizational crisis practices that guide the development and adaptation of TCM directives. From this perspective and based on the extant literature, the conceptual framework further suggests DMOs' adoption of a specific role(s) in crises will be directly influenced by four factors. The first factor is the type of crisis being experienced, e.g. political crisis vs. natural disaster. The next two factors include DMOs' environmental context (i.e. geographic location) and institutional characteristics (e.g. size, funding sources, internal structure). The fourth and final factor suggested to influence DMOs' role adoption in crisis events is DMOs' ability to absorb knowledge generated from past crisis experiences through organizational learning (Blackman & Ritchie, 2008; Paraskevas *et al.*, 2013; Pforr & Hosie, 2009; Ritchie, 2004). Each of these components thought to directly feed DMOs' TCM strategy exists within an environment unique to any particular crisis event, yet is still subject to the differing levels of panic, chaos or calm that may be present with each type of crisis. How DMOs approach the incorporation of each of these components will likely be reflected in the dynamics of their subsequent TCM approach. For example, the type and relationship held or formed with key stakeholders groups involved in a particular crisis event will act as a guide for DMOs' establishment of a set of central practices that are used as the groundwork or springboard for their TCM approach. This approach is then further dictated by the role each DMO chooses to assume during a crisis or in preparation for a future crisis event. The usefulness of organizational resilience and its adaptive capacity and planning dimensions can then be determined based on the presence and dynamics of each of the above components (i.e. key stakeholders, central practices, roles, environmental context, organizational learning and institutional characteristics).

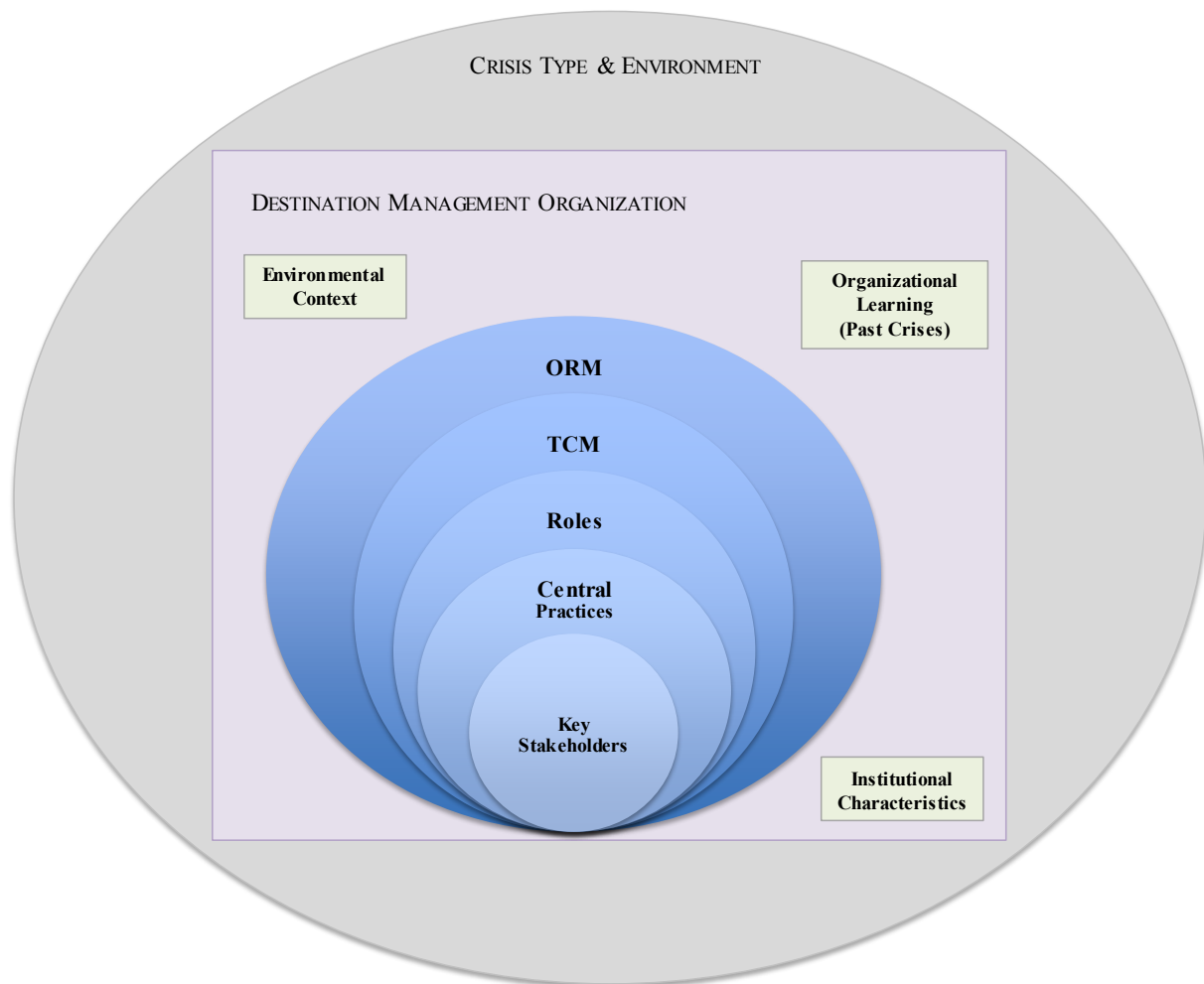


Figure 7. Conceptual Framework for this Research

## 2.5. Summary

This chapter discussed the theoretical background of this study. To outline the context of this research, a typology of crises and organizations' responses to crises was provided. Literature in tourism crisis management (TCM) including related underlying management fields (i.e. organizational behavior, stakeholder management and knowledge management and organizational learning) was explored. Current TCM models were discussed and specific limitations to those models were noted. This study focuses on DMOs' crisis experiences, but more specifically, the resilient actions of DMOs in their survival of these crises. The concepts of resilient organizations and organizational resilience management (ORM) were therefore introduced, resulting in the proposal of a resilience-based TCM framework for DMOs. Based on the relevant literature reviewed in this chapter, two central research questions were raised and incorporated into a conceptual framework to guide investigation of this research

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHOD

#### 3.1. Justification of Research Paradigm

The aim of this research is to explore DMOs' approach to and implementation of crisis management, and to identify if and how organizational resilience management may be a useful strategy in complementing crisis management by DMOs. An exploratory approach to investigate the research questions was selected as the role of DMOs in crisis and their implementation of crisis management strategy has not been sufficiently studied, particularly across multiple crisis settings. Also, the vast majority of TCM studies have focused on the macro-organizational level, leaving crisis experiences of tourism organizations at the local level, and more specifically of DMOs, especially under-researched. Further, current crisis management frameworks with respect to tourism organizations do not appear to adequately address the gravity and influence of, for example, governing mechanisms, stakeholder expectations or rapidly evolving social media (Carlsen & Hughes, 2007; De Sausmarez, 2004; Hystad & Keller, 2008; Page *et al.*, 2006; Tew *et al.*, 2008). As this study delves into an empirical exploration of DMOs' crisis experiences it recognizes the complex responses of DMOs operating in politically charged tourism systems, local community/government contexts, and rapidly changing media landscapes (Gretzel *et al.*, 2006). Keeping this in mind, this study adopted a qualitative case study approach to provide for rich insights into the realities of local DMOs and their crisis experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 2008).

##### 3.1.1. Research Paradigm Selection

Given the research premises outlined above, the research design was positioned within the interpretivist paradigm, which is characterized by a relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology (Cohen & Crabtree, 1996). The interpretivist paradigm was selected because it recognizes the embedded nature of knowledge about crises experiences in organizations and is therefore suitable for seeking rich understandings of the lived experiences of DMOs. It is also able to accommodate complexity (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Specifically, the flexibility of an interpretivist case approach is well suited to the complex phenomena of the inter-connected relationships between DMOs, tourism stakeholders, and other crisis stakeholders in TCM (Yin, 1994). Additionally, because knowledge about these relationships and DMOs' crisis management is currently very rudimentary, the opportunity for further empirical research in this context is of significant value to the evolving field of TCM, especially with respect to existing prescriptive TCM frameworks that stand to benefit from empirical exploration.

### **3.2. Justification of Qualitative Methodology**

The exploratory nature of this study suggested a qualitative methodology would be best suited to this research. Quantitative methodologies commonly use systematic empirical investigation of social phenomena via statistical, mathematical or numerical data or computational techniques geared toward reducing complexity and ambiguity (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008; Gummesson, 2008). Although the vast majority of tourism research over the last half a century has, like other social and organizational sciences, been dominated by quantitative methodologies (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004; Riley & Love, 2000; Stergiou & Airey, 2011; Xiao & Smith, 2006), this research purposefully sought to identify and understand the dynamics and complexities of DMOs' crisis experiences, not to minimize them through objective measurement and quantitative analysis.

The predominance of quantitative crisis management research, frequently from an economic standpoint surrounding political and natural disaster recovery studies, has slowed the development of crisis management theory, particularly from an organizational response perspective. From a tourism organization standpoint, however, qualitative studies in crisis management are becoming more frequent. Tourism scholars and industry professionals are pushing past basic information and statistics about crisis events and are moving towards gaining a deeper understanding of the dynamics of organizations' crisis responses, including their involvement and decision-making processes with various stakeholders and their propensity towards after-action crisis activities and organizational learning. Thus, to strengthen TCM inquiry from an organizational stance, a case study approach that incorporates multiple-case research methodology was selected for this research.

According to Xiao and Smith (2006) the number of tourism scholars employing a case study methodology has risen slowly but steadily in more recent years, focusing more on single-case versus two/comparative- or multiple-case research designs. The prevalence of single-case design studies could be resultant of a lack of funding, access, or simply a small number events or a singular incidence of an event in which to study. The appropriateness, however, of a case study and more specifically multiple-case research design has become more prominent in the tourism literature (d'Angella & Go, 2009; Getz, Andersson & Larson, 2006; Patton & Appelbaum, 2003; Poon & Swatman, 1997; Selin & Chavez, 1994; Stokes, 2008; Tikkanen, 2007). The trend towards this qualitative methodological approach can also be observed among the management science literature in general (Woodside & Wilson, 2003) and organizational behavior and knowledge management domains specifically (Maton & Salem, 1995; Numprasertchai & Igel, 2005; Oliver & Reddy Kandadi, 2006). Scholars' attempt at a more holistic approach toward understanding tourism settings has led to the rise and increased value of qualitative methodological work in recent years, and serves as a cornerstone to selection of the qualitative case study research methodology of this study.



### 3.3. Case Study Research Methodology

This section provides an explanation of the basis on which the case study research methodology was selected. Investigating the research questions posed for this study requires a research strategy with the methodological flexibility to manage the multiple individual accounts and perceptions presented to represent each organization's crisis experience, the diversity of stakeholders and management activities involved in each crisis experience, and inductive and deductive phases of this research. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the research strategies considered for use in this study. Upon reviewing each research strategy, the capacity of a case study methodology to take stock of multiple accounts of different phenomena as well as multiple accounts of the same phenomena led to the researcher to select this methodological approach. Case study research also has the ability to record and process numerous components or dimensions in complex phenomena and suggesting its appropriateness for the research design strategy in exploratory qualitative research when investigating crisis phenomena in organizations. The researcher needed to also consider selection of this research approach based on three specific criteria, where Yin (2003; 2009) suggests a case study strategy should be considered and is preferred when: (a) the study's focus is rooted in 'how and why' questions; (b) the investigator has little control over the events being investigated, i.e. behaviors cannot be manipulated, and; (c) study emphasis is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, where contextual conditions are considered relevant to phenomenon under study (Yin, 2009). Thus, it was important to determine if the study met these research criteria before selecting a case study research strategy.

The *first research condition* for assessing the appropriateness in selecting a case study research method is the identifying if 'how and why questions' are part of the issues raised in this study. Previously outlined in Chapter I, the aims of this study included broadening our understanding of how DMOs at the local level have negotiated crises in the past, how DMOs' engage with specific stakeholder groups in TCM, which DMOs' adopt roles in TCM and why they adopt those roles, as well as how OR management could be coupled with DMOs' TCM approach to enhance their overall ability to address and survive crisis events. Based on these 'How and why questions' it was deemed the first condition for selecting a case study strategy had been met. The *second research condition* for assessing appropriateness in selecting a case study strategy is the extent to which the researcher has control over the event(s) being investigated (Yin, 2003; 2009:11). As discussed in Chapter II, the main topics of inquiry are the perceptions of local level DMOs regarding their roles during crisis events, the central practices, processes and stakeholders involved in their crisis management strategy, as well as the institutional characteristics and environmental context that affect this strategy across varying types of crises. Each DMO's crisis experience, its relationship and involvement with stakeholders in that experience and its management thereof are past experiences during which the researcher was not present nor did she have any direct or indirect influence over the event, organization or its employees. Thus, it would have been impossible for the researcher to manipulate the

crisis behaviors of the aforementioned entities participating in this research given the researcher did not have control over the crisis events to be investigated.

The *third research condition* is a focus on contemporary events and their surrounding contextual factors (Yin, 2003; 2009:11). Firstly, all DMO crisis experiences investigated in this study occurred in the recent past, with the majority of crisis events occurring after 2009 and are thus considered contemporary phenomena. Secondly, the crisis experience and resulting crisis management approach developed and implemented by each DMO cannot be separated from the context in which the event occurred, thus gaining an understanding of the contextual factors that influenced each crisis experience is a necessary for the purposes of this research. Based on the former, the third condition of case research strategy selection was met as the research did indeed focus on contemporary events and their influencing contextual factors.

Lastly, in considering a case study strategy, it was important to note the success of recent tourism studies that also adopted a case study approach. For example, Sheehan, Ritchie and Hudson's (2007:66) investigation of stakeholder interdependencies among North American DMOs that looked at what they refer to as the "destination promotion triad", selected the case study method for its "ability to illuminate contextual strategy and to identify relationships between DMOs and stakeholders in a holistic manner". Thus, in considering the methodological flexibility, the research criteria and the use of case study strategy by tourism scholars in complimentary studies, a case study approach was adopted in this research for its ability to provide thick descriptions of DMOs' experiences in crisis phenomena in order to inform organizational management frameworks.

### **3.4. Assessing the Quality and Credibility of Case Study Research Methodology**

Case study research has the capacity to be quality research provided it meets the criteria of quality and credibility (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). Thus, adopting a qualitative case study methodology for this research meant research quality would be established through implementation of rigorous methods of research design, data gathering, and data analysis. Different from the aim of conventional experimental research attempting to show validity, soundness, and significance, *trustworthiness* in qualitative inquiry aims to support the argument an inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290). From this stance, trustworthiness is inclusive of four main issues: confirmability, credibility, transferability and dependability (Dul & Hak, 2008; Gummesson, 2008; Stake, 2008; Yin, 2009). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:296) these issues can be defined as:

- **credibility** is understood as an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a "credible" conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data;
- **transferability** is described as the degree to which inquiry findings apply or transfer beyond the bounds of the project;

- **dependability** is considered an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation, and;
- **confirmability** is defined as a measure of how well the inquiry's findings are supported by the data collected.

Table 7 presents a summary of the tests and techniques used to establish trustworthy results in this research.

Table 7. Establishing Trustworthy Results in Case Research: Summary of Tests & Techniques

Dimensions of trustworthiness	Phases of research in which techniques occur	Summary of techniques employed in this research
Credibility	Data collection Data analysis  Data collection Data analysis Researcher's diary Reporting Research design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple-case study research data analysis strategies for mechanism identification, meaning, pattern recognition and theory building were used (including within-case analysis and cross-case pattern matching).</li> <li>Parallel and divergent pathways analyzed and reported with limited acceptance of a degree of ambiguous causal relationships.</li> <li>Follow-up interviewing of key informants completed as necessary.</li> <li>Research deliberately designed to accomplish triangulation of the data to provide richer multilayered and more credible data set.</li> <li>Support and oversight of two competent 'peer debriefers'.</li> <li>Performed 'member checks' performed.</li> <li>Researcher's assumptions, worldview and theoretical orientation presented.</li> </ul>
Transferability	Data collection Data analysis Research design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each DMO case compared with extant literature (CM, TCM or ORM theories).</li> <li>Replication logic used in multiple-case selection.</li> <li>Boundaries and scope for reasonable analytical generalization of research defined.</li> <li>Semi-structured interviewing of DMO 'key' personnel with some predetermined questions.</li> <li>Multiple-case research design based on commonly used case study research strategies, methodology and methods in the literature.</li> <li>Thick description of case summary narratives (case study database developed).</li> </ul>
Dependability	Data collection Data analysis Research design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full account of theories and ideas presented.</li> <li>Congruence between research issues and features of study design provided.</li> <li>Case study protocol developed and refined as needed.</li> <li>Semi-structured interview protocols developed from literature of field-tested qualitative TCM research.</li> <li>Decision rules for coding, researcher memos etc. recorded; case study database mechanically developed.</li> <li>Peer review/examination performed.</li> <li>Dependability audit performed (process of inquiry examined and documented).</li> <li>Researcher's theoretical position and biases stated.</li> </ul>
Confirmability	Data collection Researcher's diary Data collection Data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of multiple sources of evidence.</li> <li>Established chain of evidence.</li> <li>Confirmability audit performed (data, findings, interpretations and recommendations examined).</li> </ul>

Source: Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994).

### **3.4.1. Credibility**

Credibility in qualitative case study research is linked to displaying authenticity and local understanding within the research results (Paraskevas & Saunders, 2012). Further, credibility can be understood as participants' confirmation of the 'correctness' or 'truthfulness' of the research findings for the place and moment in time to which they refer (Sminia, 2009). This research established credibility through the aim of interviewing at a minimum one key DMO employee with first hand crisis management experience (i.e. was present and employed by the DMO at the time the event occurred) or one that had been privy to good documentation of the crisis event relevant to the DMO's experience. This research was successful in interviewing between one and six key employees per DMO, with the mode being one interviewee. Each interviewee was given a summary, either in writing or verbally, of the themes and interpretations from their respective interview(s) with the opportunity to add to the summary and further enhance, correct, or approve the thoughts of the researcher. Suggestions as to why only one key employee participated in the study for some DMOs are elaborated in Section 3.6.2. Notwithstanding, data collection included sufficient incidents that 'captured' DMOs' crisis management experiences thus establishing credibility of the research findings.

Multiple semi-structured interviews (Section 3.6 and Appendix C) supplemented with archival records (crisis management plans) and a research journal was the primary data gathering method. This data gathering obtained information on DMOs' preparation for, response to and recovery from specific crisis events. Specifically, the experiential information gathered was filtered to identify activities, processes, stakeholders and contextual data that would in turn lead to an understanding of the differences between DMOs and differences between crises. In an effort to address any ambiguity in the data, interviewees were invited via member checking to clarify meaning when and where possible.

### **3.4.2. Transferability**

Transferability in qualitative case study research can within a multiple-case design be understood as the degree to which the results apply to those outside the research community and the bounds of this research study (Houghton, Casey, Shaw & Murphy, 2013). Therefore, transferability in this research is linked to the ability to produce an analytical rather than statistical generalization of the research results. Accordingly, this research reviewed the initial applicability of current tourism crisis management and organizational resilience management frameworks to establish three research sub-questions pertaining to DMOs' crisis experiences. These sub-questions then provided the basis for elaboration of several aspects describing the stakeholders, practices and roles thought relevant to each DMO's crisis management experience. These aspects were then used to guide a series of methodological choices and selection of methods used to investigate the research (Perry, 1998a, 1998b; Yin, 2009). In turn, the methodology and methods of this research were designed to allow for flexible application of and comparison to TCM and ORM theories resulting from the inductive empirical stage and deductive data reduction stage of this study. Replication

logic was also used in the selection of DMO cases to improve transferability between cases. DMO key personnel interviews were drawn on to establish typical and atypical stakeholders and practices involved in each crisis experience, contextual factors for each DMO, as well as perceptions regarding DMOs' roles in crisis. Research results were reported primarily through publically available research reports provided to each participating DMO, and via publication of this thesis.

### **3.4.3. Dependability**

Dependability of this qualitative case study research was achieved through the researcher maintaining a database beginning with the pre-empirical stage and continuing through the empirical stage of this research. The database included case-specific research memos, field notes, member-check responses, node descriptions and memos regarding research and interview design decisions. Interview protocols are discussed later in this chapter and are made available in Appendix C. The majority of the case database was recorded in Transana qualitative data analysis software. The node descriptions and rules for coding created during the data analysis phases of this research were recorded in Transana as well. To provide credible, transferable, and ethical results this qualitative multiple-case study is underpinned by a quality research design (Stake, 2008).

### **3.4.4. Confirmability**

Confirmability (associated with objectivity) of this qualitative case study research was achieved through external auditors' assessment of the different facets of this study. Auditors, Dr. Ulrike Gretzel and Dr. Brent Ritchie, combined have extensive knowledge of DMOs, adaptive capacities of tourism organizations and tourism crisis management strategies. Specifically, each auditor had the opportunity to pose questions regarding the conceptual framework, research questions and sub-questions, research design, methods, data analysis, findings and subsequent discussion, and made pointed observations and suggestions, playing "Devil's Advocate" at different stages throughout the research process. Upon completion of Chapters I-VI, this research was submitted to two additional independent audits by competent peers with expertise germane to the depth and scope of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Based on established precedent in qualitative research, all auditors were charged with reviewing both the dependability and confirmability of this work. Further, auditors were also tasked to evaluate the degree of researcher influence. Any and all assertions, comments or suggestions by the auditors were reviewed and resulting revisions to the study were made and/or are discussed in the 'Limitation of Study' section in Chapter VI.

## **3.5. Multiple-Case Study Research Design**

Supported by prior theory, this research took a structured approach to case study design enabling it to be confirmatory or deductive as well as exploratory or inductive in nature (Hyde 2000; Yin 1993). That is to

say a 'pre-structured' case methodology approach that facilitates deduction to the extent that theories are expanded and generalized (Perry 2001) versus predominately inductive-focused case studies that provide only descriptions or narrations of events was ascribed to this study. In this way, analytic generalization accompanies the method (Amaratunga & Baldry 2001; Yin 1993, 1994). While a process of alternating inductive and deductive processes is used (Patton 1990), theory building rather than theory testing remains the primary goal of the research. Therefore, Chapter VI of this thesis presents a proposed conceptual model for further empirical investigation.

The remainder of this section further identifies and justifies the research design and case selection of this research. First, the unit of analysis is identified and justified in terms of case study research strategy. Second, the research design is outlined and the use of a multiple-case design is justified. Third, the use of replication logic in terms of case selection criteria and number of cases is introduced and justified. Fourth, the use of multiple sources of evidence for data triangulation is discussed. Lastly, the case identification and recruitment process is outlined and justified. A graphical representation of the multiple-case study design for this research is presented in Figure 7.

### **3.5.1. Unit of Analysis**

DMOs' external structure also affects the scope of their roles at the destination and with regards to their stakeholders. In 2004, The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defined DMOs as the organizations responsible for the management and/or marketing of destinations and as generally falling into one of the following categories:

- National Tourism Authorities or Organizations, responsible for management and marketing of tourism at a national level;
- Regional, provincial or state DMOs, responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism in a geographic region defined for that purpose, sometimes but not always an administrative or local government region such as a county, state or province; and
- Local DMOs, responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism based on a smaller geographic area or city/town.

Based on the UNWTO's definition, DMOs exist at three distinct levels, each with its benefits and shortcomings. For example, national and state tourism authorities often have access to larger budgets, employ more people, and commonly hold strong partnerships with governmental agencies or policy makers with the ability to influence travel and tourism policies. Some of the downsides to being a national or state level DMO include for example, being farther removed from visitor contact and tourism business owners and managers, lending to the risk for watered-down or incomplete information/feedback regarding the actual experiences and needs of both stakeholder groups. Local level DMOs are typically saddled with much smaller budgets and less employees than their state or national counterparts, but have the unique

opportunity to create close personal relationships with their tourism stakeholders and community residents based on reciprocity and a mutual desire for the growth and sustainability of their destination. Local DMOs also have the privilege of “getting to know” their visitors on a more intimate level, allowing them to better cater to the wants and needs of their tourist population. It is also not uncommon for local DMOs to represent multiple cities and/or counties. This is often because tourism stakeholders and community residents recognize that by combining their efforts, resources and attractions, they are able to wield their combined power to create a better, stronger, and more attractive tourism product.

To identify the challenges DMOs have faced in crisis management, the main unit of analysis was the organization, or DMO itself. DMOs in the United States were selected to participate in this study. U.S. DMOs were selected above DMOs in other countries such as the U.K., New Zealand, Australia or Canada for several reasons. First, local-level U.S. DMOs can be rather homogenous in terms of the legislative environment and governing mechanisms, e.g. existing as a part of or commonly being beholden to a Chamber of Commerce, but also maintain enough diversity among them in terms of institutional and environmental characteristics to warrant exploration of their varying approaches and capacities in TCM. Although most Chambers function as a non-governmental institution, having no direct role in the writing or passage of laws or regulations that affect businesses, their collaborative efforts to support and improve the standing of local businesses is frequently observed through strong lobbying efforts at multiple governmental levels. Chambers are not exclusive to the U.S., existing as a similar functioning organization in other countries, such as Canada, France, Slovenia and Singapore, however, their prevalence and connection to local level tourism in the U.S. is unparalleled, making an interesting and appropriate sample population when examining TCM at the micro level.

The second reason for the selection of a U.S. context for this study includes the fact that the type of stakeholder groups (i.e. tourists, hotel and restaurant associations, tour operators, local and state governments, print and broadcast media) U.S. DMOs are known to engage in their day-to-day tourism development strategy is also fairly consistent across the country, thus providing an attractive platform on which to compare DMOs’ responses to the same or similar stakeholder groups as part of their TCM approach. Another key reason for the selection of the U.S. context resides in the fact that DMOs at the local or regional level often, but not always, take the form of a Convention and Visitors Bureau, a promotional and strategic destination management organization uniquely developed in U.S. culture. While the size and structure of CVBs vary, their purpose/mission remain fairly constant regardless of location in the U.S. Several additional considerations behind the selection of a U.S. context for this research included, acknowledgement of the size of the U.S. coupled with its level of tourism and economic development, and its maintenance of the largest number of DMOs in one nation worldwide. Additionally, the fact U.S. DMOs can be broadly categorized as early adopters and pioneers in terms of identifying niche tourism markets or reaching target audiences through social media (Milwood, Marchiori & Zach, 2013), boded well for the



context of this study where the use of social media in DMOs' TCM was of interest. For example, the Baltimore, Maryland DMO has been known to retain a full-time staff member with the sole purpose of posting and updating on Twitter, Facebook, and similar websites. Lastly, given the increasing number of crises in the U.S. combined with their significant impacts on tourism flows and businesses in recent years, and the predicted rise of both foreign and domestic travel and tourism in the U.S. over the next decade, U.S. tourism destinations and their respective DMOs were selected as prime candidates for participation in this research. Participating U.S. DMOs were required to meet the following criteria:

- Must operate at the local level, i.e. city or region (stronger connection to stakeholders) and;
- Must have experienced and survived an externally-influenced crisis (as listed in Table 2) in the past 15 years.

This research was focused on large-scale externally-influenced crises falling under the natural/physical disaster, political, economic, malevolence or megadamage/technological categories as listed in Chapter II, Table 2. The choice to select cases only having dealt with one of these types of crisis was largely due to the fact internally-influenced crisis such as workplace violence are often addressed in the day-to-day strategic management strategy of an organization versus a larger crisis management approach. Crisis experiences were limited to have taken place in the last 15 years in order to minimize interference of employee turnover and the inability to capture organizational information.

### **3.5.2. Selecting a Multiple-Case Design**

Yin (2003: 53-56) describes the *multiple-* vs. a *single* case study approach as one that enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases, with the goal of replicating findings across cases. The capacity to expand our knowledge of a specific organizational group (DMOs) within and across a particular phenomenon (crisis), suggests investigating more than one organization and more than one type of crisis is necessary. Multiple-case designs are known to generate more rigorous findings compared to single-case designs. However, Yin (2009) suggests a single case design can be justified if five conditions are met: a) existence of a critical case; b) existence of an extreme, unique or rare case; c) existence of a single representative case; d) existence of a revelatory case that observes a phenomenon previously inaccessible to social science inquiry, and; e) when a single longitudinal case is sufficient to study how conditions change over. No lone DMO and/or crisis event could be identified that conformed to Yin's five conditions for selecting a single case design. Thus, a multiple-case design was justified and adopted for this research and is presented in Figure 8.

Further, because this research is focused on one unit of analysis, the DMO, it can be considered holistic (single unit of analysis) in its case study design approach (Yin, 2009). Multiple-case study design dictates the theoretical foundation of the research should guide selection of cases, so that the number of cases in the design is decided using replication versus sampling logic (Yin, 2009).

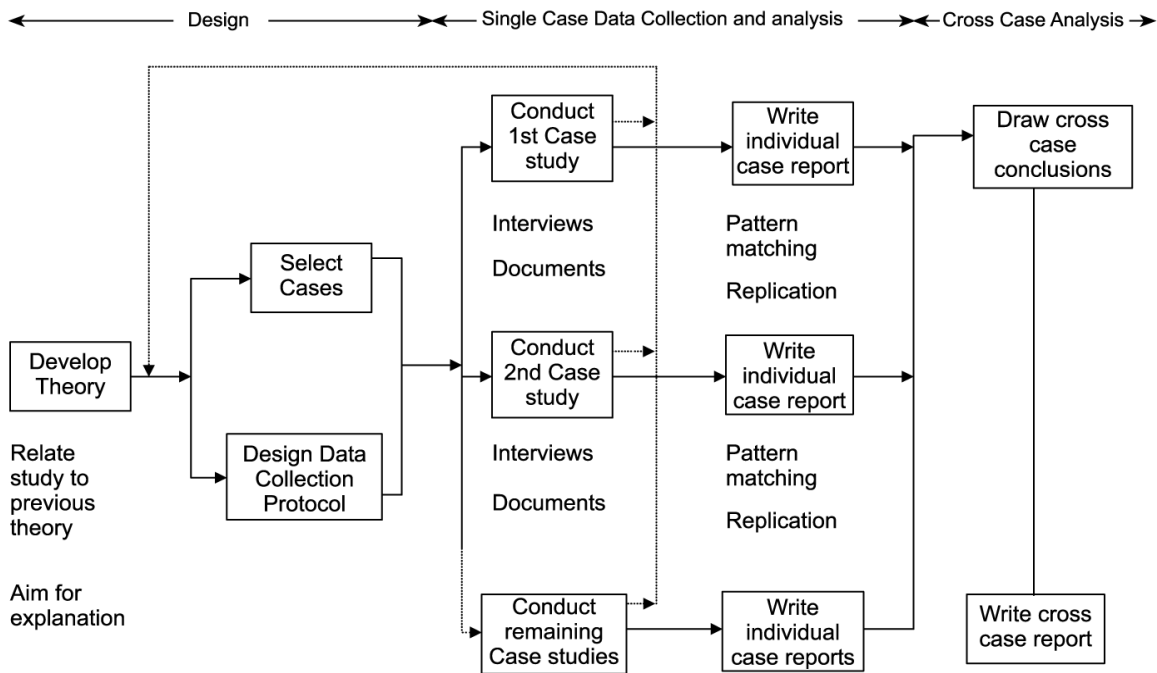


Figure 8 Multiple-case Study Design for this Research

Source: Adapted from Yin (1994; 2009).

### 3.5.3. Replication Logic: Number of Cases

Because this research adopted a multiple-case design, the use of replication logic was required (Yin, 2009). Replication logic is when each case serves as an analytic unit, where multiple cases serve as replications of findings from other cases, contrasts from other cases or extensions of theory (Yin, 1994). Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) suggest replication logic can be understood as a series of independent experiments. Since replication logic was used, typical statistical criteria for designating the sample size were not used in this research design. Yin states upon selecting a multiple-case design the researcher should identify the number of literal and theoretical replications necessary. Yin (1999) further classifies *literal replication* as a design where cases corroborate each other versus *theoretical replication* where cases are designed to cover different theoretical conditions (e.g. different types of crisis) and where one might find/expect different results but for predictable reasons. The number of literal replications needed in this research was decided based on the researcher's judgment as to the sample size needed to observe similarities and variances among DMOs' experiences. This research endeavored to identify crisis actions taken by each DMO as well as the stakeholders spurring, participating in, or challenging those actions. This in turn necessitated interviewing key personnel across DMOs who possessed the crisis experience knowledge and information respective to that DMO. Literal replication in this research was then achieved through all cases being DMOs and through key personnel from that DMO participating in the interview process.

According to Yin the number of cases required for theoretical replication is dependent on the number of extremes the researcher deems necessary for investigation of rival explanations in the theory being used in that study. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, and the expectation each case would bring new insights including a host of potential similarities and differences between cases, it was difficult for the researcher to predetermine the number of cases necessary for theoretical replication. Taking the above into consideration, the researcher originally aimed to include a minimum of five information-rich cases in an effort to create theoretical replications. Eleven DMO cases were originally included in this study, however, through the initial data analysis process, two cases (Luray, Virginia and Fairfax, VA) were excluded from further analysis due to not meeting the criteria required to participate in this study and thus their inability to make any substantive contribution to this research. This left nine DMOs and their crisis experiences as appropriate.

#### **3.5.4. Purposive Sampling**

Qualitative studies are commonly designed to make possible analytic generalizations (applied to wider theory on the basis of how selected cases ‘fit’ with general constructs), but not statistical generalizations (applied to wider populations on the basis of representative statistical samples) (Amaratunga & Baldry 2001; Curtis, Gesler, Smith, & Washburn, 2000; Onwuegbuzie & Nancy, 2007; Sandelowski, 1996; Yin 1993, 1994). Patton (2005) argues the study of information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations. This notion is particularly relevant to this research given its focus on understanding the crisis experiences of resilient DMOs in order to improve the general operability of DMO-specific TCM plans.

While the decision to pursue a qualitative multiple-case study design prescribes the use of replication versus sampling logic in terms of the number of cases involved, it does not prescribe any particular sampling strategy in terms of selection. Instead, identifying the appropriate sampling strategy for a multiple-case study requires the researcher to take several factors into consideration. Miles and Huberman’s (1994:34) manual on qualitative data analysis suggests sampling strategies can be evaluated in terms of six different attributes. Based on Miles and Huberman’s suggestion, Curtis *et al.* (2000:1003) offer the following interpretation of those six criteria as listed in Table 8.

Table 8. Evolution of Sampling Strategy in this Research

Criteria	Elaboration
Sampling strategy should be relevant to the conceptual framework and the research questions addressed by the research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which sampling strategy will help ensure only cases relevant to the conceptual framework are selected for participation?</li> <li>How will I know when enough cases have been selected or if more cases need to be included in the study for developing theory inductively from the data?</li> </ul>
The sample should be likely to generate rich information on the type of phenomena being studied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can DMOs' crisis experiences be relayed in a way that captures the potential intricacies of their responses?</li> <li>How can I ensure only DMO cases with the potential to provide 'thick' descriptions of the crisis phenomenon are included?</li> </ul>
The sample should enhance the 'generalizability' of the findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will can a diversity of cases be included so as to make analytic generalizations?</li> </ul>
The sample strategy should be ethical.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is informed consent necessary for the method options being considered to capture DMOs' crisis experiences? If so, how will informed consent be obtained?</li> <li>Are there benefits or risks associated with DMOs' or their employees' participation in the study?</li> <li>If I already know a DMO employee, what is the nature of our relationship, and should they be excluded from the sample?</li> </ul>
The sampling plan should be feasible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately how much time will it take conduct each interview? All interviews? Do I have that much time available in the research schedule?</li> <li>How will interviews be conducted (i.e. in-person, by phone, videoconference)?</li> <li>What types of data collection and analysis tools are compatible and available for the methods chosen? Is there a cost? Can I afford the cost?</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Curtis *et al.* (2000:1003); modified after Miles and Huberman (1994:34).

Taking into consideration the sampling strategy criteria above and its elaboration in this research, as well as the list of qualitative sampling strategies provided in Figure 9, criterion sampling was selected as the most appropriate sampling strategy for this study. The logic behind criterion sampling involves searching for cases or individuals who meet certain predetermined criteria (Patton, 1990). For example, a study exploring leadership styles among female CEOs between the ages of 35 and 50 in Fortune 500 businesses would use criterion sampling to select only those businesses that fit that exact profile.

Strauss & Corbin (1990)	Theoretical sampling — three stages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● open sampling</li> <li>● relational and variational sampling</li> <li>● discriminate sampling</li> </ul>
Patton (1990)	All sampling is purposeful — 15 strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● extreme or deviant case sampling</li> <li>● intensity sampling</li> <li>● maximum variation sampling</li> <li>● homogeneous samples</li> <li>● typical case sampling</li> <li>● stratified purposeful sampling</li> <li>● critical case sampling</li> <li>● snowball or chain sampling</li> <li>● criterion sampling</li> <li>● theory-based or operational construct sampling</li> <li>● confirming and disconfirming cases</li> <li>● opportunistic sampling</li> <li>● purposeful random sampling;</li> <li>● sampling politically important cases</li> <li>● convenience sampling</li> </ul>
Morse (1991)	Four types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● purposeful sample</li> <li>● nominated sample</li> <li>● volunteer sample</li> <li>● total population sample</li> </ul>
Sandelowski <i>et al.</i> (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● selective sampling</li> <li>● theoretical sampling</li> </ul>
Sandelowski (1995)	All sampling is purposeful — three kinds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● maximum variation</li> <li>● phenomenal variation</li> <li>● theoretical variation</li> </ul>

Figure 9. Various Examples of Qualitative Sampling

*Source:* Coyne (1997).

Patton (1990:176-177) states, “the point of criterion sampling is to be sure to understand cases that are likely to be information-rich because they may reveal major system weaknesses that become targets of opportunity for program or system improvement” and that “criterion sampling can add an important qualitative component to a management information system or an ongoing program monitoring system”. This is particularly relevant to this research given its focus on identifying challenges that potentially affected DMOs’ implementation of TCM, and further how an understanding of these challenges and the players involved could be used to improve operability of TCM plans. Thus, keeping to the goals and research questions of this study, the researcher elected to select cases based on three main criteria.

1. Selected cases would contribute to the creation of a diverse pool of crisis experiences emanating from various crisis types and DMOs’ organizational structure, size, geographical location, funding and visitor and industry characteristics;
2. Selected cases would include only DMOs operating at the local level (i.e. city, county or region) within the United States;

3. Selected cases must have experienced an externally-influenced crisis in the past 15 years to keep new knowledge derived relevant based on more recent industry and technological advancements.

Due to the fact the researcher had little to no way of knowing which DMOs among those contacted would have experienced a crisis, much less a type of crisis being investigated by this research, a self-selected sample was appropriate. Thus, to generate a pool of cases from which the researcher could select DMOs for participation in this research, DMO representatives were first required to express their interest in participating in the study through the self-selection process of reviewing the participation criteria outlined in an initial email invitation (Appendix A and B) and then deciding if their organization fit those criteria. DMOs self-selection to participate, however, meant the researcher initially had little to no control over, for example, the type (e.g. local vs. regional; private vs. publically held), size (e.g. micro vs. SME) or internal structure (e.g. flat and departmentalized vs. hierarchical) of DMOs interested in participating in this study. Further, the researcher could not control for who (i.e. the seniority and position of the employee/interviewee) that would be speaking on the DMO's behalf. Only after ensuring the DMO, its crisis experience and potential interviewees met the stated criteria for study participation, could the researcher take into consideration the above organizational characteristics and employees' backgrounds. It is important to note that gathering insights from a diversity of DMOs was a goal of this research, thus the researchers initial lack of control with the self-selected sample was not a concern for the research design or objectives of this research.

### **3.5.5. Fieldwork Implementation: Case Identification and Recruitment**

This study's fieldwork implementation included organizing interviews with key personnel from U.S. DMOs. Upon selecting a sampling strategy to select DMO cases and interview participants, it quickly became apparent the most practical approach to identifying cases would be to contact a large number of DMOs outlining the criteria required to participate in the study and to allow contacted DMOs to self-identify their eligibility in a response email. The first step in this process was to create an extensive list of U.S. DMOs and their contact information. The DMO list was compiled using various online resources, including each DMOs' official website (when available), each of the fifty U.S. states' official tourism websites, as well as regional and county tourism websites. Additionally, Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB) Associations' websites, the U.S. Travel Association website, and the Tourism Offices Worldwide Directory website (towd.com) were also excellent sources of information for identifying U.S. DMOs. Pursuant to the location of DMOs' basic organizational information, copious phone calls to individual DMOs were made to verify specific contact details.

Email was identified as the quickest and most efficient method of contact for this context. The recruitment process began by emailing one or more contacts at each DMO with information about the study. The initial

email sent to DMOs was slightly modified as needed over the course of the contact period, but remained largely the same as the original version (Appendix A). The email provided a brief overview of the study, the criteria required to participate, the Participant Information Sheet outlining the study in more detail (Appendix B), as well as the sample interview guide (Appendix C) and the Research Consent Form (Appendix D). Email invitations to participate in this research were sent to 398 DMOs, resulting in 24 potential DMO participants, nine of which were deemed eligible to participate in the study. Two of the most common reasons for not responding to surveys or invitations to participate in studies include, failure to deliver the questionnaires to the target population (e.g. wrong email address, employee absent from work) and the reluctance of people to respond (Baruch, 1999). Thorough preparation to mitigate the former required the researcher to obtain updated addresses and ensure where possible employees' presence at work. Aside from taking into account the possibility that an email was not received or forwarded to the appropriate individual within the organization to make a decision regarding the organization's participation, two other major limiting factors to participation appeared to be either a) DMOs' lack of interest in contributing to this study or b) DMOs' belief/acknowledgement of their ineligibility to participate in the study based on the eligibility criteria outlined in the invitation email.

Two follow-up email invitations were sent to DMOs approximately 1.5 and 3 weeks after the initial email invitation. In the event a DMO responded but did not agree to participate, no further contact was made with the organization. If a DMO requested additional information regarding the study, additional details, most commonly surrounding the purpose of the study and eligibility criteria were provided. Third, and for some fourth, follow-up emails were sent to several DMOs originally expressing interest but who were not willing/able to commit to participating in the study at the time. Upon receiving a response email from a DMO with their desire to participate in the study, their eligibility to participate was reconfirmed via a follow-up email, an account was taken on which DMO employees would be participating, a reminder was given to complete and submit the study consent form, and arrangements were made for interview dates and times. The case identification and recruitment (email invitation and follow-up) process took place from early May 2013 to early December 2013, running concurrently with data collection and analysis which began in June 2013.

### **3.6. Data Collection and Analysis**

Based on the purposively selected DMO cases and the research problems and subsequent research questions, procedures for data collection are presented below. The steps taken to develop the procedures for implementing the data collection instruments are also identified. Semi-structured interviews, with interview questions linked to the three research sub-questions, constituted the main data collection mechanism for this research. Where possible, a secondary data source in the form of DMOs' crisis management plans was

also collected and analyzed. Procedures for data management and data analysis are also identified in this section. Lastly, an explanation of how the findings of this research are reported is explained.

### **3.6.1. Sources of Evidence and Data Triangulation**

Case study research is known as a triangulated research strategy. Snow and Anderson (1991) asserted triangulation can occur with data, investigators, theories, and even methodologies. Stake (1995) suggests protocols that are used to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations are called triangulation. Data source triangulation was the main triangulation approach used in this study, coupled with investigator triangulation. Data triangulation was achieved from the multiple cases, transcripts with DMO key personnel (interviewees), use of organizational documents in the form of DMOs' crisis management plans, a research journal kept to write down my reflections, observations, and recurring themes that surfaced during and immediately after each interview session, as well as collection and analysis of official DMO websites, social media (e.g. blogs, Facebook and Twitter) news and print media, state DMO websites, individual tourism businesses' websites, and state legislative bills relevant to this research in Arizona and Indiana. Investigator triangulation requires the presence and participation of more than one investigator, which breached the independent research requirement of doctoral research, however member checking with interviewees and consultation with the investigator's PhD advisors as two competent peer debriefers was used in substitution for this type of triangulation.

### **3.6.2. Data Saturation**

Data saturation is often used as a criterion to evidence the quality of qualitative research in terms of attaining an adequate sample to demonstrate content validity (Francis, Johnston, Robertson, Glidewell, Entwistle, Eccles & Grimshaw, 2010), thus it is important to address if and how saturation of the data was achieved in this study. The concept of data saturation is rooted in grounded theory and 'theoretical sampling' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), where researchers collect data until 'theoretical saturation' is achieved, i.e. no new or relevant insights appear to be emerging from the data being collected (Bryman 2001). Rather than attempting to derive a universal number or mathematical formula to justify data saturation, many scholars have found it more realistic to uniquely account for data saturation for each piece of research they conduct by explaining what saturation means within the context of that piece of research (Bowen 2008), describing in detail data collection and analysis processes including acknowledgement of any limitations or shortcomings (Bruce 2007). Unlike quantitative research, that often seeks statistical generalizability of findings, encouraging large sample sizes for better validity and quality, the sampling strategy for qualitative research is less concerned with the size of the sample and more with the appropriateness and adequacy of the sample (Bowen, 2008; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012).



This multiple-case study endeavored to collect rich data to develop thick descriptions of each DMO's crisis experience through the data collection and analysis of interviews and plethora of other sources of evidence. Saturation of the data in this research was achieved within each case study through a combination of several actions. The first action was acquiring as many relevant sources of evidence as possible for each DMO and then thoroughly immersing myself in the data. This meant reading, re-reading and analyzing each of the sources of evidence identified in Section 3.6.1, including for example, to key personnel interviews, crisis management plans, DMOs' organizational charts, official local and state DMO websites, social media, print and news media, tourism business websites and state legislation. As new patterns or themes emerged from the data, every effort was made to find and analyze additional sources of evidence that either supported or refuted those patterns or themes. As suspected, the findings from each case consistently supported and elaborated the conceptual framework (Figure 7). Given the case selection process ensured diversity among cases, and a thorough data collection and analysis process revealed each case's confirmation of the proposed framework, data saturation was determined to be achieved.

### **3.6.3. Semi-structured Interviews**

To accurately capture the diversity of DMOs' crisis experiences, the interview was chosen as the instrument to supply the main data source for this study. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were held with key personnel for each DMO case. Bryman and Bell (2007: 474) define semi-structured interviews as when "the researcher has a list of questions on fairly specific topics to be covered...but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply". Semi-structured interviews were selected versus a survey instrument per se because the former method allows space for new viewpoints to emerge freely, which is an extremely important aspect for collecting a rich set of challenges that may exist outside of the current disaster and crisis frameworks. Specifically, interviews offer the opportunity to explore each interviewee's point of view in-depth, allowing for different emphases, perspectives, and personal stories to enrich the data.

An attempt was made to interview key personnel across the various units of each DMO. This included, CEOs or Directors, managers, IS/IT personnel, general staff and personnel directly involved in crisis management or business continuity plans. Employees must have either experienced the crisis event first hand (i.e. was present and employed by the DMO at the time the event occurred) or been privy to good documentation or knowledge of the event relevant to the DMO's experience. The objective was to interview a minimum of one employee from each DMO with direct knowledge regarding the DMO's crisis experience or crisis plans, and as many employees across the various units of the DMO (e.g. marketing, IT, administration, human resources, public relations etc.) with this same knowledge/information as possible.

**Interview guide design.** The interview guide (Appendix C) for this study was designed on two main tenets, a) to gather data regarding selected DMOs' crisis experiences and crisis planning as it pertains to the research questions posed in Section 2.5 and, b) to allow flexibility to explore related issues emerging from respondents' comments during their interview.

The first tenet of the interview guide design was addressed by ensuring each interview question could be linked to one of the two research questions and that each interview questions was in turn posed in a manner understandable to interviewees. To accomplish the later of these two criteria this research incorporated the appropriate 'jargon' or 'language' of interviewees' community of practice (destination management/marketing), that of local government, and crisis management. The fact the researcher has had several years of experience using this terminology in an industry setting was extremely useful during the interview design and implementation process. Further, given this research is rooted in tourism, and that interviewees were required to have direct knowledge of their DMO's crisis experience and/or crisis plans, being able to use jargon, language and concepts indicative of or relevant to the tourism industry and crisis management allowed both the interviewees and researcher to carry-out discussion predominately unhindered due to a common understanding. This shared understanding and language also resulted in less need to define the 'language' of DMOs, tourism and crisis management, in turn reducing the time taken for each interview and its subsequent analysis.

The second tenet of the interview guide design was addressed by creating a set of core questions devised on the basis of key themes identified from prevalent issues in the research literature (Appendix C) and the two research questions presented in Section 2.5. Studies focusing on organizational learning and a feedback cycle were also especially useful in selecting the style and tone of interview questions used in this study. For example, Vikulov and Faulkner's (2001) work with tourism stakeholders involved in the 1998 Katherine floods in Australia where they encouraged stakeholders to reflect on lessons learnt through the disaster by posing three major questions in order to get respondents to reflect on their actions and changes to the organization and destination as a result of the disaster were particularly useful. These questions were:

1. With the benefit of hindsight, is there anything you or any other partner could have done which would have enabled you to cope with the situation more effectively?
2. Has the experience of the floods resulted in any permanent changes to your firm/agency's approach to management planning?
3. Have there been any permanent changes in the planning and organization of the destination as a whole?

Questions such as these helped set the stage for the interview questions posed. Additional knowledge gained from the ongoing literature review and preliminary data analysis was used to improve and expand the interview questions during the course of the data collection phase. The exploratory focus of the study

gave credence to keeping the core questions purposefully broad and open-ended to allow the stories of interviewees to emerge and unfold. Probe questions and a selection of structured or closed questions were included to obtain a range of data about the research questions.

The first set of questions included four general questions coupled by three sub-level questions designed to solicit background information about the interviewee and manner in which they came by the crisis knowledge/information they intended to share during the interview. The primary purpose for these personal questions was to help ensure interviewees had the appropriate type and depth of knowledge about the tourism industry as well as the crisis event being presented by their respective DMO. The goal of this study was to focus on the organizational vs. individual level of DMOs' TCM strategy. It is for this reason the resulting personal variables, which may have provided interesting insights towards better understanding TCM at the local level, but were outside the scope of this research, were not employed in the research design.

The next sequence of questions included five crisis experience-specific or organizational learning-specific questions and 12 sub-level questions designed to allow thick description of the DMO's crisis experience while simultaneously identifying the actions/steps taken by the DMO in managing that particular crisis. It is important to note this sequence of questions was repeated throughout each interview until an account of the DMO's activities had been recorded. The third sequence of interview questions was designed to identify the stakeholders involved in the crisis management actions/steps previously identified by the interviewee. As with the second set of questions, the third set of questions was also repeated until each major actor or stakeholder had been identified and described. Table 9 lists interview questions by number and the correlating research sub-questions they address. As interviews progressed, questions became more specific and interviewees were asked to identify the sources they based their information on and how these sources should be regarded for accuracy and reliability. The interview guide comprised a total of 32 questions. All interviews were recorded and complete transcripts were produced from the recordings. The researcher replayed and listened to all recorded interviews a minimum of two times to verify the accuracy of each transcript prior to analysis.

Table 9. Interview Questions Related to Research Questions 1a-1c and Existing Literature

Interview Questions	Research Questions	Existing Literature
Questions 9-13 and 15-20	RQ 1a: How do DMOs' roles in crisis events influence their crisis management approach?	Organizational Response to Crisis (e.g. Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968)  TCM – Reactive vs. Proactive (e.g. Hystad & Keller, 2008; Ritchie, 2004, 2009; Ritchie, Bentley, Koruth & Wang, 2011; Page <i>et al</i> , 2006; Tew <i>et al</i> , 2008)  DMO General Roles (e.g. Fyall, Garrod & Wang, 2012; Gartrell, 1994; Morgan, 2012; Morrison, 2013; Morrison, Bruen & Anderson, 1998; Timur & Getz, 2008)
Questions 9-13, 19, 20, 23 and 24	RQ 1b: What key factors influence DMOs' role selection in crisis management?	TCM – Limiting Factors to Existing Models (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012)  TCM Roles (e.g. Becken & Hughey, 2013; Beirman, 2003; Blackman, Kennedy & Ritchie, 2001; Blackman & Ritchie, 2008, 2009; Pforr & Hosie, 2009; Scarpino & Gretzel, 2012)
Questions 8-13 and 15-32	RQ 1c: What stakeholders and practices are central to DMOs' crisis management approach?	Stakeholder Management (e.g. Hystad & Keller, 2008; Levine & White, 1961; Scarpino & Gretzel, 2014; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; Timur & Getz, 2008; Wood & Gray, 1991)  Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning in TCM (e.g. Blackman, Kennedy, & Ritchie, 2011; Blackman & Ritchie, 2008; Cooper, 2006; Edvarsson, 2008; Hansen, Nohria, & Tierney, 1999; Jasimuddin, Klein, & Connell, 2005; Johnson & Lundvall, 2001; Pforr & Hosie, 2009; Racherla & Hu, 2009; Ritchie, 2004; Schulz & Jobe, 2001; Stonehouse & Pemberton, 1999; Von Krogh, 1998). (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002; Argyris and Schön (1978) Levitt and March (1988)

**Interview process and setting.** Upon commencing the interviewing process, it became apparent that while some DMOs wished to participate, they offered only one or two employees to discuss the DMO's crisis experience, confirming those individuals to be the most appropriate to represent their organization on this matter. Additionally, it was assumed that some DMOs may have found participation in the study by several employees to be too time consuming and in effect not an efficient use of labor resources, hence the participation of only one or two employees in most cases. For those DMOs with one to two participating employees, it should be noted the employees were in all cases upper-level management, i.e. CEOs, VPs, Directors or Managers, and that these individuals provided very knowledgeable and broad accounts of their DMO's crisis experience or plans. Given the DMOs in this study comprised a mix of micro, small and medium enterprises not larger than 60 employees, it is not surprising that employees in upper-level

management positions were observed to have a good overview of both the day-to-day as well as crisis-related issues of their DMOs as well as maintaining close knowledge of the actual operation/implementation of crisis plans. This meant the ability to include upper management employees in this study was particularly useful as the researcher attempted to gather rich descriptions of the DMO's crisis experience, but also in terms of key processes and stakeholder groups, attaining a holistic view of every day non-crisis activities, as well as pertinent confidential or non-public information.

Each interview was initiated with the opening question set designed to relax the interviewee and gain an understanding of their position and responsibilities, experience in tourism and with the DMO, as well as how they were involved in their DMO's crisis experience. The interviewee was then asked to recall and recant to the interviewer their DMO's crisis experience, in what was most often presented in a story format. The interviewer casually interjected crisis-specific questions related to the research questions as appropriate during each interviewee's storytelling process. All interviews resembled general casual conversations between two professionals. The author was the interviewer in all cases, and I attempted not to take a leading position, but to be an active listener gently directing conversation to cover the main themes and questions of the research. A total of 14 interviews across 11 DMOs with 18 interviewees were conducted. Although originally thought to be eligible, two DMOs did not have crisis experiences that met the eligibility criteria of this study (Section 3.5.3) and for that reason were excluded from the data analysis process. The data collected from the remaining sample of nine DMOs including 14 interviews and 15 interviewees, represents a range of crises from political to natural and man-made disasters, nine different U.S. states and includes both small and medium enterprises.

For practical reasons, interviewees were given the option to conduct interviews in person, over the phone or via Skype. The purpose of the study was described, and consents for participation and audio recording were obtained from each interviewee before the interview commenced. Only one person elected for an in-person interview. This interview was held in a setting comfortable and mutually convenient for the researcher and participant. The other interviewees selected to participate in the study via phone or video Skype, the majority of which chose the phone. For both settings I advised participants the most ideal location for us to speak in was, a) one where the conversation could be open and private allowing participants to feel they could speak freely and, b) relatively quiet so that I and the interviewee could be easily heard and understood without interruption or excessive noise (which was also important for subsequent audio recording transcription). While no strict timeframe was implemented, participants were asked to allot approximately 30-45 minutes from start to finish for their interview. Interviews ranged from 13 to 89 minutes in length with an approximate average of 37 minutes.

Table 10 provides interview details for the nine eligible DMO cases and the 16 interviewees among them, ranging from CEOs to advertising managers. For the sake of confidentiality, names of interviewees are not

used, however, to facilitate readability cases are referred to using a shortened version of DMOs' organization name, as shown in Table 10. All interviews took place between the months of June and August 2013. One interview was held in-person and the other 13 interviews were conducted via Skype using video or voice only. Thirteen of the 14 interviews were held with one interviewee and the researcher, while one interview included two interviewees and the researcher. All interviewees consented to participate in a follow-up interview if necessary. At the outset of the data collection and analysis phase, follow-up interviews were designed to maintain a semi-structured approach, be limited to issues identified by first round analyses, and be designed to occur via phone or Skype. The purpose of follow-up interviews was to clarify any ambiguity in the data and to extend explanation of some of the previously identified actions of DMOs or other crisis stakeholders. Although follow-up interviewees were not required, several emails were sent to interviewees during data analysis to request clarification on certain facts, topics or issues previously discussed during their interview.

Table 10. Interview Details for each of the Nine DMOs Represented in this Research

	<i>Name of DMO</i>	<i>Crisis Experienced/ Date of Crisis</i>	<i>Interviewee(s) Position at DMO</i>	<i>Month of Interview</i>	<i>Length of Interview</i>
<b>IDT</b>	Indiana Dunes Tourism	1) Bridge and road construction of Indiana State Road 49 at US 20, US 12 and Dune Park Station (NICTD) – access points to Indiana Dunes State Park (May 2010 - June 2011) 2) Resisting DMO takeover/merger (2006-present)	Executive Director	June 2013	89 minutes
<b>Columbus CVB</b>	Greater Columbus Convention & Visitors Bureau	Disgruntled resident threatening e-response to DMO's LGBT message (2013)	Director, Communications	June 2013	38 minutes
<b>Philly CVB</b>	Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau	1) Duck Tour fatal accident (July 2010) 2) Non-tourism building collapse (June 2013)	Vice President, Marketing & Communications	June 2013	70 minutes
<b>SCT</b>	Spotsylvania County Department of Economic Development & Tourism	Severe weather affecting various aspects of large events (Ongoing)	Tourism Manager	June 2013	28 minutes
<b>Tucson CVB</b>	Metropolitan Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau	1) State Senate passes immigration law (SB 1070) deterring Mexican tourist population (April 2010)	Executive Vice President	June 2013	38 minutes
			Vice President, Community Relations and Visitor Services	“(group)”	“(group)”
<b>GSOBT</b>	Gulf Shores	1) Hurricane Ivan	President/CEO	July 2013	59 minutes

	and Orange Beach Tourism	(September 2004) 2) BP Oil Spill (April 2010)	Director of Hospitality & Information	July 2013	23 minutes
			Advertising Manager	July 2013	33 minutes
			Director of Special Projects	July 2013	34 minutes
			Internet Marketing Manager	July 2013	20 minutes
			Public Relations Manager	July 2013	13 minutes
<b>MCT</b>	Monmouth County Department of Public Information & Tourism	Hurricane Sandy (October 2012)	Director of Tourism	July 2013	51 minutes
<b>Frankenmuth CVB</b>	Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau	Category F3 Tornado (June 1996)	Chief Executive Officer	August 2013	27 minutes
<b>NOLA CVB</b>	New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau	1) Hurricane Katrina (August 2005) 2) BP Oil Spill (April 2010)	Vice President, Communications and Public Relations	August 2013	56 minutes

#### 3.6.4. Crisis Management Plans & Other Sources of Evidence

DMOs' crisis management plans were used as a secondary data source in this research. All nine DMOs were asked if they currently had a written (hardcopy or softcopy) crisis management plan and if the DMO would be willing to share this document(s) for the purposes of this study. Across the nine DMOs', four DMOs (Philly CVB, GSOBT, NOLA CVB and Columbus CVB) were willing to share those documents with the stipulation that the Crisis management plans would not be fully disclosed or included in any publications resulting from this research. Each of the four crisis management plans was received via email in softcopy format. These plans were then analyzed using the case research data analysis process described in the following section. In effort to identify DMOs' roles in TCM, as well as target audiences and directives related to those audiences as an indication of the DMO's responsibilities, each crisis management plan was read and re-read, and then compared to additional sources of evidence including the researcher's research journal, interview data and emergent themes, news media articles, blogs and other social media platforms, as well as the organization's official website. In the absence of a crisis management plan, all other available sources of evidence such as those listed above were analyzed for each DMO.

### 3.6.5. Case Research Data Analysis

Methods literature provides extensive guidance for researchers looking to explore the uniqueness of individual cases as well as the commonalities across cases (for example, Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Tesch, 1990, 2013). Interpretive analysis strategies such as thematic analysis including coding and sense-making techniques are among the most common data analysis strategies utilized in case research. The mechanics of interpretive analysis have been described in various ways. This research adopts Tesch's perspective of "decontextualization and recontextualization" of the data (1990:115). Data are said to be decontextualized as they are separated into units of meaning through the coding and sorting process, only to be recontextualized as they are reintegrated into themes. Recontextualized data within and across cases forms reduced data sets the researcher can then utilize to explore theoretical or conceptual relationships among emergent themes. As data reduction occurs, often the context in which each unit of meaning was originally embedded becomes less relevant, as is consistent with the goal of making cross-case comparisons (Yin, 2009). Dependent on the purpose of the research, the researcher may be inclined to situate or re-situate findings and discussion drawn from the data within the original or new contexts.

Richards (2009) suggests management of uncoded or raw data and its transformation into media for analysis should be considered initial steps towards coding, sense-making and theory development. In particular, coding phases need to move from inductive sense-making methods of analysis towards more deductive methods. This implies for example, beginning with open coding techniques for large amounts of uncoded or lightly coded data, and progressing towards data reduction that will ultimately lead to deductive phases aimed at theory development (Charmaz, 2000). Analysis of qualitative exploratory research as well as case research commands creativity, flexibility and iteration across the different data analysis phases (Tesch, 2013) and often leads to a non-linear data analysis process.

***Hybrid approach to thematic analysis.*** Thematic analysis is a form of pattern recognition within the data, identified through careful reading and re-reading of the data (Rice & Ezzy, 1999) where emerging themes seen as important to the description of the phenomenon become categories for analysis (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997). Boyatzis defines a theme as "a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (1998:161). Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest the use of coding, sorting and eventual development of themes can be a critical at often indispensable element of the research process, yet it does not always capture both the commonalities across cases as well as the individual uniqueness within cases. Analytic interpretations and generalizations require the researcher to look at and through each case (Sandelowski, 1996) in order to better understand the experiential facets that occur not as individual units of meaning, but that are inclusive to a pattern formed from the convergence of meanings within individual accounts.



In an effort to capture both the uniqueness of each DMO case and the commonalities across DMO cases, this study selected a hybrid approach of qualitative methods of thematic analysis, incorporating both a deductive [from the literature] *a priori* template of codes approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Crabtree & Miller, 1999; King, 1998, 2006) and a data-driven inductive approach (Boyatzis, 1998; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008). Thematic analysis in general, and in contrast to a grounded theory approach, is more flexible and less prescriptive (King 1998:119) and is thus well suited for this research. Selection of a hybrid thematic analysis strategy was deemed an appropriate analysis choice given this study it is not rooted in a strong theoretical foundation in terms of evolution or saturation of the research field (i.e. TCM and ORM being relatively new areas of study compared to stakeholder or human resource management), and because development of an entirely new theory was not the primary purpose of this research. The main strength of a hybrid thematic approach to case research analysis is that existing theory can be supported and extended.

Using the template analysis approach, the researcher developed a set of *a priori* defined codes based on the relevant literature and existing theory that were later modified on the basis of emergent concepts from the ongoing coding process. Development of the template was done before commencing an in-depth analysis of the data and was based on the practical issues and theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of this research. The results of the template analysis for this study involved creation of a template of 14 codes to be applied to the interview and crisis management plan data for subsequent interpretation. *A priori* codes included:

- 1) Stakeholder relations
- 2) Crisis type
- 3) Crisis practice
- 4) Financial/funding
- 5) Communication
- 6) News Media/social media
- 7) Organization/destination image
- 8) Learning
- 9) Knowledge Management
- 10) Marketing
- 11) Recovery
- 12) Institutional characteristic
- 13) Tourism/destination landscape
- 14) TCM approach

The inductive approach to thematic analysis in this research involved recognizing an important moment (practice, actor, role etc.) and encoding it (seeing it as something) prior to a process of interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998). These data-driven codes assigned during open coding were separate from those

predetermined *a priori* codes. Encoding allowed the researcher to begin organizing the data in order to support theme development. Table 11 provides an example of data-driven codes found in segments of text across different sets of data.

Table 11. An Example of Data-driven Codes with Segments of Text from Four Sets of Data

Name of data-driven code	Trust and reciprocity
Explanation of code	Trust and reciprocity as a component of the relationship between the DMO and stakeholder
IDT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All this wouldn't have happened if he didn't have that mutual respect for us that he does, and trust.</li> <li>▪ Mostly they're amazed that "that many people playing in the sandbox nicely together for that length of time just doesn't happen".</li> </ul>
GSOBT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ So it would be good if we could get a joint decision made and make a joint announcement so we can start this evacuation at the same time for everyone.</li> <li>▪ This helps maintain communications for our team and use whatever resources we have available to assist them.</li> <li>▪ Those people I had already built a relationship with showed their concern and truly cared [enough] to call and get accurate information from us.</li> <li>▪ They liked seeing me at the Indianapolis Boat Show so they could come up and talk to me about it [the oil spill] because they knew I would know firsthand if they could come back down here.</li> </ul>
NOLA CVB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 'How can we come and go to Mardi Gras and have fun when so many of your people are suffering?' And we had to say 'No, we want you to come. We need you to come.'</li> <li>▪ Competition didn't matter, past grievances or territory didn't matter; everyone came together for this bigger cause of getting NOLA back on track.</li> <li>▪ We had to really share that science and use that relationship with the Corps to give the customers confidence.</li> </ul>
Organizational documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We will assist the media by providing factual information that enables them to do their jobs, while simultaneously communicating with our staff, partners and other appropriate audiences, further positioning [DMO name] as a reliable resource and hospitality industry leader.</li> </ul>

**Coding, sensemaking and theme development.** Hybrid thematic analysis in this study comprised a seven-phase process including familiarization with the data, coding and associated sensemaking strategies, which together allowed comparison and extension of current TCM theory. These phases are as follows:

- 1) *a priori* coding (14 codes defined)
- 2) Open coding (via reading and re-reading of the data)
- 3) Pattern recognition coding (reviewing and removing codes and searching for themes)
- 4) Combining patterns (reviewing and revising initial themes)
- 5) Defining and naming themes
- 6) Sense-making and comparison to member-checking comments
- 7) Identifying relationships between themes, theory, relevant literature and research questions

The first phase of data analysis used template analysis to develop a set of 14 *a priori* codes based on the relevant literature and existing theory. The second phase of data analysis used open coding by reading and re-reading the data and then placing it among the *a priori* defined codes and/or creating new codes in the form of keywords as needed. The third phase of analysis sought to check and confirm previously established codes, remove codes that were obsolete (i.e. that did not make a significant contribution to addressing the research questions of this study), as well as combine codes with similar meanings through pattern recognition coding using the reports/matrix features of Transana. The fourth and fifth phases of analysis occurred somewhat simultaneously and entailed reviewing and further consolidating the data into a higher aggregation level (i.e. themes and subthemes). The sixth phase involved sensemaking to produce initial case summary narratives, which were then compared against member-checking comments. The seventh phase and final phase of data analysis examined potential links between confirmed themes, relevant literature, theory and the research questions.

***Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).*** Data analysis was in part facilitated through the application of Transana, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). CAQDAS supports researchers in analyzing qualitative data by providing a platform to organize data and aid the coding process. Transana allows complex searches and generation of links between data. According to Crowley, Harré & Tagg (2002:193), CAQDAS helps analysis to be “more visible, thereby enhancing transparency, and so the quality of evidence and argument might be more easily judged”.

In summary, data analysis enabled the researcher to identify various attributes of DMOs’ crisis management strategies, and further, several entities involved in helping or exacerbating these strategies. Data aggregation and organization of 423 codes emerging from the data ultimately led to the identification of 11 key stakeholders and 13 themes in the form of practices and roles central to DMOs’ TCM, and seven subthemes as factors influencing DMOs’ role adoption in TCM. Not all codes and aggregated data sets retained sufficient relevance to the research questions to be presented in the findings of this study and are thus excluded from the research findings of Chapter IV.

### **3.7. Limitations of Multiple-case Research**

Qualitative research, specifically research adopting a case study strategy has been known to be messy in nature and has been criticized by numerous scholars for creating overly complex theories, lacking quality and credibility in the research design, as well as lacking rigor. Complicating matters further, TCM and OR among DMOs is a complex construct, which adds to the density of this research. In an effort to overcome possible issues resulting from the complexity of the research construct, prior TCM and OR theories were used to develop the specific research questions and conceptual framework incorporated in the research design of this study. Additionally, further attempts to reduce the complexity of the research construct were

made by delineating the scope of the study to an under-explored segment of the construct (i.e. focusing on DMOs' roles; stakeholders and central practices involved in TCM; influential institutional and environmental context; and organizational after-action/learning).

Criticisms of qualitative case research revolving around quality and credibility as it pertains to this research were addressed earlier in this chapter. One key limitation of this study pertains to the self-selected sample, where the research design could not control for DMO type, size, structure or the seniority/position of the interviewee(s). However, the use of replication logic in case selection, triangulation of data, development of the interview guide and protocol and multiple-case study research design have addressed these and other criticisms. Further, the one of goals of this study was to make analytical generalizations based on a diversity of DMO cases and crisis experiences. The possible lack of rigor in this research has been addressed by ensuring methodological processes and method strategies for producing quality multiple-case research were followed and documented. The inherently subjective nature of qualitative case research has in the past resulted in a degree of criticism that theories developed from case research tend to be un-generalizable compared to quantitative variance studies. This qualitative case research is not intended to build theories of definitive causal relationships but instead seeks to explore both the patterns of events and elements that compose those events, as well as the uniqueness of the case.

### **3.8. Ethical Considerations, Reflexivity and Subjectivity of this Study**

***Ethical considerations.*** Producing an ethical research design is important as it protects the interests of the research subjects and the researcher and serves to ensure the research reports unbiased, accurate results (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008). The University of Wollongong's Human Research Ethics Committee policy, procedures and guidelines were followed and adhered to throughout the course of this study to protect respondents and ensure credibility of the research. First, this entailed ensuring each interviewee was fully informed of the research process and their role within, how data would be collected, stored, managed and reported for the purposes of this doctoral research and future academic publications. Participants were informed of the aforementioned via the invitation to participate email, participant information sheet and sample interview guide (Appendices A-C) as well as through reiteration of this information prior to the beginning of each interview.

Second, the privacy, confidentiality, safety and comfort of interviewees were respected throughout the research process. Informed consent constituted the foundation of the ethical procedures carried out in this research. Thus, interviewees signed and retained access to consent forms outlining their agreed participation in this study, including their option to withdraw from the study at any time. It is important to note that although this research dictated interviewees' confidentiality be maintained, signed consent acknowledged the researcher's intended use of DMOs' proper names and interviewees' titles/positions in

the reporting and publications that resulted from this research. Third, participants were provided an opportunity for member checking through access to initial reports on their DMO. No feedback was given indicating the researcher's interpretations of the interview data were inaccurate. Lastly, data collected was stored in password protected computer systems and/or in locked cabinets.

***Reflexivity and subjectivity.*** Reflexivity and subjectivity in qualitative research continue to be widely debated topics in the literature. Reflexivity requires awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research. Hardy, Phillips and Clegg (2001:533) pose four key developments concerning social science researchers' approach to reflexivity in the organization and management literature. These developments include: an acknowledgement of and attempt to remove bias; demise of claims to absolute objectivity in favor of visibility and disclosure; postmodern dismissal of objectivity and introduction of socially situated (subjective) observations, and recognition of the influence of multiple interactions within research communities on research outcomes.

This study accounts for reflexivity through all four approaches as described by Hardy, Phillips and Clegg (2001). Specifically, I am cognizant my research and the written account of its outcomes are not free of subjectivity. Furthermore, the researcher acknowledges her subjectivity regarding this research has been shaped by her education, professional experience, the literature reviewed (or not reviewed) in preparation for and while carrying out this research, the input of her PhD supervisors and the university environment in which the research was conducted. Thus, findings of this research constitute one possible interpretation of the knowledge and information exchange held between the researcher and the research subject(s) (i.e. DMOs and their employees). However, this interpretation was guided extensively by existing theory.

### **3.9. Summary**

Previously elaborated in the literature review chapter of this thesis, prior TCM and OR theories have to date resulted in broad prescriptive theoretical frameworks lacking significant empirically-derived knowledge of DMOs' actual experiences in crisis events. Further, an understanding of U.S. DMOs' TCM strategies and experiences, including the stakeholders and contextual factors influencing DMOs, had also not emerged from previous research. These elements therefore formed the context for this research. Chapter III presented an overview of the methods and approaches integrated into the multiple-case study research design of this thesis and further demonstrated the relevance of the chosen design to match the exploratory nature of the study and its appropriateness for addressing the research questions posed. The multiple-case study research design, case study research methodology and methods selected are well documented in the literature for producing quality research that is trustworthy and ethical, and is therefore suitable for the research undertaken.

Chapter III began by explaining and justifying selection of an interpretivist research paradigm on which to conduct this study. In brief, paradigm selection was justified through a) the previous limited or non-systematic empirical scrutiny of TCM that does not reflect the lived experiences of DMOs, b) the need for an open minded flexible methodology to explore the objective reality of different types of crises across DMOs, c) the need to address the complex and politically charged DMO-crisis environment (Jennings, 2010; Tribe, 2006, 2008, 2010; Zahra & Ryan, 2007) and finally, d) the need to guide the researcher through the inductive/deductive research design, implementation and analysis stages of this study.

Following a discussion of research paradigm selection, Chapter III then provided an explanation for the researcher's choice of qualitative versus quantitative methodology, and more specifically the selection, appropriateness, quality and credibility of case study research methodology for this investigation. The adoption of a multiple- versus single-case study research design was then elaborated along with the unit of analysis, inherent use of replication logic and fieldwork implementation. The use of purposive and criterion sampling on the basis of replication logic to select DMO cases was also identified.

Chapter III continued by outlining the data collection and analysis procedures and methods undertaken in this research, expounding on the various sources of evidence used for data triangulation including semi-structured interviews, crisis management plans and the researcher's journal. The need to capture knowledge and information across the various dimensions of DMOs' crisis management approaches required development of flexible semi-structured interview questions that would guide the interviewing process and allow interviewees to co-construct the crisis events and management thereof for each DMO. Data from 14 interviewees and four Crisis management plans across nine DMOs, representing crises ranging from political to natural and man-made disasters, nine U.S. states and both small and medium enterprises was collected and analyzed. Established methods of qualitative data analysis such as data coding using thematic analysis to elicit and organize findings within a framework that uses data aggregation were deemed suitable for the case study research methodology adopted. Further the use of thematic analysis to analyze secondary crisis management plan data has also been explained and justified. Finally, this chapter proactively highlighted several limitations to multiple-case research as well as the reflexive and subjective stances taken in pursuit of this research.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the data analysis through identification of themes related to the research questions posed in Chapter II. The chapter begins by describing the manner in which the data is displayed or reported, and is followed by profiles for the nine DMO cases included this study. The next section presents cross-case comparisons in relation to the research questions. Lastly, a summary of the findings is provided. The degree to which the findings mirror and build upon existing literature is then discussed in Chapter V.

#### 4.1 Profiles of U.S. DMOs

This research identifies a single case as an individual DMO's crisis experience(s) and the context in which that experience occurred, including any planning and/or recovery activities that shape or underpin the DMO's crisis management strategy. As each DMO case is elaborated, it is useful to remember the U.S. context in which it sits. For example, while a number of private travel and tourism associations exist at the national level in other countries, the U.S. to date does not have an official national DMO or government department to which other state or local-level DMOs report. State tourism policy (and funding) can vary substantially between the 50 U.S. states and five inhabited territories. It is instead extremely common for local DMO funding to stream from local room or hospitality taxes and tourism business memberships versus budgets supported by state or national government. This implies there is little to no direct link between national, state and local tourism policies, which is very different from countries such as Greece, Australia and Spain, or even larger, European tourism policy. The presence of state and national tourism governance and organizational structures in European tourism policy are much more front and center (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010; Estol & Font, 2016) allowing local level DMOs to feel slightly less responsible for the successes and failures in tourism development, much less TCM.

Detailed profiles of each of the nine cases are presented in this section. Each case involved interviews with one to six key employees with the majority being executives, managers or directors within the DMO, resulting in a rich body of data from among the cases. Particulars regarding interview time frames, number and length of interviews, the position of interviewees within the DMO, and the types of crises experienced were presented in Table 10.

**Indiana Dunes Tourism** (hereafter IDT) is located in Porter, Indiana and represents a primarily domestic tourist destination with the majority of the tourism industry serving this market being

micro and small sized businesses. The DMO is a department of the Porter County Government whose sole source of funding is through the innkeeper's or visitor tax. IDT has an independent board of directors, appointed by a variety of elected officials, as directed by state law. IDT is considered a small firm with five full-time employees, three part-time employees and two regular volunteers. The DMO is organized into a flat structure with an Executive Director who reports to the governing board, and the other employees and volunteers reporting to the Executive Director. IDT is a member of a 20-year-old regional partnership called Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission. The partnership is between seven Northern Indiana counties, Porter, LaPorte, South Bend/Mishawaka, Elkhart, LaGrange, Marshall and Kosciusko. The DMO's destination driver is the Indiana Dunes State Park, bringing in approximately three million people annually, comparable to Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks. IDT presented two crisis experiences for this study. The first crisis revolved around the closure of Indiana State Road 49 (SR 49), at points leading in and out of their main destination attraction, the Indiana Dunes State Park, to build two new adjacent bridges. The bridges' cross-sections were at SR 49 and US 20, as well as SR 49 and US 12 and the Dune Park Station of the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD). The original road reconstruction and bridge construction design plans would have inhibited IDT's new bike trail project as well as other projects the DMO already had in progress or planned. The second crisis was presented as both a political and a malevolence crisis in which the DMO has had (ongoing at time of interview) to resist a takeover/merger by a neighboring DMO for more than seven years.

***Crisis 1 - Access to Indiana Dunes State Park.*** The first crisis experience described by IDT involved planning for and addressing the impacts of the re-construction of Indiana State Road 49 and two new adjoining bridges that would lead in and out of their major tourist attraction, The Indiana Dunes State Park (a.k.a The Dunes). The adjacent national park (Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore) sees approximately three million visitors per annum of which one million also visit the Dunes. As the destination's main tourist attraction, the DMO viewed the impending crisis as one that could be managed or controlled if addressed strategically and with haste.

They [state park] were re-routing people where they would have to cross another highway at a very dangerous spot with no light. There was a concern for an increased number of accidents. It was going to be a nightmare for visitors trying to get in and out of park.... creating the long-term [feeling] "hey, this is the first time we came to the state park and it was miserable".

IDT's concerns were dynamic, but revolved predominately around the potential backlog of traffic and severe and frequent car accidents. They feared the resulting chaos would inevitably lead to disgruntled and dissatisfied tourists whose rapid negative word of mouth especially via social



media platforms, would sharply deter new and/or returning visitors to their destination. IDT took a proactive crisis management approach and began contacting a number of tourism and crisis stakeholders to confront the crisis head on. This approach chiefly involved local law enforcement, the City of Porter's development staff, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), and the Indiana State Park System. The DMO commented by saying:

So it became very clear we needed to get with the State Park (SP) and some other key people and contact INDOT to say they needed to think of other alternatives. As is, this would be crippling to the SP [and the destination's tourism economy], plus increase accidents and possibly fatalities because of the crossing location....

Because of the discussions initiated by IDT, INDOT arranged for one lane of SR 49 to be left open at all times. The direction of traffic was reversed to accommodate visitor flows into the State Park in the morning and exiting the park in the afternoon/evening. IDT reported the completion of the project being delayed, due to in part, to the partial versus complete road closure, but that all parties were able work together to ultimately find an alternative that had the least negative impact and was the safest for everyone.

They are the roads company. They want to do it the quickest and cheapest way possible. They would probably have gone forward with original plan but [instead] they were open to understanding that their way was going to create a big problem.

IDT largely attributes their ability to reduce the magnitude of this crisis in equal parts to their proactive posture and clear understanding of external resources, both recognized as critical elements of organizational resilience planning (Stephenson, 2010) and the strong, open lines of communication they maintain with their stakeholders, such as the SP and local law enforcement agency. Moreover, because of IDT's existing relationship with the SP and their emergent relationship with INDOT, the DMO was able to make a unique request to INDOT regarding a special bike lane project they had already invested a significant amount of time, planning and resources in and that would not come to fruition based on INDOT's original bridge and road construction plans. Had INDOT's construction plans gone forward without the DMO's knowledge and involvement, the bike lane project would have come to an abrupt and disappointing halt, waging a huge loss for the DMO and many of its tourism stakeholders.

In many departments of transportation in the states, that's almost unheard of. You don't go the department and say "We know you've got your plans done, [but] we want you to reconsider your plan, add to them and increase the cost."...we were able to take that and turn it into a huge positive.

Although IDT was able to soften the blow of INDOT's project on the local tourism economy and destination's image, the DMO still reported the crisis as consuming a tremendous amount of manpower, planning and resources and having a sharp negative affect on visitor numbers during their peak tourism season. Analysis of the discourse revealed IDT's acknowledgement of INDOT as an emergent stakeholder possessing the potential to significantly threaten the livelihood of the DMO through creation of extremely negative circumstances revolving around its main tourist attraction (restricted access, increased frequency of car accidents etc.). According to Savage *et al* (1991:63) INDOT's "capacity, opportunity and willingness" to carry out their original plans further solidifies their position of power over IDT. However, in terms of collaboration, Savage *et al*'s suggestion that a stakeholder's, in this case INDOT's, willingness to cooperate will be predominately driven by their dependence on the DMO, is clearly not the case. The data in this case gave no indication INDOT was dependent on IDT, thus having minimal to no reason to cooperate with the DMO's requests. So exactly what drove INDOT's willingness to not only cooperate but also collaborate on new plans at INDOT's expense? Perhaps it was IDT's proactive, organized, informed, and yet humble proposition that drove a turn of events. Maybe it was some behind the scenes politicking between the city/county and state transportation officials. The behaviors and actions taken in this crisis indicate trust and reciprocity were highly valued. The term reciprocity was not explicitly used in the discourse, but the words partner and partnership were used frequently to describe the relationship IDT had with various stakeholders, including INDOT, suggesting a relationship of mutual benefit. IDT went as far as characterizing its partnership with the State Park Superintendent as one in which each partner fully understood that by helping the other partner they "only stood to make themselves better in return." When asked if IDT would have done something differently in their approach or response to the crisis, the DMO responded by saying:

No, I think everything we did really turned out great. We were able to get everything we wanted accomplished. The biggest issue would have been if we hadn't gotten that information [about the bridge project] in a timely fashion. The timing of that information was due to the type of relationship we had already fostered with State Park Superintendent. All this wouldn't have happened if he didn't have that mutual respect for us that he does, and trust.

On a similar front, IDT reported having an immense amount of trust in its relationships with the city and county governments especially with regard to the second crisis they discussed in this study.

***Crisis 2 - Battling a DMO Merger.*** In addition to the bridge and road construction crisis, IDT also reported battling a long-term malevolence crisis in which a neighboring county's DMO has put a

tremendous amount of pressure on IDT to merge their organizations into a single DMO. It is not uncommon for DMOs to merge, especially when network resources and funding could be better accessed or utilized post-merger. Further, it is also not uncommon for the DMOs and other tourism stakeholders involved to be resistant to a proposed merger. It is rare, however, for a DMO to be subject to what appears to be a long-term attack on its employees, tourism stakeholders and local government officials when they do not agree to take part in a merger, as was the case with IDT. At the time of the interview with IDT, they reported being ‘under attack’ for over 7 years by a DMO in a neighboring county [hereafter referred to as DMO X]. IDT describes the onset of this crisis as coinciding with DMO X’s CEO petitioning to elected county officials across three neighboring counties to merge the three counties’ DMOs into one organization. Prior to that time, IDT had been participating in regional tourism development through the Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission (NITDC) and was pleased with the outcomes of their membership with respect to network resources and DMO and destination growth.

[We are] seven counties working together, leveraging marketing dollars for 22 years. Most people are shocked we’ve been able to pull off a partnership, especially with executive director turnover [among the DMOs]. Mostly they’re amazed that “that many people playing in the sandbox nicely together for that length of time just doesn't happen”.

According to IDT, DMO X (a former member of the NITDC) was not satisfied with their membership in NITDC and withdrew from the commission. Shortly thereafter, DMO X requested IDT, DMO X and DMO Y (the other neighboring county’s DMO) merge into one organization. Allegedly, both IDT and DMO Y did not wish to merge and there officially began a crisis.

Both counties have made it clear we are not going to merge. We are confident we want to remain solo.... There is a huge difference between how our counties are run. Our residents also said we do not want this to take place. Regardless, for the last 7 years he [DMO X’s CEO] has done everything possible to undermine our effort [as a DMO] and that of DMO Y.... All DMOs have to deal with politics but most don't have to deal with it on this level for so long.

Over the years, attacks on IDT have been both direct and indirect, from attempts to ‘steal’ existing tourism stakeholders to bribing elected officials to blatantly disrespecting and undermining IDT at events held by joint stakeholders in trying to sway state officials towards their cause, DMO X appears to have tried the gambit.

Downstate he [DMO X’s CEO] is constantly trying to manipulate legislation to accomplish the takeover. ...Our regional group had to hire a lobbyist specifically to rebut his advances on this

issue.... we were successful in getting it stopped but still created tremendous amount of ruckus down state.

Despite losing the support of several elected officials and tourism stakeholders along the way, IDT has taken a number of different approaches in addressing this crisis. IDT has worked tirelessly with county government, state legislature, outside consultants and existing tourism stakeholders to not only prevent the merger from happening, but to continuously repair or maintain their relationships with new and existing stakeholders.

So we're always on alert having to figure out strategically what's our next move. We've hired professionals to help us. I mean this has been seven years of strategizing different things and employing different things.... you have no idea the amount of brainpower we've put into this to try and figure out how to minimize this and to stop this.... we curtailed it and we've obviously survived it but that's not what we want for the end result.

In light of how this crisis has evolved over the years, IDT has been instructed by local government to 'keep a low profile' in order to avoid further damage to the destination's image and local community. This means reluctantly taking a 'backseat' towards helping their destination battle this merger, and instead relying heavily on county officials to continue to wade through this crisis. IDT's crisis experiences with INDOT's road and bridge project and the rejected merger echo the importance of strong stakeholder relations on both the micro and macro-level. Local and national stakeholders proved to be of extreme importance in aiding IDT toward successfully approaching these crises. Strong stakeholder relationships withstanding, IDT made distressing statements regarding the perceptual damage their political crisis has inflicted on the DMO's image. Although, the DMO appears to have tapped into numerous resources to address this crisis, it is unclear to what degree they have reached out to the larger DMO community for guidance. Thus, begs the question, Would having a platform on which to ask other DMOs around the world how they have handled similar situations be useful?

DMOs already have enough problems explaining their value... Getting residents to know you exist and what you're worth.... then they see this feuding across three counties, a divisive issue with wars between destinations "it's my land over your land" and we just can't seem to get along. So people start thinking why not just shut 'em down. Let's get rid of all of them and then there is no DMO [to worry about or deal with].

This is exactly the type of thinking any DMO would want to avoid. To abate some of their crisis-induced image issues, IDT has spent considerable time and resources making it a priority to discuss the dynamics of the crisis and their position with existing stakeholders. IDT strongly believes

DMO X has violated several codes of ethics, quoted saying “[we] would not go into fellow counties and try to sell their businesses space in our advertising. The philosophy is they have an established CVB and I would not venture into their territory.”

In discussing IDT’s crisis experiences, the DMO expanded on how these events have led the organization to increase its overall concern and preparedness to address a wider variety of crises. Their close proximity to Chicago, a famous U.S. metropolis, as well as nearby nuclear power plants, were chief among these concerns. Many tourism researchers and industry professional would consider IDT’s attempt to anticipate and plan for different types of crises based on their geographic location and immediate surroundings a smart strategic move. Although forward thinking is a positive first step towards building effective crisis management strategy, follow-through is equally important, and will require the DMO to take several steps further to include, for example, scenario development and training.

**Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau** (hereafter Philly CVB) is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, also known as “The City of Brotherly Love”, and represents an international and domestic tourist destination. The majority of the tourism industry serving this market is small to large businesses. Philly CVB is a private, nonprofit membership corporation, serving as both the official Tourism Promotion Agency for the City of Philadelphia globally and the primary sales and marketing agency for the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The DMO is considered a medium firm at 57 full-time employees, has a hierarchical structure, is departmentalized, and is overseen by a board of directors. Philly CVB presented two crisis experiences for this study. The first crisis experience pertained to the building collapse of a local non-tourism business leading to questionable practices with local government and general public safety. The second crisis experience revolved around an accident with a tourism stakeholder (Ride the Ducks) resulting in the deaths of two international tourists

**Crisis 1 - Salvation Army Building Collapse.** Philly CVB first described a crisis in which a building housing an operating Salvation Army Store collapsed during business hours in June 2013. Allegedly the License and Inspection division of the Mayor’s office’s was responsible for inspecting the adjacent building being torn down, and was accused of negligence resulting in the Salvation Army building collapse and the death of six people. The incident received national coverage and a political crisis ensued as blame for the building collapse shifted numerous times and different people began initiate litigation. Philly CVB reports first hearing about the incident through the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) listserv, and was quick to highlight its extremely beneficial relationship with the city’s OEM. Philly CVB reported that by maintaining

strong ties with OEM, they have been able to participate in an internal listserv that allows the DMO to be alerted to numerous ongoing crises and potential crises at the city and state level.

Protests can be seen as crisis. For example, say you have a convention going and there is an abortion protest outside; that's a crisis. OEM does a great job in Philly.... that's how we get a lot of information.... that relationship is key, and knowing someone at FEMA.

In addition to maintaining a strong relationship with the city OEM, Philly CVB also fostered a relationship with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Traveling with a group from the US Travel Association, the interviewee went to meet with FEMA to start a dialogue around emergency/crisis verbiage and how we could better use FEMA.

FEMA was very open to better communications with us and getting real-time information.... they have business outreach teams trying to meet with hotels, restaurants and associations in every district in the country. One of my jobs is making sure our members are connected to those FEMA resources so Philly can show its most robust voice when it comes time. OEM and FEMA are very important.

FEMA has 10 regional offices across the United States, each headed by a Regional Administrator. The staff at these regional offices support development of operational plans for all-hazards and generally help States and communities become better prepared for various types of crises. Regional offices mobilize Federal assets and evaluation teams to work with State and local agencies. Each regional office also maintains a 24/7 Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) responsible for coordinating Federal regional response efforts, maintaining connectivity with State emergency operations centers (EOCs), State fusion centers, Federal Executive Boards, and other Federal and State operations and coordination centers that have potential to contribute to development of situational awareness. Other U.S. Federal departments and agencies have regional or field offices that may participate with State, tribal, and local governments in planning for incidents under their jurisdiction and provide initial response assets to those incidents.

FEMA appears to be an important crisis stakeholder in the U.S.; however, not all DMOs have easy access to regional offices and may need to rely on local government or law enforcement agencies to make and maintain those connections. When asked what other stakeholder relationships had been pertinent in times of crisis, the DMO identified several agencies including their public transit system (SEPTA), police and fire departments.

Because we do a lot with the city tied to crime prevention and beautification we have a lot of relationships with police. We also meet monthly with the police group that is focused on the

convention center district so we have very quick access to the police in a crisis. This has definitely come in handy.... people around city are usually so caught up in it [crisis] that they don't have time to think about communicating with all stakeholders about what they are doing. So my role is "ok, City tell us how we can help you, tell us what message you want out there" and then I'll be that center point for that.

Here we can clearly see Philly CVB playing a *boundary spanner*, disseminating crisis information to various stakeholder groups. The competing interests of DMOs' diverse stakeholder networks create a very sticky web to navigate in order to keep all parties adequately informed and supported. For many DMOs, their central function and key activities involve cultivating a strong sense of loyalty between themselves and their stakeholders in an effort to enhance reciprocity for the greater good of the destination. This notion is consistently challenged when the loyalty and support of a DMO are put to the test during crises, as was the case for Philly CVB and the Salvation Army building collapse crisis.

At some point, you just can't respond. We're not a city entity so it's not our place to respond other than through social media--- and saying our hearts go out. It's hard to say what's right or wrong sometimes in crisis communications or crisis mode. It's got to be your gut and when your gut is split between your city, your heart, and legal. It's hard to know if that's the right decision or is it? Black and white is not always the case in crisis mode.

Philly CVB was abruptly met with the unexpected challenge of having to formally address or perhaps not address a crisis involving a non-tourism related building collapse and its affects on the destination from a tourism standpoint. The DMO stated the absence of formal guidelines for such incidents in their current crisis management plan was and continues to be problematic, making it increasingly difficult for the DMO to decipher when and how to respond to such crises. This in turn often forces the DMO to ask the higher question of to what degree a particular incident can be connected to the DMO or the Philadelphia tourism sector. Ultimately, the DMO has often had to rely on the instincts or feelings of key personnel about the situation when making a decision on how the DMO will respond.

So you kind of have to go with the flow and see if it [the crisis event] gets a lot of pick up around the country and it did. It was on CNN, it was everywhere.... but this was thrift store not a hotel, so do you make it worse by connecting yourself? Which again is more like a gut check. But there's no book on it....

**Crisis 2 - Duck Tour Accident.** The next crisis experience Philly CVB presented described an incident in which the requests of more than one existing tourism stakeholder afforded the DMO

little room to play a neutral party. Despite the obvious need to understand and control crises, this task can prove challenging for any organization due to the chaotic nature of crises and the uncertainty and lack of information that surrounds each crisis event. For DMOs, this challenge is coupled with another equally complex task, the task of managing multiple stakeholder interests and needs in the midst of crisis. This leads to questions of what happens when stakeholders' interests or needs conflict.

We had a Duck tour accident in Philly where a duck boat was hit by a barge in our river. The boat went under and two international tourists died.... so our job became hospitality for the victims and victim's families.... sort of low hanging fruit.

It went around the world that Philly killed two tourists. Duck tours called us in a panic because they are a member of ours, saying this is not our fault, can you help us communicate this out? We were trying to measure the Duck tour response, the city's response and the waterfront's response.

Historically, Philly CVB had attempted to address such deficiencies in their own crisis management strategy by participating in multiple crisis scenario activities as part of their local convention center's crisis management approach. At the time, scenario planning was led by an outside crisis consultant hired by the convention center. Middle to upper-level management from each department of the convention center was included and required to participate in the analysis. Interestingly, however, in the face of a recent convention center crisis, the Philly CVB reported the crisis/disaster recovery team was never convened.

We would run through it [the scenario] for hours seeing how we would respond to that crisis. My area [the DMO] was generally communications, but a lot was just making sure everyone on the team has each others contact info, the media's contact info and all is up to date. ...[Also] that in the event of crisis we try to control the situation by having a place for media where we can send info so we don't have them onsite getting in the way. ...Ironically, they run scenarios with a team but yet I have never been contacted for an incident, and we have had incidents.

This comment begs the question of just how useful scenario planning really is if individuals don't follow through with the actions they were used to devise. Similar to other industries and organizations, however, it is difficult for DMOs to anticipate every possible crisis scenario, thus one possible argument could be that although scenario planning can lead to specific crisis directives, it is the process of simply running the analyses to create a mindfulness of crisis events versus implementing the exact outcomes of the analysis that is most valuable.



Philly CVB used to sit on the crisis/disaster recovery team for the local convention center (as mentioned above), allowing the DMO and convention center to maintain free flowing communication and coordination regarding each other's crisis responses, activities and Crisis management plans. Unfortunately, the DMO was removed from the crisis/disaster recovery team when the convention center (run by the convention center authority) hired a full-time communications person creating a significant disconnect between the two entities with regard to preparing for and handling crisis events.

In addition to Philly CVB's discussion about their recent crisis experiences, the DMO also stressed its concern over handling indirect crisis-induced image issues or spillover effects. It is extremely common for neighboring cities, states and countries not directly experiencing a crisis to experience spillover effects from the businesses and communities that are actually in crisis. The close proximity of other DMOs and destinations to the destination(s) experiencing an actual crisis has been known to negatively influence the general public's perceptions of safety in those communities surrounding the destination(s) in crisis. For example, in late May 2013, shortly before this interview with Philly CVB, parts of the U.S. state of Oklahoma experienced a series of deadly EF-5 tornadoes while other parts of Oklahoma and surrounding states were for the majority, tornado free. Regardless, many citizens were heard on local and national news making statements they would not go anywhere near Oklahoma for quite some time as a result of the current tornado activity. Crises of all types have been known to create spillover effects. However, natural and physical disasters, terrorism and political crises appear to be the most common in perpetuating negative destination perceptions for neighboring communities not in crisis. This notion should be of particular interest to DMOs maintaining the "It will never happen to us" stance given we can clearly see that the crisis does not have to happen directly to them to cause major disruption and thus necessitate engaging a crisis management strategy.

The sheer inability of most DMOs to control government and media messages that stand to perpetuate inaccurate perceptions of their destination is for many, grounds enough to devise Crisis management plans. Philly CVB, with a team from U.S. Travel, has taken an activist approach in starting a dialogue around the ramifications of governments declaring a 'state of emergency' (SOE).

By calling yourself in a SOE it opens up a funding source and that's why governors claim it. ...It's a big debate because for areas not affected, people have major misconceptions about [visiting] those areas even though they're not in crisis.

Traditionally, a 'state of emergency' (SOE) is a governmental (local, state or national) declaration that announces a destination is facing a particular crisis. Governments have been known to declare a state of emergency during a time of natural or man-made disaster, periods of civil unrest, following declarations of war or when faced with international or domestic armed conflict. Philly CVB is part of a growing number of organizations and businesses experiencing the repercussions of SOE declarations that deter travel consumers from visiting specific destinations and regions around the globe due to an inaccurate or skewed view of the destination's proximity to the actual crisis. This was also an issue for the Tucson CVB and its continuous efforts to abate negative perceptions about Tucson as an unfriendly international destination, particularly with respect to Mexican or Latin American tourists.

**Metropolitan Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau** (hereafter Tucson CVB) is located in Tucson, Arizona and represents both an international (predominately Mexico and Canada) and domestic tourism destination. The majority of the tourism industry serving this market consists of small to large businesses. The DMO is a private, nonprofit membership corporation and is governed by a board of directors. Tucson CVB is considered a medium size firm at 34 full-time employees, has a hierarchical structure, is departmentalized and overseen by a board of directors. The DMO discussed its international crisis experience with the passing of Arizona Senate Bill 1070 (SB 1070). SB 1070 is known as the broadest and strictest anti-illegal immigration measure in recent U.S. history. Each year the state of Arizona receives visas for approximately 22 million visitors of who are spending a reported \$1 billion in Tucson annually. The enactment of this Bill created a crisis situation for the DMO leading to hundreds of convention and meeting cancellations by organizations and tourists who did not want to be subject to racial profiling or harassment, papers or not. Given a majority of the DMO's international tourist market was (and still is) concentrated in Mexico, the DMO was forced to address the crisis head-on.

***Crisis - Arizona Senate Bill 1070.*** Tucson CVB's description of the political crisis it experienced in 2010 revolving around Arizona Senate Bill 1070 further illustrates the positive-negative stakeholders' relations continuum, through its strong stakeholder relationship with the Mexican Tourism Department (positive) and its own state government (negative). At the passing of a SB 1070 (beginning April 2010), international tourists were required to carry registration documentation at all times, as well as be subject to law enforcement officers attempt to determine their immigration status during a "lawful stop, detention or arrest", or during a "lawful contact" not specific to any activity when there was reasonable suspicion the individual was an illegal immigrant. Tucson CVB knew it was only a short time before their destination would be confronted with a sharp decline in tourist numbers and conference events. Up to that point, Tucson CVB attributed a sizeable portion of its annual \$1 billion in tourism revenue to Mexican tourists

and Mexican hosted conference events, so this crisis was "...about our budgets, our pockets and our dollars."

Unfortunately for the DMO, their initial communications efforts to explain and inform stakeholders and the world of their position was only the beginning of responding to this crisis. As the number of cancelled convention center events rose, and potential tourists and organizations became vocal about their hesitancy to come to Arizona and Tucson for fear of being hassled, arrested or deported, the DMO knew they would have to work harder to abate peoples' fears and promote positive perceptions of their destination's image in spite of this Bill.

Tucson CVB-1: This [Bill] led Mexico to issue a travel warning to their people saying "Be careful going to Arizona because you may be stopped by the police and they're going to hassle you". ...The Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations had a meeting with the U.S. Ambassador in Mexico City. Things exploded.

Shortly after SB 1070 was enacted, the state of Arizona created a statewide ad hoc committee to address the tourism industry and other industries' concerns. Tucson CVB participated in the ad hoc committee, but said they simply could not wait for the State's recommendations on how to move forward. The DMO instead spearheaded efforts with their Mexican contacts to devise a series of countermeasures to confront the repercussions of this crisis.

Tucson CVB-1: Other friends called to ask what to do and we responded, "It's too late, you should have already done it. You should have done it right at that moment." This [call for help] was three weeks after.

Tucson CVB's had spent years building a relationship with Mexican government officials, Mexican cities and their DMOs, as well as local Mexican tourism businesses which proved to be an enormous asset in facing this crisis.

...Our big champion was Miguel Torruco (Secretaría de Turismo del Distrito Federal) because everyone in Mexico was following the orders of the federal government and recommendations from the Mexico Tourism Association, and he [Miguel] came and gave public statements, newsletters, and got in front of the media saying boycotting Arizona and particularly Tucson is not the answer. Basically taking to the microphone and saying federal government was wrong.

The DMO's collaborative efforts paid off as people around the world witnessed and were amazed by the their hands-on approach, "...we didn't hide and [instead] put our face in front of people who

were angry with us and the turnout has been amazing.” Elected city officials followed suit becoming the first city council to vote to file a lawsuit against a bill of this kind.

Tucson CVB-1: We are being called by many people in foreign relations in Mexico City an oasis in the state of Arizona for our relationship with Mexico. It was very interesting and very well received, and to this day our Mexico market continues to be very strong for us.

Tucson CVB-2: "It was really *really* relationship oriented and that's how this was conquered."

Tucson CVB-1: It was for Tucson a great success. ...Still to this day 4 years later we continue to build that strong relationship with Mexico friends.

Tucson CVB attributes much of their success in conquering this crisis to their solid stakeholder relationships and preemptive actions with those stakeholders.

Tucson CVB-2: The Executive VP, to his credit, already had all these relationships to call on. He didn't have to create or call people he didn't know. He just utilized the relationships he's been building all these years. ...You can't make friends real quick in a crisis and then have them do something for you because they don't know you. In a crisis people shy away but if they know you... the backing we got from his relationships... we couldn't create those in a week a day or a month.

When asked how the DMO perceived their local tourism stakeholders position on the DMO's response and actions in the crisis, the interviewees replied with the following:

Tucson CVB-1: I think they know we have their back in promoting their business. I think making a statement saying to them this is our position was important. I think our partners were totally in support of us because they know us. Plus we were helping them with what they might say to their clients as well.

In addition to dealing with the SB 1070 crisis and the reluctance of Mexican tourists to visit Tucson was not enough, Tucson CVB also elaborated on a recurring tangential destination image issue with the Tucson sector of the United States Border Patrol. The Tucson Border Patrol sector covers a majority of the State of Arizona from the New Mexico State line to the Yuma County line (approx. 262 border miles). The Tucson sector has 4,200 agents working in eight stations and is one of the busiest sectors in the country dealing with both illegal alien apprehensions and drug seizures. Unfortunately for the DMO, all activity in the Tucson sector is reported to the media through only one of the eight border patrol offices, the Tucson Border Patrol office, consequently

leading to more misperceptions by the general public and potential tourists about the city of Tucson.

Tucson CVB-1: I said to my friend, the Customs & Borders Chief [for the Tucson sector] that anything that happens with Arizona immigration laws, when statements are made, people are caught etc., it comes with the tagline of being from Tucson, Arizona even if the event was miles away. So information for the [whole] sector always looks like it's coming from Tucson and this is a serious problem for us.

At the time of the interview, Tucson CVB had yet to identify a clear solution to their destination's negative image issues as a result of border patrol activity, and continues for the time being to be as forthcoming and clear with its stakeholders as possible about border patrol cases and incidences actually taking place in Tucson and the immediately surrounding areas. With respect to both this image issue and their SB 1070 crisis, the DMO emphasized truth telling as one of their highest priorities, *"We continue to be transparent! When you outline good goals in a transparent manner they can't really argue with you on it."* The findings of this case highlight the already established notions that stakeholder relations are a two-way process, and that stakeholders have the capacity to influence crisis outcomes both explicitly and implicitly through their actions or inaction toward crisis policy. This same notion is also visible in the case of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Tourism, and its ability to work with city and county governments in order to greatly improve not only its own crisis management plan but that of local government as well.

**Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Tourism** (hereafter GSOBT) is located in Gulf Shores, Alabama and represents the cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama. Both cities are primarily domestic tourist destinations with the majority of tourism industry serving this market being micro to medium-sized businesses. The DMO's funding sources include a lodging tax, grants, and sports commission sponsorship. GSOBT is considered a medium size firm at 41 full-time and part-time employees, is organized into a hierarchical and departmentalized structure with a President/CEO reporting to the governing board and other managers and employees reporting to the President. The DMO presented two crisis experiences for this study, Hurricane Ivan in September 2004 and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in April 2010 (also referred to as the British Petroleum (BP) oil spill). The BP oil spill is considered the largest accidental marine oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry.

**Crisis 1 - Hurricane Ivan.** GSOBT presented a unique case in respect to crisis management as the DMO represents two separate but neighboring cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach. Across six individual interviews with DMO employees, ranging from the President & CEO to the Public

Relations Manager, the most common topic of discussion was the multiple collaborative crisis management roles the DMO played with city and county officials during both crises. The DMO's crisis management roles appeared to revolve around communications; providing local governments with necessary information about tourism businesses; disseminating information to those same businesses as needed; and pro-actively ensuring the coordination of crisis management responses and activities between the two cities and three governmental jurisdictions, who until just prior to Hurricane Ivan had had a very scattered crisis management approach.

GSOBT-1: For example, one [county] says evacuate Friday, one says we're not evacuating at all and one says evacuate Saturday or Sunday... We decided we needed to be in those decision rooms to urge our public officials by saying "What you do is gonna impact the people down the street and confuse the guests tremendously. So it would be good if we could get a joint decision made and make a joint announcement so we can start this evacuation at the same time for everyone." ...Today they work together and Ivan was a major turning point for that.

Coordination among the municipalities and the DMO had only begun to be established before Hurricane Ivan put it to the test. Fortunately, the newly found clarity and harmony among these organizations lead GSOBT as a whole, as well as individual employees, in playing critical roles during that crisis event. More than one interviewee described their experience in serving as part of the county Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and aiding the cities' Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs).

GSOBT-2: We assisted the local government with communications... This helps maintain communications for our team and use whatever resources we have available to assist them.

GSOBT-3: Pre-storm... we put our communications avenues in place with the two city emergency operation centers and the county and got information out to our industry partners and visitors at the time.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan, GSOBT conveyed their appreciation of both their existing and emergent stakeholder relationships with various media entities. One interviewee expressed how pleased she was with the genuine concern and warm response received from several travel writers with which they had maintained steady relations.

GSOBT-3: Those people I had already built a relationship with showed their concern and truly cared [enough] to call and get accurate information from us.

In addition to their existing media relationships, the DMO made a number of ad hoc relationships with national media, most notably, the Cable News Network (CNN). An American basic cable and satellite television channel, CNN was the first all-news television channel in the United States. Well respected globally, CNN is currently viewable in 212 countries and territories, which is extremely significant in the scope of tourists' perceptions of destination image.

GSOBT-3: It was also beneficial because we had the opportunity to interact with media that would have never thought about our area in a normal [non-crisis] situation.

GSOBT was able to share specific pertinent information and news with CNN about their crisis management activities immediately following as well as several months after Hurricane Ivan. The DMO claims to maintain several of the emergent relationships made during Hurricane Ivan, such as its relationship with CNN and a number of new travel writers. GSOBT's crisis case with Hurricane Ivan is a prime example of how DMOs inclusion in local government's crisis management strategy can be extremely beneficial. Unfortunately, local governments and other crisis stakeholders may not realize until it is too late the valuable knowledge, information and referent power DMOs possess, much less how to tap in to and utilize those elements during disruptive events such as crises. GSOBT appears to have a clear understanding of the concept of bi-directional knowledge flows among its stakeholders, and was, for example, able to utilize its existing partnerships with academia and wildlife experts to make important inquiries during the BP oil spill crisis in 2010.

***Crisis 2 – BP Oil Spill.*** The discourse around this crisis experience further emphasized the benefits of forming and maintaining strong relationships with a dynamic group of stakeholders to improve crisis management saying, "Having those types of relationships in place really gave us an advantage in getting that accurate information." In addition to these relationships, GSOBT made two strategic decisions regarding their image following the BP oil spill crisis, both revolving around transparency and truth-telling. First, the DMO used their attendance at annual travel trade and consumer shows to inform people of the *actual* damage, current condition and anticipated recovery of GSOBT.

GSOBT-2: They liked seeing me at the Nashville Southern Woman's Show... [and] they liked seeing me at the Indianapolis Boat Show so they could come up and talk to me about it [the oil spill] because they knew I would know firsthand if they could come back down here. I think that was one of our smartest moves.

In order to attain a better grasp on the length and dynamics of the cleanup and intermediate to long-term recovery phases, and to avoid conflicting images between the DMO and media, many DMOs

may have opted to put marketing activities such as travel trade shows on hold during crises. GSOBT's response to the BP oil spill, however, mirrored the positive, head-on approach of the majority of DMOs in this study, focusing instead on providing truthful upfront information to their stakeholders and target markets with the goal of offering a more well-rounded base of information to aid their perceptual process. The fact some areas of GSOBT were more affected than others and that tourists would not be able to visit those places did appear to be a deterrent for the DMO, who saw plenty of life in their tourism sector and set out to draw people's attention in that direction.

To further promote transparency between the destination and the general public following the emergency stage of crisis, the DMO's second strategic move entailed encouraging beachside businesses to become 'camera sponsors' of an Alabama state-run beach webcam ([bamabeachcams.com](http://bamabeachcams.com)). These webcams allow the general public real-time views of the condition of their beaches. The cameras, still in place today, offered a bias-free medium through which the world could assess some of the damage of the oil spill with their own eyes. This approach to transparency proved extremely useful at no cost to the DMO.

GSOBT reported having maintained some form of a crisis communication and crisis operational plan for more than 20 years at the time of the interview and being formally engaged in their cities' crisis management activities. The DMO's CEO has adopted a realistic view of the potential impacts of varying crises and identifies planning and learning to be key components of ensuring the DMO's survival.

GSOBT-1: Our plan is about anticipating the need and assigning one person and one backup person for that need. ...Lots of things affect how we engage, when we engage and to what level.

In an effort to expedite their crisis response process and ensure communication remains consistent and familiar to residents and tourists, the DMO's crisis management plan goes so far as to include pre-drafted press releases and template communication tools that only need a change of crisis name, description and date. Additionally, like countless DMOs worldwide, GSOBT maintains a complete database of local tourism businesses that can be made accessible to emergency personnel and other crisis stakeholders as needed.

GSOBT-1: We maintain, which is an ongoing operation, the most comprehensive database of all our tourist related businesses, and we use that as a communication tool. When our city government says we need to get message out to tourism businesses, they can email us and we have it out to them in minutes.



It is worth noting GSOBT's crisis management link to local government extends beyond "We're available if you need us", delving into actual commitments by DMO personnel to aid county offices and emergency services. The DMO consistently follows-up with city and county officials annually to ensure each entity is aware of each other's resources and everyone is on the same page.

GSOBT-1: During Hurricane Preparedness Week each year we touch base with local officials etc. to remind them of tools we have, what tools we might have added, how we can assist them... FEMA has training and certification and we put some of our people through that so if something happens they [FEMA] know our people are not just volunteers off street but have training, experience and background.

GSOBT emphasized several important lessons-learned following both Hurricane Ivan and the BP oil spill, including internal policy changes for employees returning to work, ensuring enough tourism businesses were operating to keep up with tourism demand during the intermediate and long-term recovery stages of crisis, and being more mindful of employees' physical and mental health.

When asked how, outside of modifications resulting from previous crises, the DMO addressed their crisis management plan, they reported making several changes to their plans predominately based on changing technology and popular communication platforms. Specifically, the DMO mentioned having better connectivity due to newer technology with its media and industry partners, and that integrating this new element was a crucial part of assessing and updating their crisis management plan.

GSOBT -4: From a communication standpoint and representing the destination standpoint we've made a lot of changes. At the time fax and email were main communication channels. Now that's gone by the wayside, and we're using social media and other things. That's an area we look at each year whether there is a need or not and we try to improve it.

One interviewee attributed the decreased stress in an often chaotic crisis environment to the DMO's crisis management plan and the degree to which the plan delegates duties.

GSOBT-3: We've been so fortunate to have a plan, but between Ivan, Katrina and the oil spill we've tweaked those plans, taking everything a step further. ...We noticed the communication department kind of has a plan of their own because we're the ones getting the word out to publics and industry partners etc., so we had to remove ourselves from the operations plan and focus on the communication plan while everybody did everything else. We're not about being the first one to respond but being able to respond accurately.

Apart from changes made to their crisis management plan in response to past crises, local community needs and resources, as well as evolving technology, GSOBT utilizes knowledge and information gained from dialogue with state level tourism organizations to help ensure optimization of their plans.

GSOBT -1: We have a great network with each other. Pre Ivan and pre Katrina, we had these kind of discussions with our state associations and state tourism offices. ...We keep each other informed about evacuations etc., so we might know hours before [it happens]. When they announced the Katrina evacuation from NOLA they knew that meant about 1 million people headed up the coast through Alabama needed shelter....

The DMO's proactive posture towards crises coupled with its planning, knowledge management and learning behavior, and close relationships with tourism and crisis stakeholders has allowed them to continue to expand and strengthen various aspects of their crisis management plan. The fact the DMO incorporates two distinct yet complimentary plans (communications and operations) may be a significant contributing factor to their ability to survive past crises.

**New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau** (hereafter NOLA CVB) is located in New Orleans, Louisiana, commonly referred to as NOLA. Globally known for its annual Mardi Gras celebration and French Quarter district, the DMO represents both an international and domestic tourist destination. NOLA CVB is a nationally accredited, private, nonprofit membership corporation with approximately 1,100-members. The DMO remains the largest and most successful private economic development corporation in the state of Louisiana. The majority of the tourism industry serving this market is small to large businesses. NOLA CVB is considered a medium size firm at 58 full-time employees, has a hierarchical structure, and is departmentalized and overseen by a board of directors. The DMO presented two crisis experiences for this study, Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 and the BP oil spill in April 2010.

***Crisis 1 - Hurricane Katrina.*** The devastation New Orleans suffered as a result of Hurricane Katrina was unseen in U.S. history. When Hurricane Katrina made landfall on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005, the French Quarter and a lot of historic neighborhoods were unscathed from the floodwaters, yet 80% of the city (mostly residential neighborhoods) was completely underwater.

Three of our most iconic buildings (Superdome, Convention Center and Hyatt Regency Hotel) were shelters for people. Some planned shelters and some not. Everyone remembers the terrible images coming from those three buildings of human suffering, [and] then you just had a city in complete

chaos and mostly underwater. Images broadcast around world everyday all day. Terrible scenes and images of Americans being rescued off rooftops, people trapped in attics etc.

Joining NOLA CVB in the intermediate stage of this crisis, the interviewee was tasked to run the public relations department, lead crisis recovery efforts and develop strategies that addressed the brand damage NOLA had suffered, quoted saying “... *and brand damage is really an understatement to describe what was going on in NOLA at that time.*”

By 2006, the heart of city, the majority of restaurants, numerous accommodations, the convention center and the Superdome were all back up and running. Overall, the resident and working population was reforming and NOLA CVB was able to welcome conventions back in to the city again. Although things appeared to be getting back on track for the destination, reviving NOLA’s tourism economy was much harder than expected. The perceptual damage was done. The terrifyingly vivid images of Hurricane Katrina hitting, the damage and destruction it caused and the numerous rooftop rescues were burned into the minds of people around the world. Much of NOLA CVB’s work during the intermediate and long-term recovery stages of the crisis revolved around overcoming misperceptions about NOLA’s current state and “*getting as many people here as possible and letting them see for themselves*”. The DMO wanted to inform visitors, to make them feel comfortable and confident about their choice to visit NOLA. The DMO said they were looking to instill a mindset in which people could think to themselves, “*A lot of the city is destroyed but the part I’m going to as a visitor or conventioner is looking pretty good and that’s why I should go there and support the city.*”

We still had an enormous PR challenge because people still remembered those images coming out of NOLA. A year after Katrina we still had people asking if our streets were dry. ...A lot misperception from visitors... they felt guilty. They would say to us ‘How can we come and go to Mardi Gras and have fun when so many of your people are suffering?’ And we had to say ‘No, we want you to come. We need you to come.’ It’s a \$5 billion industry for us.

In order to address their image issues, NOLA CVB did several things, one of which was initiating a campaign called "Seeing is Believing". This campaign focused on driving meeting planners, journalists etc. into the city to see the destroyed areas, but also the historic Garden District, French Quarter and newly remodeled convention center. Through seeing the recovery and revitalization efforts first hand, the DMO hoped to shape news coverage in a more positive way. The DMO also ensured everything that happened in the city was seen as a milestone, “*Every time something or a business came back we made a big deal about everything to let people know the tourism industry was coming back*” and “*That strategy really seemed to work*” or at least to a certain degree.

NOLA CVB mentioned existing media relationships prior to Hurricane Katrina were of particular use in delivering their crisis communication messages to various publics.

The first Mardi Gras we hosted [after Hurricane Katrina] in winter of 2006 we [NOLA CVB] were able to use a lot of the personal relationships we already had and had developed particularly since Katrina plus the PR council, to promote and spread positive images of the state of the city and our tourism industry.

The DMO also elaborated on its participation in a unique ad hoc citywide public relations council whose collaborative efforts were extremely powerful in building and rebuilding positive perceptions and understandings of not only NOLA's tourism industry, but NOLA itself.

We brought this group together to make sure we were all speaking in one voice, that we all had the most current data and facts about the recovery and that we were all working together. Competition didn't matter, past grievances or territory didn't matter; everyone came together for this bigger cause of getting NOLA back on track.... having this PR Council was critical and it became a really powerful group....we worked together and that was essential to our recovery.

Formation of the crisis-induced public relations council consisted primarily of PR professionals from the CVB, major museums, hotel companies, restaurants, attractions, the New Orleans International Airport, the Mayor's office and Lt. Governor's office, essentially "anyone involved in communicating messages about NOLA and its recovery." The accomplishments of this committee were vast, but focused on collectively corralling news media at all levels to ensure a coherent, truthful message was being delivered to the world. Together, this group of people was able to tackle major publicity, marketing and image issues as a single voice, and became a priceless asset for NOLA CVB. Despite launching an international PR campaign to help dispel some of the myths and create accurate, updated and positive perceptions about NOLA's condition and tourism industry, they continued to face a media-related image issue where journalists' coverage of NOLA's current state and recovery efforts were slightly skewed, making it that much more difficult for the DMO to attract tourists.

A year or two later we still had journalists that were still coming back and reporting the bad news. So part of the PR effort was to say "Look, of course you're here to cover what's not working and what's not recovered, and of course we respect your role as a journalist to report on the government failures and the truth, but if you want to help this city the best thing you can do is help tell some positive news because tourism is our most important industry, and tourism is driven by image and perception."

In addition to battling tourists' negative perceptions of NOLA due to news media's often one-sided depiction of the city, the DMO also faced the equally challenging task of ensuring potential visitors they would be safe or 'safer' in the event of another hurricane. During and shortly after the immediate stage of crisis, much of the world became aware of the failings or shortcomings of the U.S. federal and Louisiana state governments in the evacuation and recovery efforts in NOLA. To add insult to injury, one of largest issues contributing to the magnitude of this natural disaster was the fact that New Orleans' levees were breached, something that should not have happened, or at least happened so easily according to various experts. Nonetheless, because of this particular issue, a significant part of NOLA CVB's crisis recovery strategy included being able to assure tourism business owners and potential tourists that should or perhaps more, when, a hurricane hit New Orleans again in the future, the city would be much better prepared. For the DMO this required a working knowledge of how the levee breach came about and how it would be prevented in the future. To procure this knowledge and information the DMO was required to strengthen an existing stakeholder relationship with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) - New Orleans District.

[We] developed a closer relationship with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.... We partnered with their public affairs team and really got a lesson on how levees are built, new terminology, why they had failed and what was going to be done to prevent it from happening again. ... Our point was to go and see it for ourselves so we could articulate that to customers and our tourism stakeholders. ... We had to really share that science and use that relationship with the Corps to give the customers confidence.

In addition to Hurricane Katrina, NOLA CVB described a second crisis experience during which their ability to work closely with key stakeholders such as the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board significantly contributed to their capacity to effectively manage that crisis event.

***Crisis 2 - BP Oil Spill.*** Similar to GSOBT, NOLA CVB experienced crisis from the BP oil spill in 2010. Despite the fact the spill occurred nearly 100 miles away from NOLA in the Gulf of Mexico, and that it would be months before oil would eventually reach the southern U.S. coastline, current and future tourists, as well as tourism businesses were already concerned and apprehensive about safe water and seafood in NOLA. Their attitudes were exacerbated by round the clock national and international news coverage failing to reflect an accurate picture of southern U.S. coastal states and cities at the time.

Our job was trying to preserve tourism in NOLA because we didn't want to have yet another tragedy of people losing their jobs because of another misperception. ... It didn't help any of us the initial explosion happened in April and the well was at the bottom of the ocean gushing oil for

months. [So] in the corner of news there was a little timer and picture of the well gushing... I have interviews of us on CNN talking about it being safe to come to NOLA and you've got this picture of oil gushing in the corner. Really not helpful.

Another unique image and public relations challenge NOLA CVB faced during this crisis included the tendency of news reporters to provide updates on the crisis from the city of New Orleans on a daily or weekly even though there was no oil in NOLA or Louisiana at the time.

We tried to take the misperception as an opportunity to educate people on geography. People not having a sense of geography really hurt us and so many people in our [tourism] industry, fisherman, restaurants, etc. really suffered. One commercial fisherman actually committed suicide. It was such a challenge... a balance for us to do our jobs and preserve a tourism economy, and to do it in a respectful way knowing how much actual suffering was going on with our citizens.

The DMO once again found itself in a place that required knowledge and information from officials and experts that could explain the effects on the oil spill on the seafood industry, as well as identifying which seafood was safe for tourists to eat. In order to mitigate the overwhelmingly negative perceptions tourists and potential tourists held about eating seafood in New Orleans the DMO strengthened its partnership with the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board.

So we had to be very clear about the state of city. ...We had to rely on the data from the experts, the EPA and the FDA who were testing the seafood... so it wasn't just the CVB saying "the seafood is safe, come and eat it". Our stance was really backed up by the scientists. This was crucial.

This information served stakeholder interests two-fold, assuaging tourists' safety concerns, and providing support to local restaurants and eateries struggling due to patrons' fears of eating fuel oil-poisoned food. When asked about the DMO's stance on learning from these crisis experiences and its overall crisis management approach, NOLA CVB described having multiple distinct but overlapping components to its crisis management plan, many of which have indeed undergone dramatic modifications as a result of the two crises discussed in this study.

As a result of Katrina... the entire emergency plan for the city and the evacuation of residents and visitors has completely changed. The way we [the DMO] manage our emergencies has completely changed. We learned not to have our computer servers housed in our building. Ours is [now] backed-up in Arizona, so if for some reason our building was destroyed or under water we would still be able to maintain communication.

The opportunity to effectively and efficiently respond to crisis without suffering considerable damage is of substantial benefit to DMO stakeholders and employees both physically and emotionally. Similar to scenario training, the potential to avoid or curb clumsy and disjointed activities as well as possible panic in the future is invaluable to any DMO. NOLA CVB admitted to being far from as prepared as they could have been for Hurricane Katrina, and only moderately less prepared for the BP oil spill. Was this because the two crises were drastically different, thus requiring access and collaboration to a completely different set of stakeholders, or perhaps because the DMO had not adequately modified their crisis management plan from the previous crisis? The DMO claims to have pursued extensive after-action and learning activities following Hurricane Katrina so it remains unclear exactly why it only moderately prepared for the BP oil spill.

Katrina was one of those things where no one could have ever imagined how bad it was going to be or how much of a prolonged effect it was going to have but we're a much stronger destination because of it and certainly learned a lot and put those things into practice.

The rising number of domestic and global crises over the past decade has served as a constant reminder of the DMO's crisis experiences and the importance of keeping their crisis management plan dusted and relevant. Using past crises and similar smaller incidents to bolster revisions to their crisis management plan, NOLA CVB now believes they are much better equipped to handle future crises with less damage and downtime.

Just recently with the Boston terrorist bombings, it made us look at our plans and refresh them a little bit.... Especially because during Katrina social media wasn't really a factor but of course Facebook, Twitter etc. has dramatically changed our crisis communication and the way people respond to crisis and share information or inaccurate information.... Our next big hurricane that affected NOLA was Hurricane Gustav in 2008 and Hurricane Isaac in 2012 around Labor Day. Fortunately, both didn't cause major damage to NOLA but they both gave us an opportunity to test our plans and they really worked. So that's been a dramatic outcome.

Similar to NOLA CVB's crisis experiences with Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill, the next DMO case presents Monmouth County Tourism's struggle with misperceptions about the state of its tourism infrastructure following Hurricane Sandy (2010) due to inaccurate and/or incomplete information that was heavily influenced by media images.

**Monmouth County Department of Public Information & Tourism** (hereafter MCT) located in Monmouth County, New Jersey represents a predominately domestic destination with a small international tourist flow from Canada and surrounding states. MCT is a county tourism management office led by one full-time employee and a few part-time and volunteer employees

when possible. The DMO has a flat structure with a single Director of Tourism reporting to the local government under which the DMO operates. The DMO's funding sources include a lodging tax and allocated monies from the county government budget. The DMO shared its crisis experience with Hurricane Sandy (October 2012) and the destruction of the New Jersey Shore, residential beachfront homes used for tourism and general tourism infrastructure.

***Crisis – Hurricane Sandy.*** MCT described its involvement in supporting general county crisis response activities as well as leading and coordinating the tourism sector response during Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Working for Monmouth County we all wore different hats when the storm first hit [Super Storm Sandy]. So not only was I involved from a tourism perspective but as a county employee making decisions, reaching out to county workers and agencies to try and help citizens.

In the year following Hurricane Sandy, MCT's presence at annual travel trade shows became less about marketing their destination and more about providing accurate information to abate misperceptions of how much of the Jersey Shore and Monmouth County was actually operational from a tourism standpoint.

I did do a damage assessment of all the beach towns because January/February is when I go to travel shows to entice people to come to Monmouth County.... People were very aware of what had happened to us and we had an image problem. They saw the rollercoaster in water in one place and thought whole Jersey Shore was wiped out, when actually many towns had already started rebuilding.

Between the intermediate and long-term recovery stages of Hurricane Sandy, also known as Superstorm Sandy, the state of New Jersey coordinated a meeting with FEMA and EDA personnel to share stories of the storm's resulting damage and a list of anticipated needs for the various communities affected. Shortly after this meeting, the state government offered grants for businesses and homeowners, including the "Stronger than the Storm Campaign." New Jersey received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to use \$25 million for advertising to promote tourism in New Jersey the following tourist season. The campaign was administered by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and is currently overseen by the marketing firm MWW.

I speak to them [MWW] two to three times a week, more some weeks about how they are spending the money. They have been out promoting the Jersey Shore and the hardest hit areas. This money was in addition to \$9 million state tourism dollars normally allocated.



At the time of data collection, MCT and MWW were working closely together to ensure each city in their county was being adequately evaluated and allocated the tourism marketing dollars they desperately needed.

**Spotsylvania County Department of Economic Development & Tourism** (hereafter SCT) is located in Spotsylvania, Virginia and represents a largely domestic tourist destination with a smaller international tourist flow from Canada, England, France and Germany (in that order). The DMO is part of the county's department of economic development and tourism and is managed on the tourism side by one full-time employee and 14 part-time employees helping to run two visitors' centers. The majority of the tourism industry serving this market consists of micro to medium enterprises. SCT's destination drivers include its unique location as a historic Civil War battleground and the annual festivals and reenactments that ensue from this historical status. The DMO shared its crisis experience during a battle reenactment event in 2013 in which severe weather led to unfavorable conditions for event parking, ultimately leading to numerous stranded vehicles and families. Although this could be considered a small-scale crisis, especially when compared to other natural disasters, its inclusion in this study was ultimately warranted based on the fact that scale is to a certain degree subjective to the DMO context. In this case, the crisis incident triggered a formal DMO crisis management response that included coordination with local government and other key stakeholders. Further, the crisis event was considered a serious threat to the local tourism economy with respect to the damage of negative word of mouth in terms of event safety.

***Crisis - Severe Weather-Vehicle and Tourist Rescue.*** SCT is the historic home of a number of Civil War sites, battlefields and the U.S. National Military Park. Throughout the year the DMO, in collaboration with other agencies such as the city's Park & Recreation Department, host numerous culture events including battle reenactments. These events often include more than 10,000 visitors, reenactors, volunteers, residents and staff for up to a week at a time. Many of SCT's cultural events take place outdoors during the rainy season, frequently leading to crises revolving around severe weather leading to traffic issues and property damage. SCT elaborated on a recent crisis in which severe weather left rainwater saturated muddy fields and ditches that might have otherwise been event-parking areas. Despite signage posted by SCT, clearly marking 'No-Parking' zones and utilizing police and volunteers to help direct and redirect tourists and workers to appropriate safe parking areas, event participants repeatedly disregard the instructions provided. While crises of this nature have become increasingly frequent for SCT, each crisis presents a new set of challenges. SCT, city officials, the Parks & Recreation Department and local law enforcement coordinate on a consistent basis regarding the best way to mitigate or solve crises as they arise.

Local police direct traffic. County deputies and fire and emergency services are also onsite... [we] absolutely have to have that [relationship with those agencies]. You need communications early so they know what's going on and what you have mind. I might know how I want traffic to go and then talk to the Sheriff's Office and they say "No that won't work, you can't do that." So we listen to each other and then provide suggestions to prevent disaster.

SCT's proactive posture also includes investing a significant amount of energy into devising strategies that will help avoid certain crises from arising again in the future. For example, the DMO recently learned through one of their reenactment events involving more than 10,000 people, the most effective way to elicit a desired response from reenactors participating in the event was to embed messages with their 'chain of command' to trickle down the ranks. This strategy was of particular use during a recent crisis in which the DMO, after severe weather conditions, requested tourists and event staff avoid muddy dangerous "No Parking" areas that would (and still did) result in numerous 'stuck' vehicles, leaving many families stranded.

We learned temporary fencing was a bit more obvious to people and they seemed to listen to that better [than signage only]. Plus utilizing the actual structure and people acting in the event to get out our message and letting it trickle down really worked.

A firm believer in allowing past experiences to guide future actions; SCT has discovered two very useful communication pathways to improve crisis planning and response. Firstly, it was important to strategically select key persons to deliver crisis or crisis avoidance messages based on their publics, such as reenactors versus volunteers/staff. Secondly, the general public or tourists visiting events and attractions respond better to restricted areas being blocked-off or made completely inaccessible versus signage being used as the sole source of direction/warning. While these items may seem minor, knowing when and how to adapt crisis planning and responses strategies to your audience is essential to successfully negotiating crises. Although the DMO does not have an extensive formal crisis management plan in place, they maintain smaller more specific crisis plans for some of their larger events, such as battle reenactments and their annual Stars and Stripes Spectacular (SSS).

We have several large buildings around the area for people to go into for relief or shelter. Last year was the first time we've had to use those buildings. We had a big thunderstorm come up and we had to shut everything down and bring everyone into shelter to wait it out. Directing thousands of people to safety needs a plan.

To minimize the chaos that accompanies such incidents, the DMO requires all personnel and volunteers working the event to participate in an informational and question & answer session with

the city's Chief of Emergency Services prior to the event. The Chief routinely addresses who is responsible for what in certain areas of their disaster/emergency plan, as well as providing general guidelines for responses to large and small crises from major weather related incidents to terrorism (e.g. backpack or bags left alone) and lost children. Fortunately and unfortunately the DMO successfully navigates one crisis only to have another spring up with similar but markedly different character. SCT's capacity to plan for and respond to crises of this nature are of particular concern for the DMO given their potential to deter new and returning visitors looking to avoid the risk of becoming stranded or unprotected in severe weather conditions. SCT is confident their current relationship with local authorities has significantly contributed to its success thus far in dealing with crises similar to the one discussed.

Similar to SCT, Frankenmuth CVB in Michigan presents yet another case in which the DMO's strong existing relationship with city officials and law enforcement provided a solid foundation on which to tackle the effects of a deadly F3 tornado, including knowing when to delegate or re-delegate crisis management responsibilities based on responders' skills, physical abilities and emotional capacity.

**Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau** (hereafter Frankenmuth CVB) is located in Frankenmuth, Michigan. Known as Michigan's "Little Bavaria" for its German roots, the DMO represents a predominately in-state domestic tourism destination. The DMO's main source of funding is through room rate tax, followed by membership dues and advertising programs run by the DMO. The majority of tourism industry serving this market is micro to small sized family-owned businesses. Frankenmuth CVB is a small firm with a relatively flat structure, few departments, 5 full-time employees and 10 part-time employees. The President/CEO reports to the governing board and other managers and employees reporting to the President. Frankenmuth CVB described its crisis experience with a category F3 tornado (136-165 mph winds) touching down in its destination in June 1996. The tornado cut a mile-long strip through Frankenmuth, injuring one person, destroying four homes and damaging 130 others. Damages were estimated at \$5 million.

***Crisis – Category F3 Tornado.*** At the time of the crisis, the interviewee was the CEO of Frankenmuth CVB. The interviewee now serves as the CEO of the Great Lakes Bay Regional CVB of Michigan, which includes the CVBs of Bay City, Birch Run, Chesaning, Frankenmuth, Midland and Saginaw. The interviewee described the DMO's initial crisis response as one focused on assessing structural damages, deaths and providing support to other critical crisis management stakeholders.

The city, the COC and the CVB have very strong working relationships because I served on their economic development and DDA boards and the City Manager served on my CVB board. ...We new how to work with one another as far as rerouting traffic and streets, infrastructure needs and police presence. Plus police had already been trained on how to interact with guests and visitors because you have incidences at events and festivals.

The DMO was “extraordinarily pleased” with the crisis response given the absence of a more specific natural disaster crisis plan, *“We all knew what our specific roles were and knew we needed to take a positive approach to the after-action on the tornado and its impact on the destination and individual tourism businesses”*. Several lessons-learned included the DMO identifying the need to expand its crisis management plan to include other types of crises, such as natural or man-made disasters, as well as the incorporation of useful guidelines for how to recognize when fellow co-workers or crisis responders are suffering from shock or severe emotional distress. The DMO believed it would be important to instill a sense of awareness among staff and other local crisis responders of when re-delegation of duties during any stage of a crisis is necessary.

Charlie is to this day one of the best City Managers I've ever met but his talent and forte is not speaking to the media. The fact he was able to recognize his strengths and weaknesses and his ability to re-delegate a responsibility that I was able to pick up--- I think spoke volumes to our working relationship.

The interviewee for Frankenmuth CVB indicated her previous crisis management training, taken originally under the guise of addressing crises surrounding festivals and large events, was immensely helpful in aiding the DMO's management approach for this crisis event.

I had an advantage in my pocket... I purposefully took crisis management training. ... I wanted to make sure that when you have 250,000 people you're responsible for [during festivals, events, etc.] and you know there are going to be crises along the way, you're prepared. ...It was extraordinarily helpful. I fully endorse every CVB CEO or President go through crisis management training and scenario training. It has saved my butt on several occasions.

Pursuit of formal crisis management training was likely a rarity for DMOs at that time (1996). The findings of this study reveal, however, DMOs in today's age (perhaps due to the increasing number of global crises) are attempting to take a more preemptive approach with crisis management training and scenario training opportunities through private and public/government channels, e.g. FEMA. That said, there are still a number of DMOs who struggle to find the time and adequate resources to simply review and update their Crisis management plans, much less send employees to formal crisis management training programs. At the time of data collection, Columbus CVB was

one of these DMOs, having tried for the better part of a year just to update their crisis management plan.

**Greater Columbus Convention & Visitors Bureau** (hereafter Columbus CVB) is located in Columbus, Ohio and represents a largely domestic visitor destination. The majority of tourism industry serving this market is small to large sized businesses. The DMO receives the greater portion of its funding from the hotel/motel bed tax, followed by funding from the county and then members and supporters of the DMO. Columbus CVB is a medium firm at approximately 50 full-time staff, has a hierarchical structure, is departmentalized and is overseen by a board of directors. Columbus CVB presented a recent crisis experience in which a disgruntled resident threatened the DMO with spreading negative comments via social media about the DMO's endorsement and labeling of Columbus as an LGBT friendly destination. Although the smaller-scale of this case is arguable, its inclusion in this study was ultimately warranted based on the fact the crisis incident triggered a formal crisis management response by the DMO that included coordination with tourism stakeholders. Further, the crisis event was considered a potential threat to the local tourism economy with respect to immediate and long-term damage to its destination image.

***Crisis – Resident Threatens DMO with Negative eWOM.*** Columbus CVB described a crisis in which a male resident contacted the DMO to express his extreme upset with a phrase the DMO had used in one of its destination branding ads in Port Columbus International Airport. The resident was strongly offended by the DMO's labeling and promotion of Columbus as one of the top 10 most gay friendly cities visited in the world and thus threatened to contact city government and tourism businesses and religious groups to have the ads taken down and overall branding removed. Met with initial opposition from the DMO the resident threatened to use social media to share his disgust and enlist support for his cause. The DMO envisioned the negative repercussions that could have ensued if it left this crisis unaddressed thus enacting its crisis management plan and rally support from tourism stakeholders such as city council, the Mayor's office and industry partners to collectively approach this crisis. The coordinated efforts of these entities led the resident's attempts to contact city government or other tourism stakeholders to a closed door on discussing the issue; *We are big believers in nipping it in the bud. We would have looked good if it had gone to the media but we didn't want it to get into the media.*

In years past the DMO's crisis management plan had taken a fairly exclusive approach to the types of crises it addressed. However, in light of the rising incidences of global crises, the DMO now looks at any incident where lives, property or destination reputation are at risk, *"We used to say "If the CEO is embezzling, we'll get on it... but now that's just not the case"*. In a similar light the

DMO mentioned its more recent struggles in modifying its crisis management plan to adequately address its needs and roles across various types of crises and is also realistic and manageable.

You can make it as huge as you want to or just bite off the pieces that you can chew... our plan is very flexible. We used to try to anticipate and create procedures for every situation and discovered over the years that was not the way to do it. The heart of our plan is a one-page crisis response policy that staff is familiar with... We don't see ourselves as breaking news central but know not responding will make it worse.

Unlike other DMOs in this study, Columbus CVB said it has yet to see the need for strong relationships with law enforcement and other emergency management agencies in the context of crisis, claiming it is more likely to hear about a bomb threat in the city via Twitter or Facebook than from city management itself. This is a drastic difference from, for example, Philly CVB and their inclusion in the city's OEM critical information distribution list. Although Columbus CVB does not maintain a solid ongoing relationship with emergency management agencies, it does recognize them among a range of stakeholders involved in its crisis management plan including elected officials, community leaders, the state tourism office and ad & PR agencies. The DMO stressed the importance of its crisis management plan from both an operations as well as communication standpoint, further acknowledging the challenges it faces on a consistent basis in trying to keep its plan updated and relevant, especially when in competition with the more 'immediate' needs and concerns on the DMO's larger agenda.

We are dusting at the moment [in reference to crisis management plan], but it's not done ...Every time I get it out, something else comes along and it seems like it's the number one thing that can be back-burned... Once we get the plan finalized, we'll have a workshop with the entire staff. Probably two 4-hour sessions so people can choose. Run scenario planning with them etc... and then share it with anybody we think should know.

Unfortunately, creating or updating a crisis management plan is a task most managers only come to realize the importance of after it is too late. All nine DMOs in this study mentioned being all too familiar with neighboring DMOs, local governments and tourism businesses customary stance toward preparing for crises, which can be summed up neatly in the common expression "Oh, *we're* not going to have a crisis." For those DMOs, such as the Columbus CVB, who understand crises are for the most inevitable, monitoring has become an essential first step towards crisis management.

We're monitoring the news right now because it's gay pride month and we've had three incidents that could have been hate crimes. We pride ourselves on being very open here, so that's not a good thing. Monitoring is definitely one early step in our plan.

Columbus CVB presented a particularly unique case with respect to its position on stakeholder relations, i.e. having little to no interest in forming strong stakeholders relations with local law enforcement and other emergency management agencies while still recognizing their importance and necessary inclusion in its crisis management plan. It may be possible in prioritizing which stakeholder relations the DMO should put more energy into maintaining strong relationships with, situational or contextual factors indicated its attention lies more with other tourism and crisis management stakeholders.

## **4.2 Cross-case Analysis**

Based on the within-case analyses, this section presents cross-case comparisons (Yin 1994). The cross-case analysis for this study adopted a variable-oriented approach in which one variable or categories of variables across all cases were explored in responding to the research questions. Thus, within-group similarities and group differences were analyzed within the data (Eisenhardt 1989). This method of analysis is different from a category-oriented approach in which one case is examined and compared with successive cases.

### **4.2.1 Findings Related to Research Question 1a**

Recapping, the first research sub-question was:

*RQ 1a: How do DMOs' roles in crisis events influence their crisis management approach?*

To respond, the researcher began by analyzing the interview discourse and DMOs' crisis management plans to assess DMOs' *explicit* as well as *implicit* responsibilities during crises. DMOs' *explicit* responsibilities were determined based on a) involvement in their local government's crisis management approach and, b) directives in select DMOs' crisis communications plans. DMOs' *implicit* responsibilities were determined by identifying which entities DMOs appeared most accountable to during crises and what activities DMOs engaged in with those entities.

#### **4.2.1.1 DMOs' Involvement in Local Governments' Crisis Management Approach**

This research analyzed local governments' (LGs) expectations of DMOs in crisis management in order to gain insights into how those responsibilities reflect upon DMOs' roles in crisis management. The results of this search revealed eight of nine DMOs perform some crisis-related

function as a part of their LGs crisis management (Table 12). Further, these results suggest DMOs are expected to perform a myriad of activities for or in collaboration with LGs. These activities ranged from simple requests for information regarding, for example, which tourism businesses were open/closed, their capabilities (e.g. damaged but operable) and their potential capacity to aid crisis efforts. Other LGs went so far as to utilize DMO employees to help fill and/or directly support key positions in their own organization during crisis events. Based on these results, DMOs' responsibilities in LGs' crisis management efforts can be clustered into five main categories:

- 1) acting as an official communication mouthpiece for the destination;
- 2) serving as a central coordination point for news media activities;
- 3) providing an accurate short- and long-term assessment of the destination's tourism capacity (including status and capacity of hospitality sector, attractions and linked transportation);
- 4) providing direction for crisis recovery and destination marketing activities, and;
- 5) assembling and disseminating and creating knowledge.

Table 12. Involvement in Local Government Crisis Management Approach by DMO Case and Crisis

	<i>Involved (Yes/No)</i>	<i>Type of Involvement</i>
<b>IDT</b>	No	<u>Crisis 1 - Bridge/road construction</u> : DMO initiated the involvement of LG in crisis, not vice versa.
	Yes	<u>Crisis 2 - Potential DMO merger</u> : LG asks DMO to concentrate on keeping tourism stakeholders informed and affairs between IDT, DMO X and tourism stakeholders civil.
<b>Philly CVB</b>	Yes	<u>Crisis 1 – Salvation Army Building collapse</u> : LG asks DMO to facilitate news media communications; LG requests DMO to visibly stand behind Mayor's office in show of support (point of contention).
	Yes	<u>Crisis 2 - Duck Tour accident</u> : LG asks DMO to facilitate news media communications.
<b>GSOBT</b>	Yes	<u>Crisis 1 – Hurricane Ivan</u> : DMO utilized to help spearhead coordinated efforts for a new crisis management plan between City of Gulf Shores LG and City of Orange Beach LG (pre-crisis); DMO employees serve in and/or support LG positions (e.g. Public Information Officer); LG asks DMO to provide key information about tourism businesses during all crisis stages; LGs utilize DMO D to gain understanding of state of tourism economy and suggested recovery plan following crisis.
	Yes	<u>Crisis 2 – BP Oil spill</u> : LGs utilize DMO's expert contacts to gain realistic understanding of oil spill effects on shoreline; LG asks to DMO to provide thoughts on projected state of tourism economy, suggested mitigation tactics to sustain normal tourism flow and potential recovery plan following crisis.
<b>Tucson CVB</b>	No	No mention/indication of involvement in LG crisis management plan.
<b>NOLA CVB</b>	Yes	<u>Crisis 1 – Hurricane Katrina</u> : LG facilitates Philly CVB becoming media headquarters for city/crisis status and updates; LG coordinates with IDTnd U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to inform publics about levee breach and plans to avoid similar incidents in the future; LG public relations personnel work with DMO on city-wide PR committee.
	Yes	<u>Crisis 2 – BP Oil spill</u> : LGs utilize DMO's expert contacts to gain realistic understanding of oil spill effects on seafood industry, LG asks DMO to provide thoughts on projected state of tourism economy, suggested mitigation tactics to sustain normal tourism flow and potential recovery plan following crisis.
<b>MCT</b>	Yes	<u>Crisis – Hurricane Sandy</u> : (DMO part of county LG) DMO employee requested to help with county crisis activities (emergency and intermediate crisis stages); LG asks DMO to provide status update on tourism businesses for potential crisis aid; LG asks DMO to provide estimate of post-crisis financial need (marketing and recovery budget) to be presented to national government; LG asks DMO to provide tourism damage/recovery assessment and to work with contracted marketing agency for long-term recovery efforts.
<b>SCT</b>	Yes	<u>Crisis – Civil War Reenactment event</u> : LG asks DMO to consult on emergency procedures for traffic, crowd control and general safety of all publics; LG includes DMO employees and volunteers in basic crisis training prior to each large event.



<b>Frankenmuth CVB</b>	Yes	Crisis – Tornado: LG asks DMO to participate in city-wide damage assessment; LG asks DMO to serve as spokesperson for official city status/updates to news media and all publics.
<b>Columbus CVB</b>	No	No mention/indication of involvement in LG crisis management plan.

To further understand DMOs' explicit responsibilities in crisis management, and to determine the audiences targeted as well as directives related to those audiences, the researcher also analyzed several additional sources of evidence outside interviews with DMO personnel. These sources of evidence included four DMO crisis management plans, as well as a myriad of other sources (e.g the research journal kept for this study, news media articles, multiple social media platforms and DMOs' official websites). The four crisis management plans analyzed were from Philly CVB, GSOBT, NOLA CVB and Columbus CVB. All four plans reviewed in this research were in the form of a mixed crisis communication and crisis operations plan. Each plan varied slightly in regards to the number and type of target audience, as well as the depth and breadth of activities to be undertaken by the DMO for or with that audience (see Table 13).

Table 13. Target Audiences and Directives in DMO Crisis Management Plans

<b>Target Audiences</b>	<b>Crisis Directives</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Board of Directors</li> <li>▪ DMO staff</li> <li>▪ DMO International offices/ reps</li> <li>▪ CVB (if separate entity)</li> <li>▪ Local government (admin/elected officials)</li> <li>▪ Community leaders</li> <li>▪ Residents</li> <li>▪ Industry Representatives</li> <li>▪ TSA</li> <li>▪ Roads &amp; Transportation</li> <li>▪ Local law enforcement</li> <li>▪ General Public (via website)</li> <li>▪ Social media users (focus on key influencers)</li> <li>▪ Mass news media (domestic/international)</li> <li>▪ Travel Trade Media</li> <li>▪ Current convention attendees</li> <li>▪ Scheduled future convention attendees</li> <li>▪ International clients (VIPs)</li> <li>▪ State Tourism Office</li> <li>▪ DMO members</li> <li>▪ IT service providers</li> <li>▪ American Red Cross</li> <li>▪ FEMA</li> <li>▪ United Way</li> <li>▪ Legal Team</li> <li>▪ Federal/state government (governors, legislators, Homeland Security, FBI, CIA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Advance the public's understanding of crisis state related to destination's tourism sector</li> <li>✓ Draft or help draft with other agencies official statements/messages about crisis; issue statements as appropriate</li> <li>✓ Distribute critical, relevant and appropriate information to target audiences</li> <li>✓ Post information and status updates on social media; monitor and respond to user discussion/concern</li> <li>✓ Update and distribute key contact information to key DMO personnel</li> <li>✓ Check DMO main website and crisis website (if applicable) frequently to verify functionality</li> <li>✓ Gather and relay visitor communications to/from DMO members, hotels, transport (airlines, trains, buses etc.)</li> <li>✓ Cancel and reschedule events</li> <li>✓ Arrange and confirm temporary off-site management locations</li> <li>✓ DMO personnel to serve in local government agencies as needed (PIO, EOC, OEM)</li> <li>✓ Gather and relay information on building/business status of industry partners</li> <li>✓ Protect and assess all DMO hardware and software to ensure consistent, reliable communications with target audiences</li> </ul>

Analysis of the four crisis management plans revealed 26 target audiences and 12 main directives related to these audiences. All four plans are designed to address ‘crises in general’, including but not limited to:

- Crimes against tourists (thefts, physical violence)
- Plane, train, bus or attraction crashes
- Acts of terrorism (bombings, bomb threats, kidnapping, hostage situations)
- Civil unrest
- Actions or policies by a DMO member or industry player that draw negative attention to the entire industry
- Actual and perceived health and medical emergencies (disease, sanitary conditions, epidemic)
- Natural disasters
- Damage to DMO (structural, informational (i.e. IT security breach))
- Issues management (described as small crises or not “full blown” crises)

Two crisis management plans (GSOBT and NOLA CVB) also included specific sections addressing hurricane preparedness and response, a crisis experience presented by both DMOs in this research. The 12 directives across all four Crisis management plans appear to concentrate on the prodromal, emergency and intermediate stages of crisis, and coincide with the five categories of DMO responsibilities in LGs’ crisis management identified earlier.

#### **4.2.1.2 Accountability in Crisis Events**

DMOs’ accountability and associated actions with specific entities were explored to highlight their implicit responsibilities during crises, essentially broaching the *why*, of the How and why do destination management organizations engage in tourism crisis management? (RQ 1). Assessing the entities to which each DMO was accountable was accomplished in two parts, the first part containing three actions. First, the researcher made note of the entities frequently mentioned in the interview discourse or data for each DMO. Second, the researcher identified if and what type of action was taken by the DMO in regards to these entities in preparation for or response to a crisis. In addition to the former, the researcher also noted direct and indirect statements made by interviewees as to the DMO’s accountability to any particular entity during the three broader stages of crisis (planning & prevention, strategic implementation, and resolution, evaluation and feedback). The results of this first part of the process revealed five main groups to which DMOs were accountable: 1) present and future tourists, 2) local government, 3) local tourism businesses, 4) DMO employees and, 5) destination residents. Table 14 outlines the five groups of accountability in relation to the nine DMO cases.

DMOs vaguely mentioned or indirectly implied being beholden to inform, provide for or represent individuals in these five categories. Tourists present at the destination and future tourists were recognized as the most important entities to which DMOs were accountable by all DMOs, followed closely by local government at eight of nine DMOs, and local tourism businesses with seven of nine DMOs. The category with the least accountability rested with DMO employees and destination residents with only two of nine DMOs indicating some type of obligation in that category. Based on these findings, DMOs appear most accountable to mainly three categories, namely their tourist population, local government and tourism businesses.

Table 14. DMO Accountability in Crisis Events by DMO Case

	Present/future Tourists	Local government	Local Tourism Businesses	DMO Employees	Destination Residents
<b>IDT</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Philly CVB</b>	X	X	X	-	-
<b>GSOBT</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Tucson CVB</b>	X	X	X	-	X
<b>NOLA CVB</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>MCT</b>	X	X	X	-	X
<b>SCT</b>	X	X	-	X	X
<b>Frankenmuth CVB</b>	X	X	X	-	X
<b>Columbus CVB</b>	X	X	X	-	X

#### 4.2.1.3 DMOs' Roles in Crisis Management

The findings of this study revealed a plethora of explicit and implicit responsibilities DMOs undertake during crises as well as a number of audiences to which those responsibilities are related. Based on the responsibilities and audiences highlighted in the data, DMOs can be expected to pursue one or more of the following six roles in crisis management: being a Visitor Advocate; Provider, Purveyor of Information; Boundary Spanner; Knowledge Broker; and, Knowledge Activist (Figure 10). Each of these roles was exhibited by at least one DMO, with several DMOs exhibiting more than one role simultaneously but no one DMO exhibiting all six roles in one crisis experience.

1) Visitor Advocate: An organization that makes pleading for and defending the general and more specific crisis-related interests of visitors a priority. DMOs in this role are particularly concerned with visitors' potentially limited knowledge and understanding of the destination and local culture, and how those limitations may further jeopardize their safety and welfare in crisis events (e.g.

correctly interpreting signs of danger and the ability to locate and request assistance. Being a visitor advocate also extends to ensuring visitors have access to accurate, non-biased information that will aid both their pre-arrival destination selection process as well as their decision-making processes while at the destination in a crisis context.

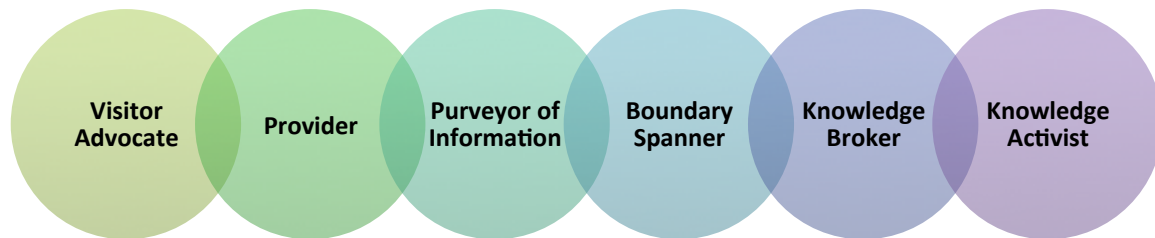


Figure 10. DMO Roles in TCM

One of the DMO cases highlighting the behaviors and thoughts behind the visitor advocate role included GSOBT:

Networking among other CVBs and chambers, the EMA at the county etc., we set up a plan to be an informational funnel from county EMA to the general publics, seeing our mission as helping our industry partners and helping visitors we've encouraged to come here by providing current accurate information in one place versus prior incidents of cities and counties issuing statements at different times not necessarily contradicting each other but not in concert with each other either.

2) Provider: An organization that not only makes it a priority to plead for and defend the interests of visitors, but also willingly offers their own material/physical or human resources to aid various stakeholder groups in an effort to collectively negotiate crises. DMOs in this role maintain a mind frame of “We will survive together” and may, for example, offer stakeholders use of their facilities, personnel or IT equipment.

An example of a DMO in the provider role can be seen in the case of Frankenmuth CVB.

I felt it was my role and responsibility to go down to my office to do a damage assessment of where we stood, the tornado path and how the visitor district looked. I also got on the home phone with the City Manager and Chief of Police to see if their facilities were functional or operational and to offer them our [CVB] offices as headquarters. They ultimately took advantage of that offer because they had no power or back-up generators at either of those facilities. The COC and CVB operated as the emergency operation center for the first 24hrs.

3) Purveyor of Information: An organization that makes collecting and disseminating information to and from various stakeholder groups a priority. DMOs in this role may act as a conduit in the passing of information, including information exclusively held by the DMO.

NOLA CVB's role during Hurricane Katrina included becoming a purveyor of information:

The CVB really became a source for news and information... essentially the hub of information for our employees, customers, visitors and potential visitors scattered all over the place and were unsure if they could come in. Our CVB became almost like a news organization gathering emergency information and disseminating it. It felt like, in part, our responsibility.

4) Boundary Spanner: An organization that recognizes a problem, brings the problem to the attention of others, and facilitates the transfer of knowledge from one party to another in effort to solve that problem. DMOs in this role do not necessarily possess the knowledge being transferred but help enable recognition and understanding of the shared knowledge of others.

One DMO case in which the boundary spanner role can be observed is through the Philly CVB.

The Philly OEM is another very valuable resource. Any CVB that has access to or has one in their region or city should really entertain making a relationship there. FEMA is the most pivotal partner in everything. We try and make sure our people and stakeholders know about FEMA and have access to them.

5) Knowledge Broker: An organization that recognizes a problem or may give its unique position in the tourism system or local community, have a problem brought to it, and who then facilitates the movement of ideas and knowledge to address that problem by bringing individuals and organizations from diverse communities of practice together. DMOs in this role possess knowledge that is shared towards the creation of new knowledge among others.

An example of a DMO in the knowledge broker role can be seen in NOLA CVB's formation of a citywide PR council.

We also formed a Public Relations Council of PR professionals from around the city that formed a coalition. It was PR from CVB, major museums, hotel companies, restaurants, attractions, airport, major's office, Lt. Governor's office.... anyone involved in communicating messages about NOLA and its recovery.

6) Knowledge Activist: An organization that proactively seeks to manage knowledge across industries and cultures outside their local community in an effort to compliment and improve both local crisis management and TCM strategy in general. DMOs in this role will pay close attention to global crisis events, gleaning from those events new knowledge that will extend the scope of crisis management for both the DMO and its key stakeholder groups. The DMO will endeavor to bring people and diverse communities of practice together to discuss and share new ideas in relation to their experiences and findings.

Both Philly and Tucson CVBs' crisis experiences revealed their role as knowledge activists.

Philly CVB: That term we all cringe at "we are in a state of emergency" (SOE) is something our team at U.S. Travel has been trying to get them [state government] to change, because people all over the world use SOE so widely and sometimes it's not an emergency.... so we're working to re-define that [SOE] which could help more than anything in terms of our roles as DMOs.

Tucson CVB: [in regards to SB 1070] It was for Tucson a great success. We received calls from organizations from California and Texas asking for help and advice in handling crises with Mexico in particular, and were delighted to share with them our experience and what we had learned. Still to this day, four years later, we continue to build that strong relationship with our Mexico friends, constantly trying to understand what each other can add to the situation to make things better and easier for everyone.

Table 15 provides a summary of the roles DMOs adopted in support of their TCM approach across crisis stages. Columbus CVB was a unique case fitting into only one of the six role categories. The simplicity of the DMO's crisis response, i.e. communicating the details of the event to key stakeholders, monitoring social media platforms and waiting, was consistent with the communication and reputation management focus of its crisis management plan. The DMO was candid about its desire to maintain a low profile and assume a more reactive versus proactive approach in addressing crises in general, further justifying its placement into solely the purveyor of information category.

Across the nine case studies the strongest recurring theme among DMOs was their presence as knowledge brokers and knowledge boundary spanners similar to that previously described in the

extant literature (Aalbers *et al.*, 2004. Hargadon, 1998, 2002, Ritchie, 2009). Further, the degree to which each DMO, with the exception of the Columbus CVB, carried out these particular roles

Table 15. DMO Roles in TCM by DMO Case

	Visitor Advocate	Provider	Purveyor of Information	Knowledge Boundary Spanner	Knowledge Broker	Knowledge Activist
IDT	X	-	X	X	X	X
Philly CVB	X	X	X	X	X	X
GSOBT	X	X	X	-	X	X
Tucson CVB	X	-	X	X	X	X
NOLA CVB	X	X	X	X	X	X
MCT	X	X	X	X	-	-
SCT	X	-	X	X	X	-
Frankenmuth CVB	-	X	X	X	X	X
Columbus CVB	-	-	X	-	-	-

varied dramatically dependent on several factors a) the dynamics of leadership and authority with a given stakeholder, b) the type of crisis, c) the stage of crisis, d) the crisis management activity undertaken and, d) the properties of the knowledge attempting to be shared or created. The findings of this research have also highlighted a movement in which DMOs are transitioning beyond the comfy boundaries of their traditionally held knowledge broker/spanner roles, observed most commonly in the pre-crisis event and long-term recovery stages, to becoming more actively and intimately involved in crisis response efforts in the prodromal, emergency and intermediate stages of crisis with diverse stakeholder groups.

#### 4.2.2 Findings Related to Research Question 1b

Recapping, the second research sub-question was:

*RQ 1b: What factors influence DMOs' role adoption in crisis management?*

DMOs' institutional characteristics and environmental context, the type of crisis experienced and their ability to learn from the crisis experience were found to be key influential factors in DMOs' role selection process. Four additional factors of influence also emerged from the data, resulting in a total of seven factors of influence. DMOs' institutional characteristics, environmental context and tourism landscape are described below, outlined in Table 16, and discussed further in Chapter V alongside the four other factors of influence.

Together these factors are:

- 1) The institutional characteristics of the DMO and its environmental context;
- 2) A change in tourism landscape;
- 3) Organizational learning and the receipt of new knowledge or information;
- 4) The introduction of new technology and pathways of communication;
- 5) The presence or loss of expertise and other physical resources;
- 6) The entrance or absence of stakeholders and the roles those stakeholders assume; and,
- 7) Crisis type.

***DMOs' Institutional Characteristics.*** For the purpose of this research, *institutional characteristics* included a DMO's size, organizational structure and funding source(s). The findings of this research in relation to DMOs' institutional characteristics are as follows:

**Size:** The size of an organization can be measured in a number of ways, most commonly in terms of either financial worth/annual revenue or determined by the number of people the organization employs. For the purpose of this research, size was understood to mean the latter, thus DMOs' size attribute was measured by the total number of full-time equivalent individuals it employed. This measurement let DMOs to be classified as either 'micro', 'small', 'medium' or 'large' enterprises based on criteria used by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). NAICS is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies to classify business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. The findings of this study classified one of nine DMOs as microenterprise. Microenterprises in the United States are commonly defined as those businesses with five or fewer employees who do not have access to the conventional commercial banking sector and are created on the basis of entrepreneurship. While the latter two items, access to commercial banking and entrepreneurship, are not necessarily applicable to most DMOs, the small number of employees warrants its inclusion in this study. Overall, DMOs in this study were classified as follows: one micro DMO, three small DMOs and five medium DMOs. Participating DMOs' size in comparison to similar organizations in other countries, such as Canada, the U.K. and many European countries is comparable.

**Organizational Structure:** DMOs' organizational structure is broken down and compared based on three key characteristics. The first characteristic identified was if DMOs employed a *flat* (few or no levels of management between management and staff level employees) or *hierarchical* (pyramid management with everyone subordinate to someone else except President/CEO etc.) structure. Second, DMOs were noted as being either departmentalized or non-departmentalized with respect to the existence of traditional functional departments (Marketing, Sales, Membership, Public Relations, Human Resources, IT etc.). The last key characteristic investigated was the type of



governing body for each DMO. Five DMOs (Tucson CVB, GSOBT, NOLA CVB and Columbus CVB) maintained a hierarchical management structure, were departmentalized, and were governed by a Board of Directors. The four remaining flat management structure DMOs were split, IDT and Frankenmuth CVB were departmentalized and governed by a Board of Directors, and MCT and SCT were non-departmentalized and existed as a department of their county government. In comparison to DMOs or tourism management organizations in other countries, for example, New Zealand's regional tourism organizations (RTOs) established by Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) (UNWTO, 2007; Zahra, 2010; Zahra & Ryan, 2007), U.S. DMOs appear to mirror much of the rest of the world in terms of the hierarchy and type and diversity of departments in comprises.

**Funding:** DMO funding was assessed by looking at per annum funds brought into the organizations as well as types of funding sources. Across the nine DMOs, per annum funding ranged from \$800k (SCT) to \$12million (NOLA CVB). Sources of funding for DMOs ranged from a lodging tax, grants, revenue from event services, DMO membership/partner dues, investments, and private party sponsorships. The lodging tax was the most commonly held source of funding across DMO, with revenue from event services and private party sponsorships generating the most monies.

***Environmental context.*** For the purpose of this research, *environmental context* pertained to DMOs' geographic location and based on that location, in some cases, susceptibility to certain types of crises. The findings of this research in relation to DMOs' environmental context are as follows:

**Geographic location:** Across the nine case studies, DMOs' experienced the crises presented at their main office locations in four of the five official U.S. regions. Three DMOs in the Midwest, three DMOs in the South, two DMOs in the Northeast and one DMO in the West. Based on geography certain locales are known to be more susceptible to natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, landslides, and flooding and forest/brush fires. In addition to the potential for natural disasters to create crises for DMO, DMOs are also vulnerable to the stability and political environments of their destination communities. This includes for example, civil unrest perhaps due to tax increases or discrimination. The findings of this research indicated DMOs' proximity to a certain bodies of water as well as neighboring countries had a direct influence on their reported crisis management strategy both before, during and following the crisis experiences described in this study.

***Tourism Landscape.*** For the purpose of this research, *tourism landscape* pertained to DMOs' visitor characteristics and local tourism industry characteristics. The findings of this research in relation to DMOs' tourism landscape are as follows:

Visitor Characteristics: DMOs' visitor characteristics included identification of the tourist population as predominately domestic or international and when available, the top U.S. states and countries from which tourists originated. Five of nine DMOs reported attracting and providing services for both an international and domestic visitor population. Two of those five DMOs (MCT and SCT) described a small international flow target that is currently targeted for expansion by the DMO. The other four DMOs reported the vast majority of the visiting population to be domestic, and predominately from surrounding cities and states.

Industry Characteristics: DMOs' industry characteristics pertained to the basic makeup of the destination's tourism sector in terms of types and size of businesses, existence of destination attractions/drivers. Industry characteristics were fairly homogenous in terms of accommodations with seven of nine destinations having large corporate hotel chains with a small mix of B&Bs, RV camping, and one destination with guest ranches (GSOBT). Four destinations' (SCT, IDT, Frankenmuth CVB and GSOBT) retail and restaurant sectors were comprised of predominately micro- to small businesses. The vast majority of the five DMOs' destinations included a mix of corporate, small and independently-owned and operated businesses. Destination attractions varied among DMOs, but in general, included the beach/oceanfront (GSOBT), several national and state parks (Tucson CVB and IDT), historic U.S. memorials and revolutionary battlegrounds (Philly CVB and SCT), nature trails, waterfront rides (GSOBT and MCT) and historic old town centers (NOLA CVB, Columbus CVB and Frankenmuth CVB).

Table 16. Summary of Institutional Characteristics, Tourism Landscape and Environmental Context by DMO

	<i>City, State (Region)</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Funding</i>	<i>Visitor Characteristics</i>	<i>Industry Characteristics</i>
<b>MCT</b>	Monmouth County, New Jersey (Northeast)	Micro 1 FT	Flat and non-departmentalized. Exists as department of and governed by county government.	Unavailable.	Largely domestic visitor destination. Top U.S. states of origin are MD, PA, NC and NY. Small international flow from Canada, England, France and Germany.	Mixed. Most hotels attached to larger corporate entities; restaurants and retail are corporate, small or independently owned. Beach/oceanfront, revolutionary history sites, nationally recognized parks and golf courses, seafood and jazz festivals, and country fairs.
<b>SCT</b>	Spotsylvania, Virginia (South)	Small/ 1 FT and 14 PT	Flat and non-departmentalized. Exists as department of and governed by county government.	\$800k per annum. Sources: Transient Occupancy Tax (hotel tax).	Largely domestic visitor destination. Top U.S. states of origin are MD, PA, NC and NY. Small international flow from Canada, England, France and Germany.	Mixed. - Most hotels attached to larger corporate entities. Stock race cart track. VA Soccer League to draw international and domestic flow. Lake Anna area is small family-owned businesses (wineries and breweries). B&Bs offering wedding venues.
<b>IDT</b>	Porter, Indiana (Midwest)	Small/ 5 FT <sup>1</sup> , 4 PT <sup>2</sup> and 2 volunteers	Flat and departmentalized. Exists as department of county government. Governed by BOD <sup>3</sup> .	\$1.1 million per annum. Source: County's Uniform Innkeeper's Tax is sole funding mechanism.	Largely domestic visitor destination. Top U.S. states of origin are IN, IL, MI and OH.	Mixed. Most hotels attached to larger corporate entities; restaurants and retail are micro or small businesses. Indiana Dunes State Park
<b>Frankenmuth CVB</b>	Frankenmuth, Michigan (Midwest)	Small/ 5 FT, 10 PT	Flat and departmentalized. Governed by BOD.	\$1.1 million per annum. Sources: Room Tax Revenue; membership income and advertising programs.	Largely in-state domestic visitor destination. Top U.S. states of origin are OH, IN and IL. Small international flow from Canada.	Micro to small family-owned businesses. Historic old town known as "Michigan's Little Bavaria". Year-round festivals with and without Bavarian theme.
<b>Tucson CVB</b>	Tucson, Arizona (West)	Medium 34 FTE	Hierarchical and departmentalized. Governed by BOD.	\$7 million per annum. Sources: City tax; county tax; town--\$120k; partner dues approx. \$232k.	Domestic and international destination. Top U.S. states of origin are AZ, CA, TX, NV, IL; top international countries of origin are Mexico and Canada.	Mixed. Most hotels attached to larger corporate entities; RV camping; B&Bs and ranches. 50+% of Visit Tucson's 530+ partners are small businesses. Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Saguaro National Parks, caverns, observatories.
<b>GSOBT</b>	Gulf Shores /Orange Beach, Alabama (South)	Medium 41 FT & PT	Hierarchical and departmentalized. Governed by BOD.	\$11.2 million per annum. Sources: Lodging tax; grants; sports commission sponsorship.	Largely domestic visitor destination. Top U.S. states of origin are AL, TN, LA, MS, KY and GA, MO, MI, WI, IN, IL, AK, OH, MN and TX.	Mixed. Most hotels attached to larger corporate entities; RV camping; (2) B&Bs; majority micro to small family-owned businesses; Beach, nature trails, Gulf State Park and Historic Fort Morgan.
<b>Columbus CVB</b>	Columbus, Ohio (Midwest)	Medium/ 50 FT	Hierarchical and departmentalized. Governed by BOD.	\$9.9 million per annum. Sources: City's hotel/motel bed tax; Franklin County; members and supporters.	Domestic visitor destination.	Mixed. Most hotels attached to larger corporate entities; restaurants and retail are corporate, small or independently owned.
<b>Philly CVB</b>	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Northeast)	Medium/ 57 FT	Hierarchical and departmentalized. Governed by BOD.	\$11.1 million per annum. Sources: Lodging tax; grants; event services; membership dues; investments.	Domestic and international destination. Top U.S. states of origin are NJ, CA, NY, MA and MD.	Mixed. Most hotels attached to larger corporate entities; restaurants and retail are corporate, small or independently owned.
<b>NOLA CVB</b>	New Orleans, Louisiana (South)	Medium 58 FT	Hierarchical and departmentalized. Governed by BOD.	\$12 million per annum. Sources: Lodging tax; grants; event services; membership dues; investments.	Domestic and international destination. Top U.S. states of origin are AZ, CA, TX, NV, IL; top international countries of origin are France, Germany. U.K, Canada and Australia.	Mixed. Most hotels attached to larger corporate entities; restaurants and retail are corporate, small or independently owned.

### **4.2.3 Findings Related to Research Question 1c: Stakeholders and practices**

Recapping, the third research sub-question was:

*RQ 1c: What stakeholders and practices are central to DMOs' crisis management approach?*

To respond to the third research sub-question, the researcher analyzed the data to identify a) which stakeholder groups could be identified as important to DMOs' crisis management approach, b) was their relationship with the DMO (existing or emergent) with respect to the crisis experiences described and, c) which practices emerged as fundamental in DMOs' crisis management approach.

#### **4.2.3.1 Stakeholders Central to DMOs' Crisis Management**

For the purposes of this research, a stakeholder is understood as key participant in or a target of a DMO's crisis management strategy. Across the nine case studies 11 key stakeholders were revealed. These stakeholders are, in order of salience:

- 1) Tourists
- 2) Tourism businesses
- 3) DMO employees (full-time, part-time and volunteers)
- 4) Local government (city and county)
- 5) Federal and Central government
- 6) Residents
- 7) Law enforcement, Emergency Services, Roads and Transport
- 8) Other DMOs and support agencies
- 9) Media and Public Relations Professionals (social, news and print)
- 10) Experts (academia and industry)
- 11) Consultants (crisis and marketing)

The stakeholders involved in DMOs' crisis management strategies across all nine cases were identified and compared. Terminology used by DMOs varied when referring to important groups and included members, employees, publics, and audiences; however, through further clarification and observation during each interview, it became clear these terms could be understood as synonymous with stakeholders. Previous literature in stakeholder management has elucidated the concept of existing vs. emergent stakeholders, however, the overly simplistic nature of this conceptualization does not accurately capture the multiple layers in which DMO-stakeholder relationships exist or the fluidity between layers, thus stunting its value towards aiding DMOs' engagement with different stakeholder groups in TCM.

1) Tourists: All nine DMO cases identified tourists/visitors as a key stakeholder group in their crisis management strategy. This included tourists at the destination, inbound tourists and potential tourists. Discussion revolving around this group primarily addressed them as a public or audience the DMO felt compelled to provide information to, ensure the safety of and provide aid to in terms of locating or re-locating accommodations (e.g. NOLA CVB – Hurricane Katrina tourists evacuees) and communications resources (Philly CVB – tourists on Duck tour accident). Inbound tourists, those holding reservations for hotels, conferences and other events, were only briefly mentioned under a similar light as those tourists currently at the destination. Potential tourists were most commonly discussed in terms of identifying targets audiences in which to direct brand damage and recovery marketing efforts (e.g. GSOBT-travel trade shows).

2) Tourism businesses: All nine DMO cases identified tourism businesses as a central stakeholder group in their crisis management strategy. Exceptions to these findings are, SCT did not mention existing or emergent relationships with tourism businesses as a part of their crisis management approach in response to its severe weather rescue efforts. DMOs' discussion and inclusion of tourism businesses in their crisis management approaches was broad, where in some cases tourism businesses were seen simply another audience the DMO needed to address and provide information to, where as other DMO's enlisted their help as an essential entity in the emergency crisis response stage (e.g. MCT hotels to house displaced residents, tourists and FEMA).

3) DMO employees: All nine DMO cases identified employees as a central stakeholder group in their crisis management strategy. The majority of the discourse across DMOs spoke to the roles employees' play(ed) in the implementation of the organization's crisis management strategy. In the cases of GSOBT and Frankenmuth CVB, both DMOs highlighted important changes have made to their crisis management plans in an effort to create more mindfulness about employees mental and physical health as well as skills sets based on delegated duties in crisis.

4) Local government (city and county): Eight of nine DMO cases identified local government (city or county) as central stakeholders in their crisis management strategy. Further, each DMO, with the exception of GSOBTT, described their existing relationship with local government as a critical component in their capacity to navigate the crises presented in this study. The depth and scope of each relationship varied across DMOs, and while it is not the goal of this research to ascertain the strength of each stakeholder relationship, discourse among the cases consistently highlighted the inclusion and necessity of this particular stakeholder group in the success of DMOs' crisis management strategies. For example, IDT claims its existing relationship with the Town of Porter and its economic development personnel aided the DMO in its successful appeal to INDOT to modify its construction plans. Further, close coordination with and backing from the Town of

Porter to INDOT ensured the DMO's ideas and actions were consistent with the desires of the local community. This same relationship has also been fundamental in supporting IDT during its current political crisis. The Town of Porter has become a boisterous advocate of the town's as well as the DMO's wishes not to pursue a merger with DMO X. Local government has taken a lead role in this crisis which has in turn allowed IDT to reinvest some of its energies in continued tourism development for the destination. IDT's case reveals local government's ability to teeter back and forth between a mostly supportive role and a more dominant leadership role.

On a government basis, I'm not allowed to talk about this issue. I've been told to just ignore it... Our county will have to fight the fight. Thankfully our county is 100% in fighting mode and is willing to go toe to toe with them [DMO X]. So we just have to take a backseat. The county knows they are waging that war for both of us, and we trust them.

The majority of DMOs in this research emphasized a mutually beneficial relationship between the DMO and its local government, most often in terms of knowledge and information sharing. However, in the cases of GSOBT, NOLA CVB, MCT and Frankenmuth CVB for example, DMO's moved past traditional boundaries of information sharing to physically serving for example on local emergency management response teams.

GSOBTT-3: [during Hurricane Ivan] I was assigned to EMA working there for several days as the storm came through... updating our staff that couldn't get online and communicating with the city folks at the EOC up there and getting messages coordinated, as well as getting a lot of the county messages out because they didn't have the personnel to do it.

With the exception of Columbus CVB, DMO relations with this stakeholder group in terms of crisis revealed DMOs' increasingly prevalent role as knowledge broker and/or knowledge boundary spanner. These roles are discussed in more detail in subsequent sections of this chapter as well as in Chapter V.

5) Federal and Central government: Six of nine DMO cases identified federal government, specifically U.S. Homeland Security, and/or central government as a prominent stakeholder groups to their individual crisis management strategy. Central (state level) government was described as an active stakeholder for IDT, Philly CVB, Tucson CVB, GSOBTT, NOLA CVB and MCT. These cases were further compared to reveal similarities in terms of the type of crises experienced. Philly CVB, GSOBTT, NOLA CVB and MCT described federal government in terms of FEMA as critical crisis stakeholders. Philly CVB and GSOBTT elaborated on specifics such as learning how to better access and utilize FEMA as a crisis asset with regard to its business network database and

crisis training and certification opportunities for the average layperson, e.g. DMO employee. NOLA CVB did not elaborate on the degree in which is collaborated or cooperated with FEMA during Hurricane Katrina, but did identify its emergent relationship with the entity as a crucial part of their crisis management efforts, primarily from an information conduit standpoint. Prior to Hurricane Sandy, MCT had previously established a relationship with FEMA following Hurricane Irene in August 2011. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, MCT had to work more extensively with the FEMA to sort and direct displaced families (not necessarily tourists) into temporary accommodation and to accurately record damages and establish immediate and future needs of the New Jersey tourism industry to be reported to the federal government in order to receive finds for relief and rebuilding. FEMA, within the context of crisis management, is one of the most commonly talked about branches of U.S. Homeland Security. Tucson CVB, however, described maintaining yet another important relationship with the Border Control Division of Homeland Security. Prior to the SB 1070 crisis, Tucson CVB had been working intimately with this division to make tourists trek across the border as smooth and painless as possible.

With respect to central government, IDT and Tucson CVB discussed the role of their respective state governments in terms of addressing political crisis. IDT mentioned working tirelessly with, among others, the Indiana State Legislature in order to both prevent and repair the damage resulting from the merger sought by DMO X. Tucson CVB described participating in an ad hoc committee created by the State of Arizona to address the tourism industry's concerns surrounding Senate Bill 1070, but ultimately moving forward with their own agenda due to the less than expeditious pace of the committee. IDT also emphasized the importance of its relationship with the Indiana Dunes State Park System, specifically, the Indiana Dunes State Park Superintendent at the time of the road and bridge crisis. IDT accredits a significant portion of its capacity to have successfully negotiated this crisis to the strength of its longstanding relationship with the SP.

We have a great relationship with the State Park Superintendent (SPS)... so when you have really strong partnerships throughout the community those people will let you know these things. The SPS knows the CVB is a huge advocate [for the SP] and knows that by telling me they can get things done. So we started to bring all the different players together and reaching out to people in INDOT and bringing in some people with some clout. You start working those angles and before you know it, you have it solved.

Philly CVB, GSOBTT and NOLA CVB elaborated on the role of central government in their response to man-made and natural disasters. Philly CVB's case presented an account of two fatal man-made disasters (Duck tour accident and Salvation Army building collapse) during which, at times, uncertainty of how to respond to each crisis and the DMO's ultimate response to serve more

in an aid capacity to state (and local) government in managing response efforts accounted for a significant portion of their crisis management strategy for both incidents.

6) Residents: Six of nine DMO cases identified residents as a central stakeholder group in their crisis management strategy. DMOs' inclusion of residents as a important stakeholder group focused in three main areas, 1) providing information as to the status of the tourism industry and recovery efforts following the intermediate stage of crisis, 2) soliciting residents and special interest groups such as COCs to help with recovery activities (e.g. GSOBT-concert series with residents beach condos to increase tourism flows) and, consulting with special interest groups in the pre-event/prodromal stages of crisis management planning. These two exceptions aside, each DMO case made either direct or indirect, i.e. 'to those in our community or destination' references to maintaining their relationships with each of the above stakeholders. Frankenmuth, Philly and Tucson CVBs' made not mention of residents' inclusion in their approach to the specific crises presented in this study or their more general crisis management strategy.

7) Law enforcement, emergency services, roads and transport: Five of nine DMO cases including IDT, Philly CVB, Tucson, SCT and Frankenmuth CVB identified either local law enforcement and/or road and transportation authorities as central stakeholders in their crisis management plans. All stakeholder relationships in this group existed prior to the crises presented by each DMO. In the case of IDT, a strong relationship with local law enforcement existed prior to Crisis 1 – Access to Indiana Dunes SP and was particularly useful in IDT's request to INDOT to consider modifying their bridge and road construction plans in order to avoid not only failure of future tourism plans (bike trail), but an increased number of car and pedestrian accidents, previously witnessed and responded to by local law enforcement. The inclusion of local law enforcement added an important measure of credibility to ITD's plea, which ultimately resulted in INDOT's agreement to work with IDT and others to adapt their original plans.

We brought in the town of Porter, their economic development person and their police chief to kind of echo what we were concerned with... Bringing in the police is critical because they are ones who are going to be responding to those [accident] calls, and for them to have those concerns just elevated the discussion further.

Philly CVB also maintains a solid mutually beneficial relationship with both local law enforcement as well as Pennsylvania road and transport authorities, including the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). General stakeholder relations with these groups revolve around crime prevention and beautification of the city of Philadelphia. Although Philly CVB did not indicate involvement of these particular entities in its crisis management strategy for the two crises



presented (Salvation Army and Duck Tour Accident) in this study, the DMO does describe their relationship with these stakeholders as important and further elaborates on the intermediary or knowledge broker roles the DMO plays among these entities, and between these entities, tourists and the general public during crisis events.

SCT's proactively addresses a large number of potential crises through close coordination and collaboration with its local law enforcement and emergency management agencies. The DMO reported being in a continuous state of communication with its Sheriff's Office, county deputies and fire and emergency services to thoroughly review, address or mitigate crises affecting tourism events. SCT described a particular crisis in which it was required to work closely with several of these existing stakeholders to rescue tourists and residents following severe weather during one of its yearly historic Civil War battleground reenactments. Stakeholder relations with this group were characterized as open and respectful.

Frankenmuth CVB's tornado crisis provides yet another example of the importance of developing and maintaining relationships with local law enforcement. The DMO attributed much of their ability to successfully negotiate the aftermath of the tornado including assessing damages to infrastructure, rerouting tourists and planning for similar future incidents to their previously established relationship with this stakeholder group. The DMO further noted its original general crisis management strategy required close coordination with law enforcement but was predominately focused on festivals and other tourism events, paying little to no attention to large scale natural or man-made disasters. Thus, as a result of this particular crisis event, Frankenmuth CVB broadened the scope of its scenario planning and training with local enforcement and other stakeholders to address a wider variety of potential crises in its crisis management strategy.

8) Other DMOs and support agencies: Four of nine DMO cases including IDT, Philly CVB, Tucson CVB and NOLA CVB identified a range of specific aid or other agencies as important stakeholders in their crisis management strategy. Each stakeholder served as a critical resource in the DMO cases presented in this study. For example, IDT's membership in the Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission, a regional partnership of CVBs across seven northern Indiana counties, has been indispensable. Through networked DMO resources, the commission has provided IDT guidance and the enhanced ability to see stable growth during its nearly decade long political crisis with DMO X. Philly CVB utilizes its relationship with and membership in the U.S. Travel Association to gather information from other DMOs and travel and tourism businesses and organizations around the nation on the challenges and successes surrounding a plethora of crisis events that can they be used to inform their crisis management strategy. Utilizing U.S. Travel as a medium through which it initially made and built connections with FEMA, Philly CVB has now

developed a relationship with FEMA's closet regional office and has incorporated crisis communications and other planning and response activities with this agency into its crisis management plans.

To add to the diversity of stakeholders in this category, Tucson CVB identified several international tourism organizations including Mexican DMOs as essential stakeholders in the navigation of their recent political crisis involving Arizona SB 1070. Specifically, the DMO described the strength of its relationships with the Mexican Tourism Association and Miguel Torruco, Secretaría de Turismo del Distrito Federal as the foundation of its ability to survive this crisis event. The immense amount of trust and support Tucson CVB received from these two existing stakeholder relationships laid the groundwork for Tucson CVB's proactive approach to counteract the negative effects of this crisis on their destination and destination's image. Tucson CVB further recognized without the support of these relationships their crisis management approach, particularly their efforts to communicate a welcoming and safe environment to international visitors, would have lacked the credibility from the Mexican side resulting in the DMO being subject to the delayed reactive response of Arizona's ad hoc tourism committee.

NOLA CVB's identified two emergent stakeholder relationships in their crisis management efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina. The first being the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. NOLA CVB implied having an existing relationship with the Corp, but "developed a much closer relationship" with this organization in order to better understand the recent crisis in terms of breached levees, what would be done isolate the incident, and how the DMO could reassure its tourism businesses and future tourists of their safety after the levees had been rebuilt. Similar to local law enforcement substantiating IDT's concerns to INDOT during their road and bridge crisis, the Mexican Tourism Association and Mexican Secretary of Tourism supporting Tucson CVB in their claims of safety and assurance of non-harassment of tourists despite SB 1070, illustrates the success of the strategic use of specific stakeholders to infuse credibility into DMOs' words and actions during crises.

9) Media and Public Relations Professionals (social, news and print): Three of nine DMO cases, Tucson CVB, GSOBT and NOLA CVB identified specific media outlets and/or the audiences of a particular media platform as central stakeholders in their crisis management strategy. One of the first actions Tucson CVB took in response to the SB 1070 initiative was to post a video and statement through YouTube that spoke to their disagreement of the Bill and their continued support and encouragement of Mexican and other international visitors to Tucson. The DMO also targeted social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to communicate to its diverse user populations the DMO's position throughout the life of the crisis. Tucson CVB stressed selecting social media and the DMO's own website as its frontline crisis communication mediums for their

capacity to accurately and rapidly disseminate the DMO's actions, thoughts and beliefs to their various stakeholder groups. GSOBT also elected to utilize social media platforms to relay crisis communications to the public during its BP oil spill crisis in 2010. During GSOBT's previous crisis, Hurricane Ivan, social media had not yet been well developed and was certainly not being utilized from a "news" standpoint as it is today, thus the DMO relied more heavily on traditional television new and print media to help deliver their messages concerning the damage and actual status of their destination as well as recovery initiatives. Following Hurricane Ivan, GSOBT's efforts to combat potential tourists' negative perceptions of their destination, including its tourism attractions and businesses, was facilitated through pre-existing relationships with travel writers and emergent relationships with local and national news media, such as CNN, in which the DMO was able to engage in open, honest and supportive dialogue that was in turn shared with a global audience. GSOBT further reported utilizing some of the same media relationships made during Hurricane Ivan in its crisis communications for the BP oil spill more than five years later.

Similar to GSOBT, NOLA CVB expounded on the dynamics of numerous existing and emergent stakeholders relations with various media entities during Hurricane Katrina. The DMO became the central coordination point for news media regarding official statements about the destination's status and recovery efforts. Being in this position allowed the DMO to a degree to have a hand in balancing the honest facts with the bigger picture. NOLA CVB also participated in an ad hoc public relations council created in response to Hurricane Katrina and that included a number of PR professionals from the CVB, major museums, hotel companies, restaurants, attractions, the New Orleans International Airport, the Mayor's office and Lt. Governor's office to name a few. The DMO continues to sit on this council to date, and witnessed its collaborative power in subsequent crisis events such the DMO's response to the BP oil spill.

10) Experts (academia and industry): Two of nine DMOs, IDT and GSOBT, identified experts in either academic or the industry as key stakeholders contributing to their crisis management strategy. IDT described creating new relationships with industry experts in transportation and engineering to assist in modifying INDOT's original road and bridge construction plans. GSOBT used existing partnerships with academic community and wildlife experts to make important inquiries during their BP oil spill crisis in 2010.

GSOBT-4: Suddenly when you need to know about the effects of oil in ocean tides etcetera we had some partners from other projects we could call and say "Do you know anybody whose done this research or do you know anybody that knows etc.?" So having those types of relationships in place really gave us an advantage in getting that accurate information.

11) Consultants (crisis and marketing): Two of nine DMOs, IDT and MCT, identified crisis or marketing consultants as a central part of their crisis management strategy. IDT mentioned drawing on professional crisis consulting services as a part of their approach in managing their current political crisis with DMO X. While the DMO did not expand on the exact nature of the instruction and activities undertaken with this particular stakeholder, it did mention the guidance received had been both applicable and useful to its crisis management endeavor. With respect to MCT, following Hurricane Sandy, the DMO was obliged to work closely with the marketing firm MWW to strategically spend the \$25 million dollar promotional budget provided by HUD to help revive New Jersey's tourism economy.

The findings of this research revealed 11 key stakeholder groups. Stakeholders were categorized as having an existing or emergent relationship with each DMO respective to crisis. The vast majority of stakeholders identified had an existing relationship with the DMO, however, 17 incidents across six stakeholders were recorded in which a stakeholder relationship emerged due to the crisis event. Among those cases, emergent relationships with federal and state governments were the most prevalent with seven incidences, followed by academia and industry experts (3 incidences), support agencies and associations, media and public relations and crisis and marketing consultants all with two incidences, and lastly local government with one incident. Additional commonalities across DMOs included the fact that all DMOs across all crises presented in this study indicated tourism businesses, tourists and local residents were key stakeholders and thus maintained directives in their crisis management strategy addressing the needs of these groups. Further, all but one DMO (Tucson CVB) indicated have a strong existing relationship with local government. Table 17 provides a summary of the stakeholders identified as central to DMOs' crisis management strategy by case and crisis, listed alphabetically.

Table 17. Stakeholders Central to TCM by DMO Case and Crisis

	STAKEHOLDER TYPE										
	Tourists	Tourism Businesses	DMO Employees	Local Govt. (city/county)	Federal/ Central Govt.	Residents	Law Enforcement/ Emergency Services/ Roads and Transport	Other DMOs and Agencies	Media/PR Professionals	Experts (academia /industry)	Consultants (crisis/ marketing)
Columbus CVB	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-
Frankenmuth CVB	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
GSOBT	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	-	-	C1: X C2: X	C1: X	
IDT	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X	C1: X	-	C1: X C2: X	C2: X
MCT	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	X
NOLA CVB	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	-	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	-	-
Philly CVB	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	-	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	-	-	-
SCT	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	-
Tucson CVB	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	-	-

Notes: For DMOs presenting multiple crises, C1 = Crisis 1 and C2 = Crisis 2.

#### 4.2.3.2 Practices Central to DMOs' Crisis Management

For the purposes of this research, a *practice* is understood as the use of an idea, belief or method to help ground and guide DMOs' crisis management strategy. Across the nine case studies, seven fundamental practices were revealed. These practices are, in order of salience:

- 1) Maintaining open lines of communication with all stakeholders
- 2) Transparency
- 3) Truthfulness
- 4) Knowing when and how to respond
- 5) Being prepared
- 6) Educating ourselves to educate others
- 7) Mindfulness

1) Maintaining open lines of communication: The belief that communication is a basic critical element of effectively navigating crisis events and that it must be proactively pursued and maintained with all stakeholder groups.

For example, GSOBT emphasizes its appreciation for the strong, trustworthy and reciprocal communication exchange it maintains with the county EMA,

GSOBT-3: It has been absolutely wonderful because the county PIO is phenomenal and is always on top of things and we've developed a great relationship. If something is brewing out in the Gulf I can shoot her a quick messages asking if I can do anything to help? We keep in touch often and get information from them that I then pass on to our team here to put on our website.

It's been a good 2-way communication also because she's my contact to the county call center too so when something develops in the Gulf we would activate our crisis page on our website... and give [tourists and residents] accurate information. So hopefully we reduce inaccuracies by all speaking from the same verified information.

At the time of the interview, the county PIO position was currently vacant. Understanding the importance of this relationship to the success of the DMO's crisis management strategy, GSOBT made meeting and coordinating with the new PIO a top priority.

GSOBT-3: And it's different now because she [past PIO] is no longer at the county EMA and they are in the process of finding someone new, and [now] I have to rebuild that relationship with someone new. So I have on my list to go and meet the new person ASAP because I don't want the first time we interact to be unfortunately due to some crisis activity.

3) Transparency: The belief that maintaining communication channels in a manner that provides all publics a clear unbiased or as minimally biased as possible view into the actual state of the DMO and destination is most appropriate.

For example, NOLA CVB knew their crisis recovery would be longer and more painful for their tourism stakeholders if the general public and potential tourists continued to receive only one side of the story. The destination's image had suffered significantly and the DMO knew stories of revival, refurbishment and reopening would likely be coupled with stories of destruction, delays and abandonment until the former began to outweigh the later. Thus, one of DMO's chief concerns during the crisis was maintaining their credibility through transparency with various media outlets, city representatives, tourists and DMO staff.

We weren't trying to manipulate the media but instead be a credible source for them. So they knew they could come to us and we would give them the honest facts. The most important thing to us was to maintain our credibility. ...We would have just slaughtered ourselves from a reputation standpoint if we had gone on the news and said 'Hey everything is great, come back and visit' when it wasn't because people could see that ...So we had to maintain our credibility and make sure what we were saying was absolutely honest and we weren't just putting out this rosy picture when reality was very bleak. The residents and CVB employees wouldn't have appreciated that.

3) Truthfulness: The idea that never lying or skewing the truth, particularly in order to avoid scrutiny or fear is the best approach.

For example, Tucson CVB made it a point to be open and honest about its position in regards to SB 1070.

Tucson CVB-1: Our VP of Community Relations had to deal with our partners and crisis management as far as messaging and how to tell the world that Tucson is not a place that enhances or supports those kinds of initiatives [SB\_1070].

Tucson CVB-2: So the first thing we did the day the governor signed the Bill was use social media (YouTube) to place a video and send a message Mexico. Saying "It's unfortunate what has happened today. We understand there are some immigration problems and we believe in tourism from Mexico and what you can contribute to our economy. So we are supporting our visitors from Mexico and hope that you understand that Tucson is a community that really is in favor of visitors from Mexico and we're sorry this is happening."

In our centers in Mexico we have banners outside also making the statement that we want to have a dialogue and to continue to build our relationship.

We tried to promote our organization as one that tries to promote everything there is to do in region with no desire to inhibit anyone from coming to the destination. ...We had a issues page on the media area of our website talking about our views on SB-1070 were. We sent a little blurb and link to that [media area of website] to our partners so they knew our position, which was "We're just marketing our destination". Then we educated our folks in the Visitors Center and the call-in information center on how to handle calls about that issue, and we got both bad and good calls.

4) Knowing when and how to respond: The idea that a DMO's formal or informal response to a crisis from a communication standpoint as well as a physical aid and assessment standpoint, should be, intentionally and carefully thought out; disseminated or conducted in a timely manner; utilize the most accurate information; consider the repercussions on all its constituencies, and; employ appropriate communication and media platforms in order to avoid retractions, minimize negative word of mouth and balance the appearance of being unreliable with uncaring.

For example, the uncertainty surrounding the events in Philly CVB's Duck tour incident led the DMO to exercise extreme caution in its short and long-term response to the crisis.

The Duck tour had to close down for a year and had problems getting back up and running. So we needed to support our member with marketing but also needed to respect the City's response. It was hard, because until we knew for sure what happened we couldn't say "duck boats are safe". So very big dynamic there. At least a week [went by] and we needed a PR response. We ended up diverting to the Mayor's office to be the spokesperson.

7) Being prepared: The notion that preparation for crisis events can lead to greater success towards effectively and efficiently navigating those events. For example, IDT expressed concern for the organization's preparedness to address different types of crises. Their close proximity to Chicago, a famous U.S. metropolis, as well as nearby nuclear power plants were chief among these concerns.

We are between Illinois and Michigan and there are nuclear power plants, so that materials for those plants are actually going through our area because we have major highways. Many people are unaware of these materials passing through. We're right by Chicago who has a lot of steel mills so a terrorist attack on Chicago would just miss our CVB/destination or easily hit us. So we need to think about these things and how they're going to affect us.

Many tourism researchers and industry professional would consider IDT's attempt to anticipate and plan for different types of crises based on their geographic location and immediate surroundings a smart strategic move. Although forward thinking is a positive first step towards building effective



crisis management strategy, follow-through is equally important, and will require the DMO to take several steps further to include, for example, scenario development and training.

5) Educating ourselves to educate others: The idea that the DMO should make it a priority to educate themselves on the particulars that led to a crisis event, how and what the recovery from that crisis will look like, as well as making a concerted effort to understand and learn from the activities and stakeholders involved in that crisis event.

For example, GSOBT noted its recurrent focus on maintaining an accurate, applicable crisis management plan to help maximize the DMO's capacity to survive future crises.

GSOBT-1: We have hurricane plans and review those plans annually. Just had internal review a few weeks ago, included updates and updates on personnel assignments etc. After disasters we review and apply lessons learned and add things as technology and resources change.

6) Mindfulness: The belief that crises evoke different and distinct responses across stakeholder groups and individuals, thus requiring DMOs to stop, think, listen and monitor the thoughts, feelings and health (as appropriate) of individuals involved in order to better access the needs of those individuals, and to more effectively negotiate crisis response activities.

For example, during Frankenmuth CVB's tornado crisis key responsibilities previously assigned to the DMO and local government had to be re-evaluated and re-delegated in order for the city to present a calm, strong and united front in conveying its immediate and long-term crisis response.

The city manager was in a bit of shock and wanted to focus more on internal functions and the data and not to speak to the general public. He [city manager] said it would be my [CVB/COC's] role in the crisis management to speak to media and any public comments associated with what was occurring. When you are in the middle of a crisis and you are in a situation of shock you need to be able to recognize that in another person and be prepared to pick-up responsibilities that may not necessarily be considered yours.

Similarly, for GSOBT one of the most important lessons-learned following the BP oil spill was the need for an increased awareness and focus on employees' overall health, particularly mental and emotional.

GSOBT-1: For the oil spill, we had to learn to give people a break... disconnect time. People were forbidden to use cell phone or Internet etc. [to contact DMO or do work] for 3 days so they could

recover. ...[It] took a while to recognize the need for it but as soon as I did, we gave people that break they desperately needed. Next time I will try to recognize/implement that much sooner.

Among the nine DMO case studies, seven practices have been identified as central to DMOs' crisis management strategy. Six of seven practices are rooted in prevention, reduction and mitigation of negative perceptions and behaviors of the 11 key stakeholder groups previously identified in these findings. Table 18 provides an outline of the seven practices in relation to each DMO case.

Table 18. Practices Central to TCM by DMO Case and Crisis

	Maintaining Open Communication	Transparency	Truthfulness	Knowing when and how to respond	Being Prepared	Educating ourselves to educate others	Mindfulness
<b>IDT</b>	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X	C1: X C2: X
<b>Philly CVB</b>	C1: X C2: X	-	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	-	-
<b>Tucson CVB</b>	X	X	X	-	X	X	X
<b>GSOBT</b>	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C2: X	C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X
<b>NOLA CVB</b>	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C2: X	C1: X C2: X	C1: X C2: X
<b>MCT</b>	X	X	X	-	-	-	X
<b>SCT</b>	X	-	-	-	X	-	X
<b>Frankenmuth CVB</b>	X	X	X	-	X	-	X
<b>Columbus CVB</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	-

Notes: For DMOs presenting multiple crises, C1 = Crisis 1 and C2 = Crisis 2.

The findings of this research have revealed DMOs' development and/or maintenance of strategic relationships with one or more of 11 key stakeholder groups as an essential component to their crisis management strategy. Individuals within these grouping ranged from city council members to local police chiefs, state political representatives and wildlife experts to the average tourist. The degree to which each DMO collaborated with a particular stakeholder group varied substantially, hinging on several factors including a) the dynamics of leadership and authority with a given stakeholder, b) the type of crisis, c) the stage of crisis, d) the crisis management activity undertaken and, d) the properties of the knowledge attempting to be moved or created by the DMO. The understanding that each DMOs' crisis management approach was heavily influenced by the presence or absence of these stakeholders as well as those groups' flexibility and desire to work collaboratively to reach solutions that would benefit all parties was clearly evident through this research.

The findings of this study have also illuminated several instances in which DMOs have evolved beyond traditionally held mental models of their more reactive or supportive roles as knowledge brokers and knowledge boundary spanners (Section 2.2) in the mid to later stages of crisis. DMOs

instead are taking a more proactive role as brokers and spanners spearheading crisis management activities in the pre-event and prodromal stages of crisis. Furthermore, this research has exhibited DMOs' willingness to step out of the confines of their own organizations and on to the 'crisis battlefield' as active participants working side-by-side with other crisis and tourism stakeholders to physically assess and manage crisis activities. This included, for example, DMO employees not only working *with* other organizations but at times *in* other organizations to meet the needs of different stakeholders and the destination as a whole in its perseverance over crisis. In terms of tourism businesses, DMO employees, tourists and residents, DMOs ultimately expressed their efforts to remain mindful of the needs, fears, health and general safety of these stakeholder groups. Analysis of DMOs' existing and newly created relationships with different media outlets, particularly during emergency, intermediate and recovery stages of crisis, shed light on DMOs' steadfast concern and appreciation for opportunities to accurately portray their true crisis state.

In addition to uncovering 11 key stakeholder groups, this research also identified seven central crisis management practices across DMO cases. Maintaining open lines of communication with all stakeholders emerged as a principal practice through which all other practices, including transparency, truthfulness, mindfulness, knowing when and how to respond, being prepared, and educating ourselves to educate others were intrinsically linked. Figure 11 indicates the key stakeholder groups most closely targeted or associated with each crisis management practice. Stakeholders groups are listed by number corresponding to Section 4.3.3.1.

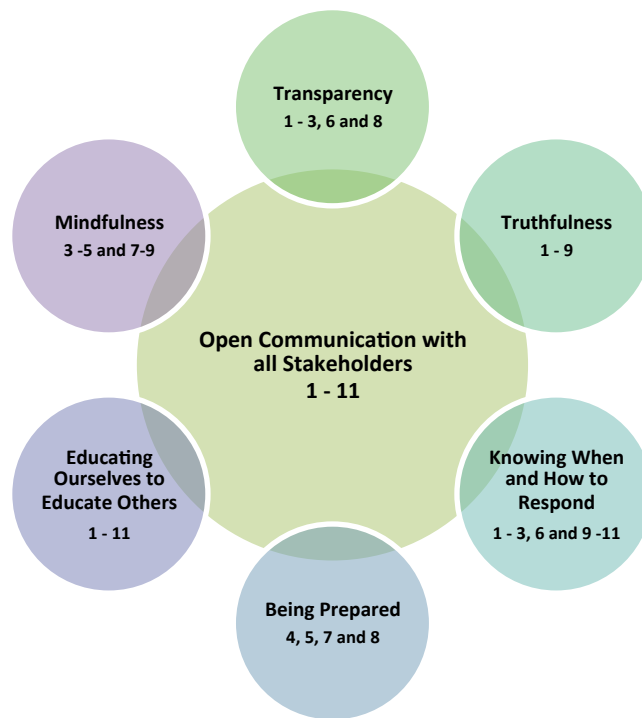


Figure 11. TCM Practices and associated Stakeholder Groups

### 4.3 Summary

Within-case analyses and cross-case comparisons of the data were used to explore the research question posed in study. The findings of these analyses revealed DMOs' adoption of six main roles in their TCM approach, two of which were presented in the extant literature (knowledge broker and boundary spanner). The results of this study have illustrated an expanded understanding of the knowledge broker and boundary spanner roles DMOs have adopted in past crises, and introduces an extension of these two roles in the form of a knowledge activist, who through certain activities attempts to exercise more control over the future of their organizations and destinations. Together, the six main roles are: Knowledge Activist, Knowledge Broker; Boundary Spanner; Purveyor of Information; Provider, and Visitor Advocate.

In addition to gaining a better understanding of the roles DMOs assume in crisis environments, this study also sought to explore key factors having the ability to influence DMOs' selection of these six roles. In that regard, the results of this study revealed seven factors as having significant potential to influence DMO's role selection in TCM. Three of the seven factors, institutional characteristics and environmental context; crisis type; and the ability to learn from past crisis experiences were suggested to be influential factors prior to data collection and were confirmed through the analysis process. The four newly discovered factors of influence include: the entrance or absence of stakeholders and the roles they assume; the presence or loss of expertise and other

physical resources; the introduction of new technology and pathways of communication, and lastly, a change in tourism landscape.

The findings of this research also confirmed the inclusion of 11 key stakeholder groups in DMOs' tourism crisis management approach. The discourse surrounding these stakeholder groups was on the whole positive with the majority of DMOs expressing sentiments of gratitude, appreciation and contentment in their relationships. The key stakeholder groups identified include: Federal and Central government, Local government (city and county); Law enforcement, Roads and Transport; Other DMOs and support agencies; Media and Public Relations Professionals (social, news and print); Consultants (crisis and marketing); Experts (academia and industry); Tourism businesses; DMO employees (full-time, part-time and volunteers); Tourists; and Residents. Several stakeholder groups were mentioned in the extant literature, e.g. local government and tourism businesses, thus confirming their importance to DMOs' TCM. However, it is the inclusion of other groups such as experts and support agencies and associations, and the enhanced understanding of the dynamics of DMOs' relationships with each of the 11 stakeholder groups that substantially advances our knowledge of TCM. DMOs' collaboration across stakeholder groups varied significantly and was subjective to several factors, including the dynamics of leadership and authority between the DMO and a given stakeholder; the type of crisis experienced; the stage of crisis; the crisis management activity undertake; as well as the properties of the knowledge attempting to be moved or created by the DMO.

Additionally, the results of this study have highlighted previous conceptualizations of stakeholder relationships as either existing or emergent (Scarpino & Gretzel, 2014) do not adequately reflect the true nature of DMOs' relations with these stakeholder groups. Thus our understanding of TCM in this context could greatly benefit from a new empirically-based conceptualization that better distills the salience, type presence and subtleties of these DMO-stakeholder relationships.

Lastly, the findings of this study discovered seven central practices to DMOs' crisis management approach. Descriptions and examples of each practice were provided and summarized by DMO case and crisis. Maintaining open lines of communication with all stakeholders emerged as the principal practice through which all other practices were intrinsically linked. Linkages were made between each of the 11 stakeholder groups and seven crisis management practices. Interestingly, six of seven practices appear to be grounded in prevention, reduction and mitigation of negative perceptions and behaviors by the 11 stakeholder groups. The findings summarized above are discussed in greater depth in relation to the extant literature and new theory in Chapter V of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of this study in greater depth in relation to the extant literature and theory. The chapter begins with discussion of DMOs' roles in TCM and the factors believed to influence DMOs' adoption of these roles. This is followed by discussion of the conceptualization and dynamics of key stakeholder relationships and foundational practices DMOs employ in their crisis management approach. Lastly, organizational resilience is discussed and the TCM-ORM framework presented in Chapter II is reviewed based on empirical insights from this research, culminating in the presentation of an expanded TCM-ORM model.

#### **5.1 DMO Roles in TCM**

Based on the crisis experiences explored in this research, DMOs' roles in TCM have, in part, remained static in agreement with those roles previously defined in the extant tourism literature. However, drastic changes in both the tourism and crisis landscapes, including the introduction of, for example, new knowledge, social media and increased access to resources and information, revealed that some of DMOs' roles and many responsibilities in crises have evolved significantly over the past several decades. Tourism literature has characterized DMOs' roles in crisis management into two main categories, knowledge boundary spanners and/or knowledge brokers (Ritchie, 2009; Blackman & Ritchie, 2011). While both the knowledge broker and knowledge boundary spanner roles were observed in the findings of this research, the present scope of these two roles did not extend far enough to adequately reflect the various DMO mindsets and activities across different types of crises. Thus, to better capture the broad spectrum of DMOs' actual attitudes and actions, four additional roles emerging from the data were proposed: a Visitor Advocate, Provider, Purveyor of Information, and a Knowledge Activist.

The extant literature has focused largely on the functions of DMOs in supporting general destination management and tourism development. In line with these business as usual functions, three of the six roles observed in this study (visitor advocate, boundary spanner and knowledge broker) closely resemble the responsibilities attributed to DMOs outside a crisis context, such as DMOs as being, coordinators working to achieve a single voice; leaders and advocates for the advancement of tourism within a destination; protectors of the people who utilize and benefit from the local tourism economy; liaisons or intermediaries to tourism sector businesses that may otherwise find difficulty in communicating their services to key audiences; and, builders of community pride and flag carriers for residents and visitors (Morrison, Bruen, & Anderson, 1998;

Gartrell, 1994). Each of these functions fits neatly in one or more of the visitor advocate, boundary spanner and knowledge broker roles exhibited in this study, confirming DMOs' crisis management behavior to a degree, as a critical extension of its standard destination management behavior.

Divergence from typical destination management behavior and these three roles is observed with the introduction of the provider, purveyor of information, and knowledge activist roles. Thus, the results of this study highlight DMOs' roles in TCM as both static and evolving from the current literature. Given DMOs were observed filling more than one role within and across different crises, it is fundamentally important to understand each of these roles may be assumed in tangent with one another or standalone. Further, because each role includes engagement with multiple and diverse stakeholder groups, our ability to better understand and support DMOs in their fulfillment of these roles in TCM will be of significant value in enhancing not only DMOs' approach to crisis management but that of key stakeholders as well. Discussion of each the six roles are now provided.

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**Visitor Advocate:** An organization that makes pleading for and defending the general and more specific crisis-related interests of visitors a priority. DMOs in this role are particularly concerned with visitors' potentially limited knowledge and understanding of the destination and local culture, and how those limitations may further jeopardize their safety and welfare in crisis events (e.g. correctly interpreting signs of danger and the ability to locate and request assistance). Being a visitor advocate also extends to ensuring visitors have access to accurate, non-biased information that will aid both their pre-arrival destination selection process as well as their decision-making processes while at the destination in a crisis context.

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The tone or attitude projected by DMOs in this study revealed a sense of responsibility to ensure the crisis actions of those DMOs as well as other key stakeholders were or are now in the long-term recovery stage, in the best interest of the visitor. Serving as a visitor advocate is not a new task for the DMO. Visitors are known by DMOs to fall prey to lost sheep syndrome visitors due to less familiarity with destination infrastructure, businesses, resources and general geography, a syndrome generally exacerbated by actual crisis events. Thus, in certain respects DMOs' advocacy role is unchanged in the presence of a crisis. However, the range of crisis experiences in this study showed being a visitor advocate in crisis has less to do with lobbying for longer attraction hours or cleaner public restrooms and more to do with the implementation of advanced disaster warning systems and appeals to airlines and other travel and tourism providers to provide aid for tourists. "The visitor has no advocate; that's the DMO" – IDT in reference to H. Katrina in NOLA.

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**Provider:** An organization that not only makes it a priority to plead for and defend the interests of visitors, but also willing offers their own material/physical or human resources to aid various stakeholder groups in an effort to collectively negotiate crises. DMOs in this role maintain a mind frame of "We will survive together" and may, for

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example, offer stakeholders use of their facilities, personnel or IT equipment.

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An extension of the visitor advocate role, DMOs acting as providers in this study felt compelled to share not only information but physical and human resources with other key stakeholders in their efforts towards crisis management. Within this role a broad spectrum of positions exist. DMOs such as Frankenmuth and NOLA CVBs voluntarily offered their office space, use of IT equipment and back-up generator to stakeholders in need; NOLA went as far as becoming a temporary command center for media relations for the City of New Orleans. GSOBT had, in tangent with their local governments' crisis management plans, prearranged for specific DMO staff to temporarily 'work' for the government in their hour of need during the emergency and intermediate stages of crisis.

Although the decision-making process behind some of these DMOs' choices to act as either a proactive or reactive provider was not well-defined, motivation behind the role appeared to be rooted in the mentality that if one key stakeholder struggles, this weakness could cause additional challenges for other stakeholders, further compromising the DMO's and destination's chances of survival. This attitude remains consistent with Gunn's (1988:272) notion "No one business or government establishment can operate in isolation" and that the 'go-it-alone policies' of many tourism sectors of the past were being replaced with stronger cooperation and collaboration for the greater good. While the costs associated with pursuing this role are largely unknown, DMOs' increased visibility of the crisis management activities, resources or lack there of among key stakeholder groups may for some DMOs who are able to translate and integrate the data and information they observed to modify their crisis management strategy in real-time and/or in the later stages of crisis.

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**Purveyor of Information:** An organization that makes collecting and disseminating information to and from various stakeholder groups a priority. DMOs in this role may act as a conduit in the passing of information, including information exclusively held by the DMO.

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From an everyday destination management perspective, DMOs have been known to purposefully share a plethora of information with a diversity of stakeholders, such as destination promotion via direct marketing, advertising, sales promotion, publicity and public relations (Dore & Crouch, 2003) as well as internal destination development focused on expanding and improving general tourism options and services (Presenza, Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). The purveyor of information (POI) role in a crisis context extends and resituates DMOs' traditional information sharing role into a place of urgency and survival. As a POI in crisis, DMOs not only acknowledge their unique position in regards to accessing certain types of information, but that



efficient, timely dissemination of that information may be the difference between calm and panic and the death or survival of many organizations in crises. What has yet to be revealed, however, are the processes by which DMOs acquire new information, store and disseminate this information. Further, how the individual information processing capacities of DMO employees affect the speed, quality and format of the information being disseminated is unknown and maybe a significant indicator of DMOs' capacity in this role.

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**Boundary Spanner:** An organization that recognizes a problem, brings the problem to the attention of others, and facilitates the transfer of knowledge from one party to another in effort to solve that problem. DMOs in this role do not necessarily possess the knowledge being transferred but help enable recognition and understanding of the shared knowledge of others.

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**Knowledge Broker:** An organization that recognizes a problem, or may, given its unique position in the tourism system and local community have a problem brought to it, and who then facilitates the movement of ideas and knowledge to address that problem by bringing individuals and organizations from diverse communities of practice together. DMOs in this role possess knowledge that is shared towards the creation of new knowledge among others.

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Characterization of the boundary spanner role assumed by the DMOs in this study was consistent with the extant literature in TCM (Ritchie, 2009; Blackman & Ritchie, 2011). However, with respect to DMOs' roles as knowledge brokers, the results of this study suggest a more applicable definition of DMOs in this role should incorporate stakeholders' propensity to approach DMOs' for their capacity to drive central knowledge-based systems (KBS) that extract, serve and manage knowledge and knowledge flows among contributors and beneficiaries of the system (Racherla & Hu, 2009). This was predominately due to key stakeholders acknowledgement of DMOs' unique position within the tourism system and local community, as well as their ability to corral sufficient resources and tools that small- to medium tourism businesses alone would not possess in order to deploy KBSs (Billing & Chen, 2004).

One of the major challenges organizations face in crises is rapidly finding experts with the experience or knowledge to decipher the dynamic scenarios presented, however, at the same time simply having access to knowledge or even the right knowledge does not imply the organization or individual has suitable mechanisms that will allow exploitation of that knowledge. The majority of cases in this study suggest DMOs have in the past successfully negotiated the knowledge broker role to the advancement of theirs and key stakeholder groups crisis management approach.

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**Knowledge Activist:** An organization that proactively seeks to manage knowledge across industries and cultures outside their local community in effort to compliment and improve both local crisis management and TCM strategy in general. DMOs in this role will pay close attention to global crisis events, gleaning from those events new knowledge that will

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extend the scope of crisis management for both the DMO and its key stakeholder groups. The DMO will endeavor to bring people and diverse communities of practice together to discuss and share new ideas in relation to their experiences and findings.

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In contrast to the knowledge broker role, DMOs' role as knowledge activist was illustrated by their strong preemptive attitude, typically fueled by past crises or spillover effects, and desire to develop crisis management initiatives that were not only relevant but took into consideration multiple perspectives, stakeholder capacities and the state of the art in TCM as well as crisis management more broadly. The knowledge sharing initiatives pursued by DMOs in this study were, for example, in the case of Philly CVB and FEMA, meant to incite change, increase awareness and access to best practices, benchmarking opportunities and tools in TCM available for key stakeholder groups in the Philadelphia area. Each crisis experience coupled with the rising incidence of crises has admittedly ignited a certain desire to pursue each of these roles with fervor and determination DMOs in this study confess they did not possess pre-crisis.

## 5.2 Factors Influencing DMOs' Role Adoption in TCM

Similar to the evolution of the roles themselves, DMOs' pursuit and fulfillment of each of the six roles observed in this research has been shaped by numerous factors that may change, disappear or become irrelevant with time. The following section provides a discussion of these seven factors (Figure 12).

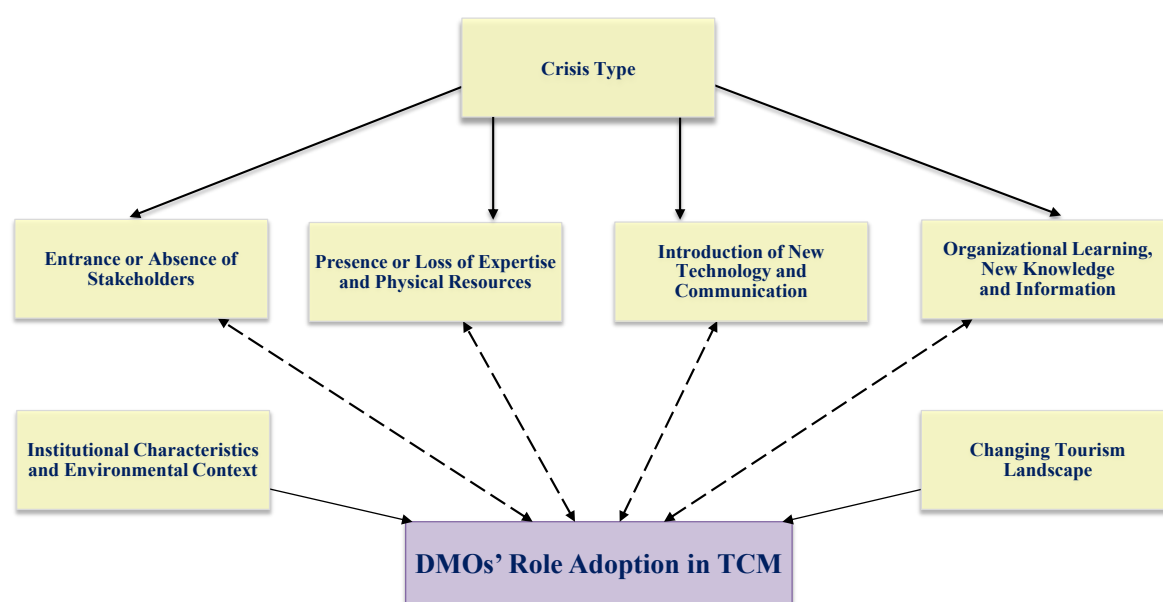


Figure 12. Factors Influencing DMOs' Role Adoption in TCM

### **5.2.1 Institutional Characteristics and Environmental Context**

Many small to medium size DMOs have been quite effective in managing their destinations and growing their tourism economies (Beiger, Beritelli & Laesser, 2009); however, in the crisis experiences presented in this study, the number of employees was often not adequate given the plethora of TCM directives that needed to be carried-out efficiently and expediently. DMOs with fewer employees (e.g. GSOBT and MCT) frequently struggled to juggle business and usual activities with the needs and requests of various stakeholder groups. Other DMOs, such as the NOLA, Tucson and Philly CVBs, made little to no mention of their size crippling their capacity to respond to crisis effectively or efficiently. This may have perhaps been due to believing they had sufficient manpower with the number of employees present during the crisis, or their desire to focus more on the positive capabilities and accomplishments of those employees present at the time. Broadly speaking, DMOs' concerns with size and role adoption were two-fold. DMOs either felt they simply did not have the manpower to support the responsibilities of that role, particularly as a provider or purveyor of information, or they feared the limited manpower allocated would not allow them to perform the job properly. In the case of the latter, allowing another organization to assume that role was preferred. Interestingly, the case of MCT was a prime example of how a full-time staff of one, although exceedingly challenging, can be successful in TCM. Major concerns with a smaller staff and its general capacity to adopt or maintain crisis roles among DMOs included issues such as employee burnout due to the high number of mentally and physically taxing tasks shared by less people (Quarantelli, 1988: 380), as well as less access to individuals' mental storage of knowledge and information. Oppositely, having a smaller staff for some DMOs meant less organizational domain conflicts (Quarantelli, 1988: 381), which in turn facilitated more rapid decision-making processes.

Organizational structure goes hand in hand with organizational size. The level at which a DMO operates (i.e. local, state, national) has been known to influence how it will be structured and thus providing further insight into its decision-making processes and capabilities in across organizational strategies. Although seven of the nine DMOs in this study reported being accountable to a Board of Directors, with one DMO (IDT) being accountable to both a Board of Directors and directly to local government, neither size nor structure were necessarily limiting factors to the success of TCM by a DMO. However, constraints did exist in terms of what governing bodies deemed worthy of the DMO's budget and time, thus directly influencing several DMOs' ability to adopt more time consuming and financially constraining roles in TCM such as knowledge brokers or activists. Several DMOs expressed their desires to have 'done more' when describing their crisis experiences, but were often limited by the time required to seek approval from governing bodies or by requests to governing bodies being denied.

In addition to organization size and structure, the DMOs' physical presence both at its destination and in representing its destination at other locales, was observed as having influence on its role selection in TCM. These days it is not uncommon to find destination promotion and management activities in locations outside of the destination itself. Prior to their crisis experiences, several DMOs in this study participated in travel trade shows and conventions on an annual basis. Other DMOs maintained a more permanent physical presence through international representatives or small branch offices in other cities, states and countries in order to expand and enforce their management and marketing efforts. The type of presence each DMO maintained prior to their crisis experiences gave DMOs an indication of the different audiences, e.g. solely domestic or domestic and international, and avenues through which the DMO could or would need to deploy crisis initiatives, but also, for example, Philly CVB's desire to pursue a knowledge broker role in TCM has in part been facilitated by the ease of access through which it obtains knowledge and information from its Philadelphia destination representatives in six European countries and two cities in India.

In terms of funding, the results of this study found DMOs' funding sources to be consistent with those typically identified in the tourism literature, e.g. sponsorship and advertising in destination promotional activities, commissions for bookings and sales, allocations of public funds, specific tourism taxes or hotel/room taxes, user fees, and tourism organization membership fees (Franch & Martini, 2002; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Sheehan & Ritchie, 1997). The amount and type of monies a DMO receives both in terms of its general destination management budget and crisis-event specific budget regulate to a degree DMOs' crisis management strategy and role adoption. Unfortunately, it is a rarity to find 'crisis funds' as a line item in a DMO's annual budget, much less one that comes close to matching the amount of money required to address almost any type of crisis from a 360° perspective (i.e. planning, implementing, recovering and learning). TCM has in the past been an area many DMOs ignorantly or at times purposefully overlook, resulting in inadequate financial resources to prepare for and address crises when they hit, and further hindering DMOs' ability to take on crisis roles at any stage. Oppositely, the access to crisis funds through either the general budget or the introduction of emergency or recovery funds by outside entities, allows DMOs to assume new crisis roles or expand those currently held.

Generally speaking, funding capacity to influence DMOs' role selection in TCM was focused predominately around the natural disaster and megadamage crisis experiences (hurricanes and the BP oil spill) of MCT, NOLA CVB and GSOBT. All three DMOs expressed frustration with the inadequacy of their standard organization and larger local government tourism budgets to effectively carryout recovery marketing and TCM initiatives that would help ensure the survival and revival of their destinations. GSOBT and NOLA CVB, where, for example, able to extend the

scope of their recovery and future crisis planning initiatives with funds provided by BP to help counter the brand damage that ensued from the oil spill. MCT experienced a similar opportunity to expand its TCM function and activities through infusion of federal relief and recovery funds following Hurricane Sandy. To this effect, funding's influence on DMOs' role selection among the cases in this research appears closely linked to crisis type. That is only those DMOs suffering the catastrophic consequences of a natural disaster and megadamage crisis made it a point to highlight the need for monetary relief, usually via emergency government relief and rebuilding funds, in order for them to be able to adequately take up or continue pursuing their visitor advocate or boundary spanner roles. Several DMOs stated that by having experienced the crisis events described here, the DMO as well as key stakeholders now have a better understanding of the gravity and need for TCM, and have subsequently allocated additional monies towards *when* crises occur in the future. These monies have in turn extended the platform on which each DMO is now pursuing TCM and the roles they adopt there in.

### **5.2.2 Change in Tourism Landscape**

Tourism scholars have emphasized the powerful economic ramifications of varying crisis types on the tourism industry, particularly with respect to long periods of decline and stagnation in tourist flows married to frequent cycles of decline and recovery, e.g. as seen in Israel, Egypt, Turkey and Northern Ireland (Aziz 1995; Enders & Sandler 1991; Enders, Sandler, & Parise 1992; Hall and O'Sullivan 1996; Mansfeld 1994; Sönmez and Graefe 1995; Wahab 1996). However, DMOs whose destinations "represent unique and highly attractive tourist products are more likely to experience a rapid recovery from crises" (Mansfeld, 1999:31). The ebb and flow of popular tourist trends, niche markets and famous attractions can quickly create a situation that pushes DMOs to adopt a more active visitor advocate role or perhaps a knowledge broker or boundary spanner role to address both residual and new crisis issues resulting from a decrease or increase consumer demand. Following the intermediate stage of crisis, both NOLA CVB and GSOBT were met with a unique set of challenges on how they would revive their tourism economies without the major draw from their more popular attractions/events, such as Orange Beach, Mardi Gras and the Superdome.

### **5.2.3 Organizational Learning, New Knowledge and Information**

DMOs' ability to learn from their crisis experiences was as one of the most significant factors affecting their future role selection in TCM. Blackman and Ritchie (2008:50) define reflection as the "process by which knowledge, beliefs, assumptions and processes are considered in order to establish how they influence behavior and understanding and, consequently, experiences." Each DMO in this study discussed changing or slightly tweaking their crisis management approach and subsequent role(s) in crisis management based on organizational learning activities related to their

crisis experiences. The majority of DMOs admittedly conducted this learning process in the recovery and resolution stages of crisis, leading to a plethora of interviewees' comments like "if we had only known or understood at the time". Although new knowledge and information was derived from the outcomes of DMOs' organizational learning processes, and appropriate adjustments to future strategy made, much of the frustration expressed through these comments could be addressed with implementation of a more formal *ongoing* reflection process across all stages of crisis. By engaging DMO employees and possibly key stakeholders in real-time learning exercises that evaluate "what people think, say and do" (Preskill & Torres, 1999:92) within a crisis environment, valuable knowledge and information could be generated and re-incorporated into TCM immediately.

The findings of DMOs' organizational learning and more specific managed reflection activities have the capacity to provide DMOs with sound direction as to which crisis roles would be the most appropriate for them at the moment and in future crises. Similarly, DMOs' failure to conduct managed reflection will weigh just as heavily on DMO's role selection in TCM. DMOs may generate new knowledge sans formal organizational learning processes, however, without taking into consideration, for example, individuals' underlying assumptions and beliefs, the relevance and usefulness of said knowledge and information has the capacity to be more detrimental than beneficial (Chapman & Ferfolja, 2001; Gibb, 2002). It is important to note that as DMOs take on knowledge-based crisis roles (boundary spanner to activist), the outcomes of their participation in those roles may lead them to abandon those roles or adopt new ones as part of their TCM approach. Thus, with new knowledge and information as a game changer in crisis environments, we can see both role selection and knowledge and information having the capacity to influence each other.

#### **5.2.4 Introduction of New Technology and Communication**

The advent of the Internet, and in more recent years social media (Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat etc.), has dramatically changed crisis communications in the tourism industry. The popularity of both smartphones and social media apps, coupled with the increased frequency of crisis events and their affects on travel and tourism has led DMOs and other industry stakeholders to integrate modern communication pathways into their crisis communications. Although this area had until recently received limited empirical attention in the tourism literature, recent studies suggest tourists rely heavily on social media to help shape their perceptions of a destination in the context of crisis, as well as to inform their decision-making processes in destination selection in the context of crisis (Schroeder, Pennington-Grey, Donohoe & Kioussis, 2013; Pennington-Grey, Kaplanidou & Schroeder, 2013). Further, given social media is a two-way communication platform, were tourists seek and provide information and feedback; it serves as both a benefit and potential threat to DMOs

and their destination in times of crisis. Implying monitoring and management of these channels should be an important crisis management directive. The findings of this study further support this notion, as DMOs' strategic use of social media, blogs, Twitter and their own websites to communicate with internal and external stakeholders was described as a central activity in their crisis management approach. If the evolution of technology in the last millennium is any indication of that in the current one, the introduction of new technologies in terms of communications, alert systems and knowledge management systems, will without a doubt require DMOs to take up roles that oversee and manage these systems.

#### **5.2.5 Presence or Loss of Expertise and Physical Resources**

DMOs' role selection in crises was also guided by the composition of its workforce and other physical resources. The number of employees coupled with the level and type of expertise possessed by those individuals will in part, determine a DMO's capacity to fill certain roles in crisis, particularly with respect to knowledge management processes conducted with diverse stakeholders. Further, dependent on the type of crisis, having access to physical resources such as functional office space and IT may inadvertently place a DMO with access to those things in the provider and purveyor of information categories. In situations such as these, where DMOs are likely to have access to personnel and other physical resources to which their stakeholders have limited or no access. Equally, DMOs' distinctive position in the tourism system and local community affords the organization a destination and tourism-specific expertise that may ultimately resign the DMO to filling a particular role that no other organization has the capacity to fill.

#### **5.2.6 Entrance or Absence of Stakeholders**

DMOs' capacity to play multiple roles across more than one crisis type was not uncommon. IDT's case is a prime example, acting as a knowledge activist in their bridge and road construction crisis, the DMO possessed the knowledge, resources, networking capacity and zeal to spearhead crisis efforts. Placed in a different crisis situation, however, resisting a proposed tri-county DMO merger for a near decade, IDT found itself assuming more of a boundary spanner and knowledge broker role yielding to its local government's more activist approach on the DMO's behalf. The number and level of involvement of each of the key stakeholders described in this study, coupled with their crisis management approach and thus subsequent roles in crisis, will help determine a DMO's selection and pursuit of its roles in crisis as well. It is important to note that DMOs' role selection may be by default. As other tourism and non-tourism organizations begin to fill certain roles in crisis, DMOs may be left to assume those roles remaining, e.g. a regional tourism association takes on the visitor advocate and knowledge broker roles during a political crisis of civil unrest, leaving

the local DMO to act as a provider and boundary spanner in support of the regional entity. Similarly, as key stakeholders exit a crisis environment or assume more passive behavior, the absence of those stakeholders and the roles and resources they once contributed, may push DMOs to re-evaluate their current position and adopt new or additional roles. Ultimately, the entrance or absence of key stakeholders will help shape the crisis environment in which DMOs are required to respond and thus the subsequent roles they assume.

### **5.2.7 Crisis Type**

Crisis type is observed as having an indirect influence on DMOs' role selection through the four of the factors discussed above. First, with each crisis experience the DMOs were able to gain new insights as to how they would negotiate that type of crisis in the future, e.g. natural disaster vs. political crisis. Thus, when faced with a similar or completely different type of crisis in the future, DMOs would have a better idea of how to approach TCM different based on that type of crisis. For example, after having experienced the BP oil spill, one could conclude GSOBT and NOLA CVB are in a more appropriate position to assume a knowledge broker role focused on preparedness for megadamage crises than say Tucson CVB with its political crisis. DMOs thrust into crisis environments in which they have little to no experience with that particular type of crisis, may refrain from taking on coordinating crisis roles that require it to collect, share and manage knowledge and information that is crisis type specific. There is the possibility, however, a DMO could be required by their governing authorities to refrain from adopting certain crisis roles for political reasons, or perhaps because they believe the role would be better filled through outsourcing, or a different governmental department.

Based on the above discussion, we are able to envision how several factors individually or in combination with one another has the capacity to guide DMOs' role adoption in TCM. As the effects of individual crises saturate DMOs' crisis environment, the need for adaptive organizational strategies increases. Given the impact of crisis events on any destination can be both unpredictable and highly differential, it is reasonable to believe the relationship between each factor and a particular TCM role will become more or less relevant as a crisis evolves. If crises are to remain unpredictable and differential, and the factors that influence DMOs' role selection in managing those crises can change, disappear or become irrelevant with time, how will DMOs select roles that will better support successful TCM? The results of this study indicate DMOs' adaptive capacity was a supporting pillar in their TCM approach.



### 5.3 Key Stakeholders Groups in TCM

The findings of this research have shown current conceptualizations of stakeholder groups in TCM literature does not accurately reflect the relationships DMOs develop and maintain in crisis environments. The following section provides a discussion of the 11 key stakeholder groups involved in DMOs' TCM approach situated in a more relevant conceptual framework.

#### 5.3.1 Managing Key Stakeholders as 'Family'

The findings of this research revealed relational attributes for 11 key stakeholder groups. Two distinct stakeholder categories outlined in previous stakeholder management literature are 'primary' and 'secondary' stakeholders (Carroll 1989; Clarkson 1995; and Freeman 1984). Primary being those with a "formal, official or contractual" relationship, and secondary, being those with an informal relationship that influences or that is influenced by the organization, but may not be engaged in transactions with the organization (on a routine basis) and are not essential for its survival (Clarkson, 1995:106–107). The conceptualization of stakeholders as primary and secondary is useful for DMOs in terms of guiding management and decision-making processes on a daily basis, essentially when managing is just doing business. However, in a crisis, *survival* becomes your business. This is not to say DMOs' stakeholders are haphazardly addressed or ignored during crises, but that based on the findings of this research they can be perceived differently in terms of their needs and general contribution to DMOs during crisis management. The cases in this study revealed not only 11 key stakeholder groups but also a 'feel' for the type of relationship each DMO had with these stakeholders in the midst of the crisis. These findings provide a platform on which to conceptualize stakeholders less as 'primary and secondary' and more like family where trust, loyalty, familiarity and a sense of parental responsibility pervade crisis management strategy. The 11 stakeholder groups are situated in four family categories and one friend category to better understand the dynamics of their relationships with DMOs in the context of crisis and thus DMOs' respective crisis management strategy. Note in this framework the DMO should be seen as an adult sibling with children, i.e. the DMO has 'parents' and is the parent to the 'children'.

Grandparents – Consultants (crisis and marketing) and Experts (academia and industry): These organizations/individuals are appreciated for a wisdom and knowledge not held by the DMO. They rarely if ever have a hidden agenda behind their relationship and activities with the DMO. They have an interest in being generally helpful and/or fulfilling contractual obligation. If an organization does not survive or is unable to effectively market their destination, this reflects poorly on the consultant or expert; thus they are motivated to only do things that will truly help the DMO.

Parents – Federal, State and Local (city and county) governments and Residents: These stakeholders are thought to have DMOs’ ‘best interest at heart’, however, their behavior and actions are not always easily understood and they may have their own agenda to which the DMO is not privy. The organization’s ‘parental’ authoritative position allows it to give commands and expect those commands to be followed, however, it is not uncommon for DMOs to pacify parental requests or concerns. These organizations are a typical source of funding for the DMO as well as a source of emergency funding. Ideal situations might include one in which both or multiple parents ‘get along’ (e.g. state and federal government initiatives corroborate each other) or when the DMO is the ‘favorite child’ of either parent and this status has additional benefits. Loyalty to these organizations is moderate to strong, underpinned by a “we support our parents because they support/supported us” mentality. These organizations also have the capacity to embarrass you with a slap on the hand or more severe punishment (e.g. fine or new policy).

Siblings – Law enforcement, Roads and Transport, Tourism businesses and DMO employees (\*includes DMO): These stakeholders you see and interact with on a fairly frequent to everyday basis. The organization/person and DMO have respect for each other as unique individuals/entities, and for each other because you ‘grew-up’ together and were thus exposed to the same family environment. As siblings you both understand the role and importance of ‘family norms’ (i.e. the way your ‘parents’ operate and what that means for one another). The DMO and this organization/person share a loyalty and are often both accountable to your parents. These organizations may also seek guidance from grandparents when needed. The DMO is likely to seek out and maintain a healthy relationship with this organization for its ability to support the DMO when called upon, including taking a stand against their parents.

Children – Tourists and Residents: These stakeholders you see and interact with on a frequent to everyday basis. Tourists will look to the DMO for information and guidance due to a lack of area specific knowledge and a lack of understanding of the destination and cultural norms. The DMO possess a strong sense of responsibility to these individuals because they are ‘its people’, the ones the DMO was created to ‘love’, grow, provide for and protect. Residents may share their appreciation or concerns for the DMO’s TCM approach directly with the organization or via the DMO’s parents. If neglected or ignored, residents may ‘kick and scream’ causing a scene until their concerns are addressed by the DMO or its governing body. In order to avoid these types of responses, DMOs are often faced with the challenges of ensuring residents are adequately informed and have some degree of understanding of the positive and negative implications of their TCM strategy on the survival/revival of the destination and its tourism economy.

Cousins: Support Other DMOs, Support agencies and Media and Public Relations Professionals (social, news and print): These are stakeholders you may see or interact with frequently (daily,

weekly, monthly) or perhaps only annually. They have the capacity to help or hinder the DMO's cause, via a very supportive relationship or direct/indirect negative actions (e.g. communication—gossip, negative e-WOM). This group also includes new organizations/people the DMO is required to work with on a frequent to semi-frequent basis but that in general have spent the time and experienced less of the ups and downs of 'life' or business with the DMO to be considered 'close family'.

***Dynamics of the Stakeholder Family Environment.*** DMOs looking to enhance their TCM strategy will need to invest time and energy in developing a healthy knowledge and understanding the dynamics of the stakeholder family environment. Literature in tourism and stakeholder management had previously placed stakeholders into two overarching categories, primary vs. secondary (Clarkson, 1998, 1995; Carroll 1989; Freeman 1984) and existing vs. emergent (Hystad & Keller, 2008). These categories were to a degree visible in the findings of this research. However, as predicted the distinction between existing and emergent stakeholders in crisis was not cut and dry, resulting in an over simplified labeling of stakeholders as either existing or emergent. This oversimplification left very little room to capture the true dynamics of DMOs' new and evolving stakeholders relations in crisis. This was particularly evident post-crises when DMOs' 'emergent' relationships may have been now considered 'existing', but did not provide any real indication of what existing means in terms of trust, resources, loyalty, attitude or their potential to threaten or support the DMO in future crises. How much more did the DMO *really know* about that stakeholder or stakeholder group, what type of relationship did they *really have*, and what type of relationship did the DMO *want to have* with that stakeholder in the future?

Similarly, this research also revealed a fuzzy boundary between Clarkson's (1995:106–107) definition of primary stakeholders having a "formal, official or contractual" relationship with the DMO, and secondary stakeholders, believed to "influence or affect, or be influenced or affected by the organization, but are not engaged in transactions with the organization (on a routine basis) and are not essential to its survival". From this perspective, entities that had been previously considered primary stakeholders, such as tourism businesses, residents, tourists and government agencies, remained a priority, *but* secondary stakeholders in a majority of cases also became a priority, predominately for their ability to add unexpected value to crisis management directives. For example, considered a secondary stakeholder prior to Hurricane Katrina, USACE's capacity to add credibility to the DMOs' crisis recovery initiatives, transitioned the agency to primary stakeholder status in terms of a formal relationship. Once again, however, the primary/secondary category does not appear to accurately reflect or characterize the true nature of DMOs' stakeholder relations in TCM.

Re-conceptualized as parallel to a real family, DMO stakeholders seen as family exist on a spectrum that more accurately illustrates the depth and scope of their relationships. Specifically, stakeholder relationships in this research were placed into three main subcategories with the majority of relationships falling under the first and third categories:

1. Close family

Ex: GSOBT and County PIO or IDT and Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission

2. Distant relatives

Ex: Tucson CVB and State govt. or GSOBT and Wildlife experts from previous project

3. New family (organizations/people the DMO is slowly building meaningful experiences with)

Ex: NOLA CVB and US Army Corp of Engineers or Philly CVB and FEMA

Conceptualized as family, existing stakeholders may be re-classified as close family or distant relatives, and emergent stakeholders, as new family (e.g. in-laws). The placement of each stakeholder relationship into the above subcategories is contingent on a number of factors that may, at any point in time, lead to a shift from one category to another. This is because, although family relationships are for the most part stable, the entrance of divorce, new boyfriends/girlfriends, foster children, stepchildren, in-laws etc., can reinforce, change or degrade existing family dynamics. Disgruntled staff, irritated residents, miscommunication and upset by tourism businesses could lead each stakeholder to change their interaction with and expectations of DMOs. Since family members can distance themselves from each other at any point in time, it becomes critically important for DMOs to consistently reevaluate their relationships in order to adequately assess and adjust their crisis management strategy to best fit the needs, expectations and responsibilities required in each new relational dynamic. This may also include, taking into account a change in the level of trust the DMO places in a family member. For example, by looking at trust from three standard perspectives in organizational behavior, “contractual, communication and competence” (Kinicki & Fugate, 2012:239), it is possible to predict that a change from a new family member to a close family member would likely involve a change in the depth of each of these types of trust. This in turn may result in a change in the DMO’s behavior, reliance on and potential level of accountability in that

relationship. Based on the findings of this research, factors thought to influence the family environment are presented in Table 19.

Table 19. Factors of Influence: Traditional vs. the Stakeholder Family Environment

	Traditional Family	DMO's Family in Crisis
Factors of Influence	◆ Type of situation	◆ Type of crisis
	◆ Personal characteristics, behavior and motivation of the individual	◆ Personal/organizational characteristics, behavior and motivation of the stakeholder
	◆ Interactions and outcomes of family interacting with each other	◆ Interactions and outcomes of stakeholder groups interacting with each other
	◆ Number of family members involved	◆ Number of stakeholders involved
	◆ Length of time as a family member	◆ Length of time as stakeholder
	◆ Parenting style	◆ Leadership and general stakeholder management

### 5.3.2 Stakeholder 'Parenting Style'

The parental relationship DMOs' expressed having with federal, central or local governments varied across cases. Interestingly, the parenting styles perceived by each DMO closely mirrored traditional styles observed in true parenting relationships. Based on the exorbitant amount of research on parenting styles and relationships, DMOs' conceptualization of stakeholders' attitudes and behaviors within this realm will allow them to better determine stakeholder expectations and the ability to craft their responses accordingly. The four parenting styles emerging from the crises investigated in this research are authoritarian, authoritative, participative and uninvolved (see Figure 13).

**1) Authoritarian** parents are known to be very strict. They demand respect and obedience, with little to no room for negotiation. Communication with authoritarian parents can be tricky, as parents often believe discussion or two-way communication may be perceived as weakness. Thus, more closed communication practices are exercised. Children are expected to trust parental motives and assume parents are acting in the best interest of the child at all times. Disobeying or not meeting stated and implied expectations typically results in strong punishments.

*Translated to DMO crisis context* – Federal, central or local governments have strict crisis management policies/procedures and expectations of the DMO. Compliance by the DMO

is non-negotiable, thus attempts to persuade government to alter their strategy range from extremely difficult to futile. Willfully or indirectly refusing to follow ‘parental’ directives during or leading up to a crisis may result in loss of funding, fines, stricter policies in the future, including creating roadblocks for the DMO’s short- and long-term crisis recovery and organizational learning processes.

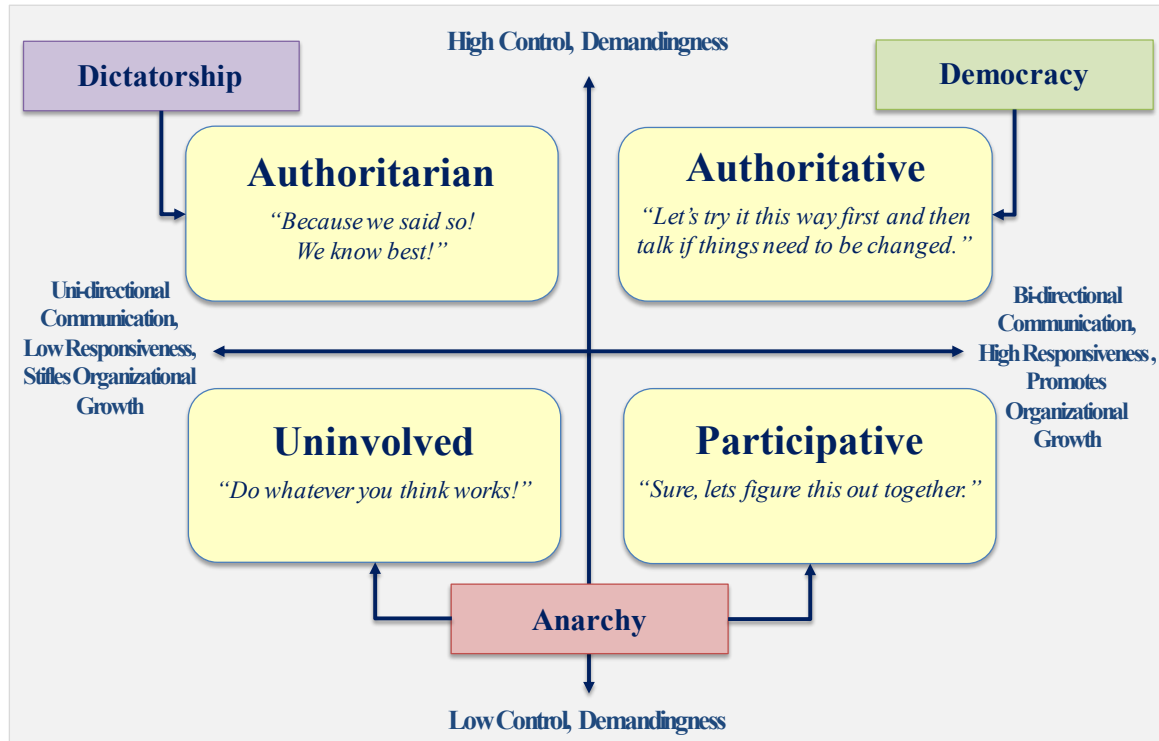


Figure 13 Stakeholder Parenting Styles  
Source: Aadapted from AFineParent.com.

**2) Authoritative** parents, a step-down from authoritarian parents, attempt to set clear expectations for children, explaining the basis for their expectations. Communication with authoritative parents includes maintaining open lines of communication to allow both parent and child to express disagreement, concern and other emotions without severe consequences. Although open communication exists, because rules and expectations are also stated, appropriate punishments are given for rule breaking. Authoritative parents seek to be patient, affectionate, understanding and consistent with their children.

*Translated to DMO crisis context* – Federal, central or local governments will inform the DMO of their crisis management strategy and set the stage for further discussion as to their expectations of the DMO’s responsibilities. The DMO will be encouraged to provide suggestions for cooperative measures to be taken by both the parent and child for a more

effective and efficient crisis management outcome. DMOs' should feel free to express general disagreement and concern, with the understanding that their arguments may be listened to and contemplated, but ultimately the parent may undertake no change in strategy.

**3) Participative** parents are relationship-centered, patient, and known to naturally enjoy nurturing the child and the discovery process. Communication is open and positioned under the guise asking is better than telling, and that both parent and child always have something that could be learned from a situation. Children are encouraged to express their emotions and make decisions together with the parent. Because exploration and flexible boundaries are common, particularly in the co-creation of rules, expectations and consequences, parents must be careful not to let the child "become the boss" and instead confidently and assertively maintain control of the situation and overall parenting.

*Translated to DMO crisis context* – Federal, central or local governments will in response, or proactively pursue collaborative crisis management efforts with the DMO. The government will place a high value on the DMO's input and resources allowing its inclusion to create a more well-rounded and effective crisis management strategy. Communication will be open and encouraged at all times, but will in certain circumstances be limited in order for the government to enforce a measure of authority that will allow it to carry-out crisis specific responses in a timely manner.

**4) Uninvolved** parents are commonly thought "neglectful". They attempt to provide only the basic physical needs their children require but lack commitment and interest in developing and addressing the child's social or emotional needs. Communication is open but passive. Parents consistently place addressing the child below their own personal stresses and needs. Little to no guidance is provided, and punishments (for often unspoken rules) can range from harsh to non-existent.

*Translated to DMO crisis context* – Federal, central or local governments will spend little to no time looking out for the best interests of the DMO, instead limiting their involvement with the DMO to reactive only measures based on what is minimally expected of them as a government entity. The DMO may, however, be sought out to participate in collaborative crisis management efforts when it best suits the needs of the government (i.e. limited to no access to certain information/resources without DMO), primarily to ensure the survival of the destination or create a positive image of the government to its publics. Communication

may be intermittent, weak and inefficient. Similarly, crisis responses by the government with respect to the DMO will likely be delayed and offered with minimal real guidance.

While the key to successful parenting in a traditional sense is often said to rest in patience, love and appropriate guidance, successful parenting of DMOs in crisis appears to lie in respect, reciprocity, inclusion and teamwork, and efficient communication. Similar to traditional parenting, the authoritative parenting style appears one of the most effective styles. However, in addition to the authoritative style, the participative parenting style adopted by government entities also emerged as an effective parenting style for DMOs in crisis. One important element DMOs will be wise to consider in responding to their governments' parenting style, is that each government entity may practice a different style requiring a different type of response from the DMO in order it to successfully navigate crisis activities. DMOs should consider discussing concerns and potential responses to their 'parents' with appropriate staff and other stakeholders. It will also be essential for the DMO to recognize its own parenting style with respect to its children (tourism businesses, tourists and residents) and how that style can be either strengthened or weakened by the parenting style of its parents during crisis. For example, a DMO with authoritarian parents in the chaos of crisis may find the additional stress of this parenting style to negatively affect their ability to communicate effectively and sincerely with their own children. DMOs should endeavor to remain flexible and respectful of differing parenting styles while encouraging other 'family' to do so as well. Fostering strong family relationships is one way to help ensure this happens.

### **5.3.3 Fostering Strong Stakeholder Relationships for Crisis Mode**

Fostering strong healthy relationships with family is for many DMOs, one of their most important goals. The presence of dysfunctional or chaotic stakeholder relationships frequently and quickly leads to miscommunication, delayed or ineffective crisis responses, confusion, panic, misuse and inefficient use of resources, all of which have been identified as major contributors to DMOs' ability to survive crises. The DMO cases in this study, have however, pursued and established successful stakeholder relationships that not only significantly contributed to their survival, but that continue to be strong prosperous relationships for the DMOs' growth and destination's tourism development. Simply put by one interviewee from Tucson CVB in regards to the other, "You are talking to the guy who is to be congratulated for all of that. Felipe was super integral to everything he just described and headed it up. It was really, really relationship oriented and that's how this was conquered." The findings of this research revealed the following four characteristics as key foundational principles towards DMOs' pursuit of strong stakeholder relations in the event of crisis.



**1) Meeting and Discussing routinely.** Relationships are rather like gardens, deprived of proper care and attention, the weeds are left to take over. In the context of crisis, any weed has the potential to threaten the life of the garden. From this perspective, once a DMO has established a family relationship, it will be important to meet and discuss crisis management strategy and the respective degree of involvement for each stakeholder. This is the case because unmet expectations in crisis create more frustration and panic, but also because this research suggests open dialogue with stakeholders is favorable for productive, successful crisis outcomes. Meetings should happen on a routine basis (ex. annually, semi-annually, following each crisis event etc.) and may incorporate options such as video conferencing and virtual meetings to make maximize time management for busy stakeholders and DMOs. Modifications to crisis management strategies based on new technology, funding, alert systems, the introduction or absence of expertise, or a 'parent's' change in policy, are all sound reasons to meet and discuss in any stage of crisis. If and when a DMO is unable to actually engage in meet and discuss activities, providing and collecting knowledge and information through effective communication pathways will be of absolute importance.

**2) Striving for Effective Communication.** Establishing effective communication channels seems to be a must. It begins with the requirement that DMOs identify, explicitly state and model what is meant by effective communication. Facilitating effective communication that is clear, concise, respectful and applicable with stakeholders should be practiced daily for DMO staff making its extension into crisis a subtle and simple transition. Part of effective communication for DMOs in crisis means exercising good listening skills, recognizing each person's or stakeholder's ideas are valid and that concerns, mistakes and miscommunications need to be vetted at the appropriate time and place. Showing family the DMO cares about them and equally that the DMO appreciates being cared about was also a critical component of effective communication in the findings of this research.

**3) Pursing Steadfast Commitment.** Crises are inherently trying times with fuzzy boundaries especially when it comes to what may be considered 'the end'. To develop and maintain strong relationships in crisis, DMOs will need to exhibit solidarity and a steadfast commitment to meet or exceed stakeholder's expectations. Like practicing effective communication, adopting a committed approach both outside of and during times of crisis will help DMOs anchor stakeholder relationships in an environment of trust. Trust and loyalty among stakeholders proved invaluable in several cases across this research. Staying committed is no easy feat and will require the DMO to acquire and implement good coping skills. Members of strong families demonstrate the ability to stand firmly together, support each other, know and maximize each other's strengths, delegate and re-delegate duties, and strive for a positive outlook to pull them through crises.

**4) Expressing and Upholding Values and Ethics.** Identifying and communicating a set of core values and ethical standards is an essential component for strong DMO families. DMOs and stakeholders can express values by having open discussions about organizational goals, policies and target audiences and ethical standards by posting them in a place visible by everyone. The most effective method to reinforce this principle will be to “practice what you preach” allowing all family members to observe your position, and consistency in that position.

DMOs’ ability to triumph in the face of crisis is markedly influenced by several factors, including the dynamics of their stakeholder environment, the type of parenting style(s) imposed on them, and their capacity to foster strong stakeholder relationships. Based on our understanding of these factors, and the general uncertainty that ensues from a crisis environment, we are able to further conceptualize DMOs’ difficulty in exercising effective stakeholder management within the scope of their crisis management strategy. Seven foundational practices were also discovered as a vehicle through which DMOs attempt to address and make sense of the crisis environment by maintaining certain beliefs and desired behaviors. These six practices also provide a platform on which DMOs can attempt to understand the roles of various stakeholders throughout the different crisis stages crisis in order to improve TCM (Hystad & Keller, 2008), and as a mechanism to further collaboration and coordination between tourism and emergency management agencies (Ritchie, 2009).

## **5.4 Practices in DMO TCM**

The following section will provide a discussion of the seven central practices involved in DMOs’ crisis management and how those practices are used by DMOs to filter and make sense of the crisis environment around them.

### **5.4.1 Foundational Practices as a Sensemaking Device in TCM**

Organizations are often perceived only as good as their people, products or services. Regardless of industry and country, most organizations have a vested interest in employees and other key stakeholder’s abilities to make common sense of the organization’s position and actions in order to produce consistent products and services. Observing and processing the world around us to give meaning to experiences is often part of what is referred to as *sensemaking*. Weick’s (1979) seminal work in sensemaking at the organizational level has provided insight into how organizations address either uncertain or ambiguous situations. Extended into a crisis context, Weick (1988: 305) posed,

The less adequate the sensemaking process directed at a crisis, the more likely it is that the crisis will get out of control. That straightforward proposition conceals a difficult dilemma because

people think by acting. To sort out a crisis as it unfolds often requires action that simultaneously generates the raw material that is used for sensemaking and affects the unfolding crisis itself. There is a delicate tradeoff between dangerous action that produces understanding and safe inaction that produces confusion.

This statement suggests DMOs' and their stakeholders' sensemaking processes in crisis will invariably affect their capacity to effectively address the crisis itself. Given the frequently turbulent and changeable nature of crises, Weick's work further implies DMOs would be wise to adopt a frame within which both internal and external stakeholders can make common sense of the organization and its actions – what it is and what it does. In the event stakeholders, particularly DMO employees, cannot negotiate some commonsense and shared understanding, goal achievement in crisis will likely become increasingly difficult. Thus, by providing key stakeholders a platform on which to filter and assess crisis actions in tangent with the simultaneously generated “raw material”, the DMO is able to better shape the sensemaking process and subsequently crisis management outcomes to fit the desired goals of the organization. The findings of this research revealed crisis actions taken by DMOs were framed within seven central crisis management practices previously identified in Section 4.3.3.2 and listed in Table 20 below for reference.

Table 20. Practices Central to DMOs' TCM

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**Truthfulness:** The idea that never lying or skewing the truth, particularly in order to avoid scrutiny or fear is the best approach.

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**Transparency:** The belief that maintaining communication channels in a manner that provides all publics a clear unbiased or as minimally biased as possible view into the actual state of the DMO and destination is most appropriate.

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**Mindfulness:** The belief that crises evoke different and distinct responses across stakeholder groups and individuals, thus requiring DMOs to stop, think, listen and monitor the thoughts, feelings and health (as appropriate) of individuals involved in order to better access the needs of those individuals, and to more effectively negotiate crisis response activities.

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**Knowing when and how to respond:** The idea that a DMO's formal or informal response to a crisis from a communication standpoint as well as a physical aid and assessment standpoint, should be, intentionally and carefully thought out; disseminated or conducted in a timely manner; utilize the most accurate information; consider the repercussions on all its constituencies, and; employ appropriate communication and media platforms in order to avoid retractions, minimize negative word of mouth and balance the appearance of being unreliable with uncaring.

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**Maintaining open lines of communication:** The belief that communication is a basic critical element of effectively navigating crisis events and that it must be proactively pursued and maintained with all stakeholder groups.

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**Being prepared:** The notion that preparation for crisis events can lead to greater success towards effectively and efficiently navigating those events.

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**Educating ourselves to educate others:** The idea that the DMO should make it a priority to educate themselves on the particulars that led to a crisis event, how and what the recovery from that crisis will look like, as well as making a concerted effort to understand and learn from the activities and stakeholders involved in that crisis event.

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Through analysis of the data it became apparent DMOs not only used these practices to make sense of their own actions and the actions of others in a crisis environment, but to provide further direction to key stakeholders in regards to those actions. Figure 14 provides a graphical representation of DMOs' sensemaking process and the generation of new/revised actions in terms of their central crisis management practices.

The importance of this device lies equally in DMOs' awareness and understanding that a) such a device exists within their organization and, b) the ability to alter individual and organizational actions and thus crisis management outcomes, will be rooted in the DMOs' ability to change or tweak the central practices through which this sensemaking device is engaged. Further, with the advantage of hindsight from past crisis experiences, DMOs would be wise to remember 'changing and tweaking' is better suited to the "calm before the storm". In essence, avoid waiting until crisis hits to begin altering how you would like people to actually act in crisis mode.

One option for observing and evaluating sensemaking by DMO staff and stakeholders prior to a crisis event can be done through the use of scenario planning (Chermack, 2004; Moats, Chermack & Dooley, 2008; Penrose, 2000). Activities such as these allow management to observe how and why individuals formulate certain ideas and responses, as well as to ask questions that shed light on if and how perceptions of DMOs' central practices influence those actions. Scenario planning also provides a political "safe haven" to encourage all participants regardless of position and hierarchy to challenge those foundational practices on which sensemaking in an organization has recently or traditionally rested. Scenario planning in this context has the capacity to serve as an extremely powerful tool for igniting change in crisis management directives, however, the reliability of such an exercise in terms of effectively evaluating sensemaking through central practices can be contingent on several factors. DMOs will need to run scenarios that stretch much farther than what exists immediately to the right or left of reality as they experience it at the time. Disregarding extreme scenarios because they are less likely to occur or, if they do, "only God can help us now" only serves to cripple the DMO through willful ignorance of the true scope of this sensemaking device.

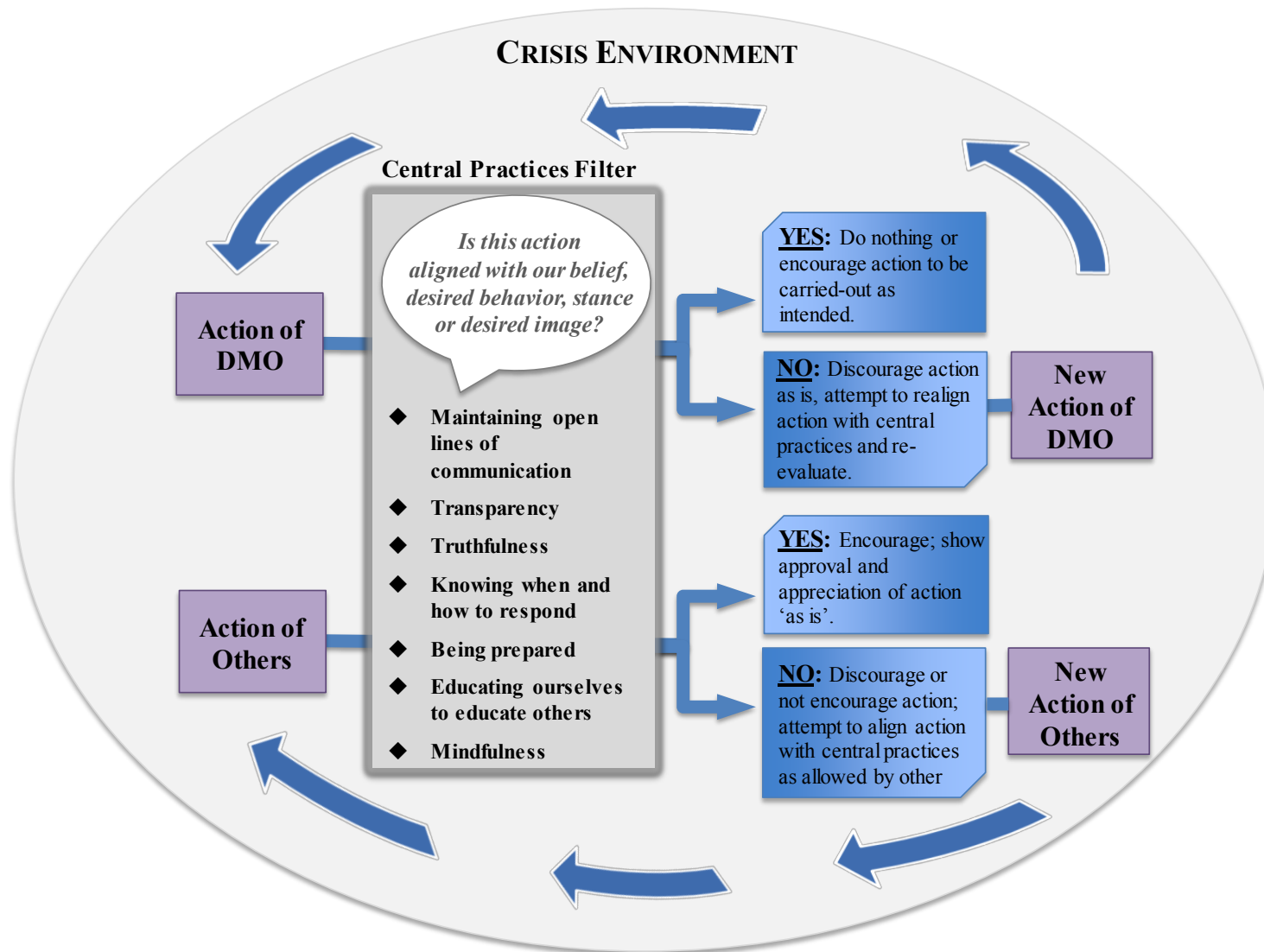


Figure 14. Central Practices as a Sensemaking Device for DMO TCM

#### 5.4.2 Summary of Contributions to Research Question 1

Thus far, this chapter has elaborated on the depth and breadth of DMOs' stakeholder relationships in a crisis context, the foundational practices that underpin DMOs' crisis management approach, and the variety of functions DMOs play in the implementation of TCM. Table 21 provides a summary of this discussion in relation to responding to the first research question posed in this study.

Table 21. Contributions on How and Why DMOs Engage in TCM

Research Sub-question	Contributions to Research Question 1
1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DMOs engage in TCM through adoption of six distinct crisis roles.</li> </ul>
1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DMOs engage in TCM through coordination, collaboration and the providing of resources with key stakeholders across 11 distinct groupings.</li> <li>▪ Links exist to current stakeholder management theory in terms of categorizing key stakeholders but extend further to accurately capture the nature of DMOs relationships in crisis events.</li> <li>▪ When conceptualizing key stakeholders with attributes of 'family', DMOs' motivation to involve and respond to stakeholders in TCM can be related to trust, loyalty, familiarity, reciprocity, and a sense of parental responsibility.</li> <li>▪ DMOs engage in TCM differently based on the type of 'parenting style' imposed on them from governing bodies.</li> <li>▪ DMOs strive to foster and maintain strong healthy relationships with their stakeholder 'family' as a form of crisis preparedness.</li> <li>▪ DMOs engage in seven core practices that are used to help make sense of individual crisis environments and guide implementation of TCM.</li> </ul>
1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DMOs' adoption of the six distinct crisis roles in TCM is based on seven broad factors of influence.</li> </ul>

#### 5.5 Aligning Tourism Crisis Management & Organizational Resilience

The following section provides a discussion of the findings related to the second research question, *How can organizational resilience management be used to expand or complement DMOs' crisis management strategy?* The results of this study suggest DMOs are currently exercising organizational resilience management in TCM through their adaptive capacity and planning. The majority of these activities supporting DMOs' resilience were implemented by DMOs during or following the resolution, evaluation and feedback stage of crisis, suggesting DMOs' recognition of their value in TCM, and that their implementation *prior* to crisis events would likely prove extremely beneficial.

### **5.5.1 Organizational Resilience and DMOs' Adaptive Capacity and Planning in TCM**

In comparison to the initial TCM-ORM framework (Table 6), the results of this study indicated resilient DMOs' adaptive capacity and planning is mainly reinforced by activities in three areas: evaluating the capabilities and capacities of external resources, stakeholder engagement and flexibility with governing bodies, and acquiring and promoting strong crisis leadership. DMOs' pursuit of activities in each of these three areas was present across all eight phases of TCM as illustrated in Table 22. Oppositely, in contrast to Table 5, innovation and creativity was not observed as part of DMOs' adaptive capacity. Similarly, adjustments were also made in DMOs' approach to planning strategies and minimization of silo mentality. Discussion of the three main support areas and well as the inclusion or exclusion of the other 11 indicators of adaptive capacity and planning for ORM in TCM are provided below.

***Capability and Capacity of External Resources.*** Generally speaking, the results of this study support the initial TCM-ORM framework with respect to the seven phases in which DMOs assessed their external resources. Stephenson recognizes an organization's endeavor to "understand the relationships and resources it might need outside of its own organization" as an indicator of OR (2010:245), but consigns this activity to the planning or pre-event stage of crisis. DMOs' crisis experiences show this is simply not the case. Evaluation of external resources provided by other organizations, especially key stakeholders, was an integral part of a larger ongoing TCM strategy evaluation, modification and implementation process, hence its now inclusion in the strategic evaluation and strategic control phase of TCM implementation. The details of DMOs' evaluative processes were not divulged, however, taking into consideration the often chaotic nature of crisis environments coupled with a smaller number of staff in several cases (e.g. MCT, SCT and GSOBT), ensuring the accuracy and reliability of assessments may prove challenging for DMOs. The prospect for a sloppy or haphazard evaluative approach suggests DMOs might consider using standardized tools—such as checklists or templates that enable employees to quickly build mind maps that track external resources. Perhaps transposing Brandenburger and Nalebuff's (1996) 'value nets' model with its four generic interaction types among tourism competitors, complementors, suppliers and customers to a crisis context, would be an appropriate starting point that affords DMOs a fairly quick and reliable means of evaluating the presence and value of its external resources. DMOs' engagement of key stakeholder groups during crises was in part a result of these assessments, however, DMOs' adaptive capacity in this regard, rested on a more comprehensive approach to stakeholder involvement and engagement in TCM.

***Stakeholder Engagement & Flexibility with Governing Bodies.*** DMOs' engagement with key stakeholder groups was underpinned by several central practices described earlier in this chapter

including, maintaining open lines of communication, transparency, truthfulness, mindfulness and educating ourselves to educate others. Although ‘understanding and collaborating with stakeholders’ is identified as an element of strategic implementation in TCM, DMOs’ approach to not only gathering information regarding the composition, dynamics and capacity of various key stakeholder groups, but their purposeful and proactive engagement of key stakeholders in meaningful dialogue to facilitate a collaborative team-oriented approach, was a clear indication of their adaptive capacity. Examples include NOLA CVB and its approach to news media and the ad hoc PR committee, as well as Frankenmuth CVB and their mission to assist and empower city officials and local law enforcement in the wake of a devastating tornado.

DMOs maintained an exhaustive list of tourism stakeholders, including company profiles, points of contact, products/services offered etc., however, it was their dynamic crisis behavior that propelled stakeholder engagement past the scope of simply identifying skills, knowledge and resources among stakeholders and into a marriage of educated guesses and reciprocity in pursuit of the greater good. DMOs’ ability to involve stakeholders and build crisis response and/or recovery teams quickly and effectively appeared to stem from the nature of their everyday business relationships with stakeholder groups. DMOs’ engagement with special stakeholder groups such as FEMA or USACE took place mostly on a reactionary or ad hoc basis, and later became the foundation for their inclusion in future crises, as was the case with NOLVA CVB and Philly CVB. For DMOs experiencing more than one crisis, stakeholder engagement the second time around had the benefit of hindsight and a more systematic approach to identifying ‘neglected’ stakeholder groups that closely mirrored Hardy, Wickham and Gretzel’s (2013) hybrid stakeholder analysis approach.

Because the majority of DMOs were required to extensively collaborate and cooperate with governing bodies (e.g. federal, state and local government, Chambers of Commerce) and their ‘parental styles’ described earlier in this chapter, the degree of flexibility exercised in these relationships was a crucial element of DMOs’ adaptive capacity. For example, in the case of IDT’s bridge and road construction crisis, the DMO saw significant value in bringing the details of the impending crisis to the county government and requesting their support and guidance in pursuit of a collaborative appeal to INDOT. In this particular case, IDT’s involvement of local government is seen more as a strategic move in waging a stronger appeal to INDOT than it is a request for the country’s permission to proceed. Oppositely, much of IDT’s TCM strategy with respect to its tri-country merger crisis has been limited by the county’s mandate to let them handle the situation and for the DMO to maintain a low profile. The situational factors that push the DMO to seek support but not permission in one case, and yield to the country’s request in another pose an interesting debate.



Table 22. New Framework for Tourism Crisis Management and Organizational Resilience Management. X = DMO employs activities under this indicator.

			TOURISM CRISIS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK								
			PLANNING & PREVENTION		STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION			RESOLUTION, EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK			
ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE DIMENSIONS	PLANNING		Proactive Planning and Strategy formulation	Scanning to planning	Strategy evaluation and strategic control	Crisis communication and control	Resource management	Understanding and collaborating with stakeholders	Resolution and normality	Organizational learning and feedback	
		Planning Strategies	X	X					X	X	
		Participation in Exercises	X	X				X		X	
		Proactive Posture	X	X				X		X	
		Capability & Capacity of External Resources	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Recovery Priorities	X					X	X	X		
	ADAPTIVE CAPACITY	Minimisation of Silo Mentality	X			X		X		X	
		Capability & Capacity of Internal Resources	X	X			X	X	X	X	
		Staff Engagement & Involvement	X			X			X	X	
		Stakeholder Engagement & Flexibility with Governing Bodies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
		Information & Knowledge	X	X	X		X	X		X	
		Leadership, Management & Governance Structures	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
		Innovation & Creativity									
		Devolved & Responsive Decision-making	X		X	X	X	X		X	
		Internal & External Situation Monitoring & Reporting	X			X		X		X	
					Pre-Event		Prodromal		Emergency	Intermediate	Long-term (recovery)
ANATOMY OF A CRISIS											

Yellow boxes highlight indicators under which DMOs pursue activities that were not proposed in the original TCM-ORM model (Table 5).

Purple boxes highlight indicators DMOs were thought to pursue activities under in the original TCM-ORM model but did not.

If we were to use crisis type, control or authority, and the area(s) of expertise thought useful in expounding on and navigating that crisis as potential situational factors, we may be able to better understand DMOs' inclination towards a consultative versus submission dialogue. The potential physical/manmade disaster, although directly involving roads and infrastructure within Porter County's limits, would be best addressed in collaboration with the actual entity imposing the crisis situation. INDOT not only had access to detailed engineering plans, project timetables and industry-specific experts, it also had, as a department of the Indiana state government, authority and control over the design, implementation and progress of those plans, and thus IDT's potential crisis. IDT's acknowledgement and understanding of the gravity of these factors in relation to the magnitude of the crisis event may have pushed them to pursue an active role in mitigating this particular crisis. A similar conceptual frame could be applied to IDT's constrained TCM approach with its political crisis. Although the proposed tri-county merger poses a direct threat to the survival of IDT as it stands today, the process by which the merger would be sanctioned is dependent on the approval of local legislation, an arena outside the DMOs' scope, authority and control.

One problem with the approach is that we can already see exceptions to the rule. Tucson CVB's crisis experience with SB 1070 led the DMO to initially seek answers and action through participation in an Arizona state-formed committee to address the tourism industry concerns surrounding this piece of legislation. The state government clearly has a measure of authority over the DMO, as well expertise regarding the details of the bill it enacted, however, despite these factors, Tucson CVB elected to pursue its own course of action in an effort to mitigate the effects the crisis on its local tourism industry. Both DMOs demonstrated their adaptive capacity through their flexible approaches with governing bodies at more than one level and who possessed varying degrees of expertise and control.

***Crisis Leadership.*** Strong crisis leadership from within the organization was previously identified as an indicator of an organization's adaptive capacity (Stephenson, 2010), however, the findings of this study indicate it has been significantly underplayed in the TCM literature for its ability to bolster organizations' crisis management strategies. Crisis leadership was clearly the backbone of all nine DMOs' resilient responses to crisis. For many DMOs like Tucson CVB and IDT, crisis leadership began with a fierce yet strategic initiative to make the DMOs' presence known and to proactively begin assessing the crisis situation. Towards the resolution stage of a crisis event, crisis leadership frequently evolved into spurring the beginnings of a learning and knowledge culture that would eventually support future TCM. The underlying mindset, vision and actions couple with flexible delegation of authority in crisis situations is what appeared to drive DMOs' adaptive capacities.

What was absent from this study in respect to leadership, however, was the notion of granting rewards. Across all nine cases, no mention of extrinsic or intrinsic rewards for any stakeholder group was report or implied. According to La Porte and Consolini (1991) and Rochlin (1996) DMO employees' might expect rewards for reporting or discovering errors, or perhaps devising innovative solutions to DMO or stakeholder problems. Additionally, the degree to which crisis leaders met resistance both within and outside the organization for the chosen crisis management strategy and leadership style is also unknown. In this respect, the notion "there is always room for improvement" is key. Although strong crisis leadership was clearly a principle element of DMOs' adaptive capacity, the willingness of crisis leaders and the DMO as a whole to put crisis leadership behavior and decision-making on the chopping block with other key components of their TCM strategy is what will divide singular instances of resilient behavior with the long-term resilience of an organization.

***Other Adaptive Capacity and Planning Indicators.*** DMOs pursued activities under the other adaptive capacity and planning indicators, however, the majority of these activities were implemented by DMOs during or following the resolution, evaluation and feedback stage of crisis. Their eventual incorporation suggests DMOs' recognition of their value in TCM; however, given their implementation was fairly homogenous across the board, i.e. across DMO size and crisis type, their inclusion *prior* to crisis events would prove extremely useful.

## **5.6 Summary**

The results of this study indicate DMOs' approach to TCM is highly complex, involves a vast number of stakeholders and is constantly subject to change. The findings of this study showed DMOs' adopt of six distinct roles in TCM. DMOs' role selection in TCM can be influenced by seven factors that may evolve or remain static over time. The presence or absence of key stakeholder groups and DMOs' management of those groups was a critical component of DMOs' resilient behavior in crises. Analysis and re-conceptualization of DMO-stakeholder relationships allowed for a more holistic and accurate depiction of the true dynamics of DMOs' cooperative and collaborative efforts with these groups. In transposing DMOs and key stakeholders groups to a 'family' environment, constructs such as trust, loyalty and reciprocity start to emerge as more visible features of these relationships. Simultaneously, DMOs must take caution in negotiating their relationships with governing bodies, remaining mindful of the 'parenting' style of each and how it could effect DMOs' development and implementation of TCM directives. Generally speaking, DMOs employ seven main practices as a sensemaking device to help navigate the constant barrage of questions and issues that arise during crises. Finally, this research shows DMOs participate in ORM through adaptive capacity and planning behavior, rooted in three areas: evaluating the

capabilities and capacities of external resources, stakeholder engagement and flexibility with governing bodies, and acquiring and promoting strong crisis leadership.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

This thesis explored two central research questions: 1) How and why do local destination management organizations in the United States engage in crisis management?; and, 2) How can organizational resilience management be used to expand or complement DMOs' crisis management strategy? The main theoretical and practical contributions of this study are summarized below and discussed in further detail in subsequent sections of this chapter. The contributions are:

- ❖ Expansion of our general knowledge of crisis management in tourism;
- ❖ An introduction into how DMOs at the local (city/regional) level negotiate crises, specifically including:
  - Identification of key stakeholders, a novel manner in which to conceptualize their relationships with DMOs, actions that can be taken by DMOs to develop/maintain strong stakeholder relations, and a general understanding of how these relationships influence TCM;
  - Identification of the practices underpinning DMOs' overall TCM approach and suggestions of how these practices are used in DMOs' sensemaking in TCM;
  - Identification of the roles DMOs' adopt in managing crises, as well as key factors influencing DMOs' adoption of these roles;
- ❖ Insights into the use of organizational resilience management as a foundational management theory for crisis management in general and in the context of tourism;
- ❖ An empirically grounded and more comprehensive framework of TCM strategy tailored to DMOs
- ❖ A broader understanding of what DMOs' perceive as a crisis.

#### 6.1 Implications for Tourism Crisis Management Theory

TCM research has advanced conceptually, but has largely failed to test conceptualizations of TCM models empirically, particularly at the organizational and local levels. Broadly, TCM has implied a plethora of stakeholders need to be addressed as part of strategy implementation yet fails to provide evidence to substantiate this claim. Further, research in to the dynamics and relationships DMOs develop and maintain with various stakeholder groups, the roles DMOs assume in crises, and the

factors influencing those roles are vague to non-existent in the current TCM literature. In this respect, four major contributions to the current discussion in TCM have arisen from this research.

The first major contribution of this research is confirmation and extension of our understanding of DMOs' stakeholder management in TCM in terms of both their existence and the relational dynamic between each stakeholder group and the DMO. On the one hand, this research has confirmed the existence of 11 key stakeholder groups, all of which had been previously noted across the TCM literature as being collaborators or key audiences of DMOs' crisis management directives. On the other hand, the results of this research extended our view of stakeholder management in TCM by re-conceptualizing DMOs' stakeholder relations to coincide with traditional relationships held with family members. Older mental models of stakeholders in the management and tourism literature prescribe stakeholders to be either 'primary' vs. 'secondary' (Carroll 1989; Clarkson 1995; and Freeman 1984) or 'existing' vs. 'emergent' stakeholders, both of which did not adequately capture the true DMO-stakeholder-crisis environment revealed in this study. By conceptualizing stakeholder groups as family, we are able to better picture how elements of trust, loyalty, familiarity and a sense of 'parental responsibility' pervade DMOs' crisis management strategy. Acting as a 'sibling' in this family framework, the DMO and 11 stakeholder groups are situated in four family categories and one friend category based on the observed attributes of their relationships with DMOs in a crisis environment. Further, insights into the dynamics of the family environment are provided through suggested general factors of influence, the authoritative influence of stakeholder 'parenting style' and suggestions for developing and maintaining strong stakeholder relations.

The type of relationship a DMO develops and maintains with each stakeholder in and outside of crisis has bearing on how the DMO utilizes and negotiates that same relationship during crisis events. Specifically, in comparing DMOs' stakeholder relationships in crisis to that of traditional family, we are able to better understand where, for example, stronger linkages of trust and loyalty may lie, further indicating a certain level of commitment and cooperation by that stakeholder. Additionally, in conceptualizing stakeholders as family we can also envision the pathway, activities and behaviors DMOs may undertake in moving a stakeholder from being a 'distant relative' to 'close family'. The purpose of seeking this transition will likely lay in reinforcement and enhancement of a DMO's crisis management strategy through reducing uncertainty about any one stakeholder while simultaneously gaining an awareness of the potential benefits or constraints of that relationship in future crisis events. Being able to adequately assess the responses and requirements of certain stakeholder groups prior to a crisis situation was perceived by the majority of DMOs as a significant advantage towards the implementation and modification of TCM, especially during the prodromal, emergency and intermediate stages of crisis. Unfortunately, for

other DMOs, such as the Philly CVB, the ability to decipher the attitude, behavior and resulting demands of certain stakeholders during crisis was a little trickier. Confirmation of these 11 stakeholder groups as present and important to DMOs, coupled with the ability to observe their relationships in terms of needs, resources, notions of reciprocity, knowledge sharing, and general perceptions of crises, have provided an excellent breeding ground for extended theoretical and empirical works.

The second major contribution of this research is the discovery of seven practices central to DMOs' crisis management approach. Numerous factors have the capacity to influence DMOs' TCM strategy, in turn, DMOs are extremely careful to engage in certain foundational practices that serve to preserve the integrity of their organization, its image, and the functionality of its crisis management approach. These seven practices were used by DMOs as a lens, or sensemaking device, through which to view and implement TCM strategy. Given TCM literature at the organizational level is limited, these findings are thought to encourage tourism scholars to investigate the linkages between DMOs' central practices and those of its key stakeholders in terms of alignment and purpose.

The third major contribution of this study lay in unearthing the roles DMOs play in crisis management. This research confirms tourism scholars' previous conceptualization of DMOs' roles in TCM as knowledge brokers and/or knowledge boundary spanners (Ritchie, 2009; Blackman & Ritchie, 2011), but also extends this conceptualization to include DMOs' roles as a Knowledge activist, a Purveyor of Information, a Provider and a Visitor Advocate. While new knowledge, social media and increased access to resources and information are believed to be catalysts for the birth of the four additional categories, it is equally important to note the belief that these roles are thought to exist outside of the crisis context. That is, DMOs' activities and responsibilities associated with all six DMO roles closely reflect DMOs' destination management behavior on a general everyday basis. Although these six roles are evident on a daily basis for DMOs, it the dynamic attitude with which each role is pursued during crises that differentiates it from the everyday business environment, much of which is attributed to the intense and tumultuous nature of crisis events. Two important elements were revealed with the extension of DMOs' roles in crisis 1) that each of these roles maybe assumed singularly or simultaneously and, 2) DMOs' role adoption during crisis can be influenced by several factors that may change, disappear or become irrelevant with time. Tourism scholars may in the future look to conduct longitudinal case studies that attempt to observe and analyze the influence of these factors on TCM for DMO and the wider tourism community.

The final major contribution of this thesis rests in an enhanced understanding of how ORM can be aligned with TCM to create resilient DMOs that are able to survive different types of crises. The initial TCM-ORM framework (Table 6) was compared and contrasted to the findings of this study allowing conceptualization of a new TCM-ORM framework (Table 22) that more fully captures the adaptive capacity and planning behaviors of resilient DMOs. Through elaboration of this framework, DMOs were observed to predominately still take a reactive versus proactive approach to TCM, but, through organizational learning of past crises they recognize the value of ORM in creating a more solid footing in approaching and surviving future crisis events.

Based on the findings and three major contributions of this study as elaborated above, the indicate the originally stated prefix and components of the conceptual framework (Figure 7) are applicable to DMOs' crisis experiences, and further reveal more of the 'fabric' behind each component layer. It not only confirmed DMOs' engagement with a variety of stakeholder groups (Hystad & Keller, 2008; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005), but elaborated on who those groups are and the manner (i.e. attitude, strength of relationship, trust, loyalty) in which coordination and collaboration among them takes place, i.e. within a 'family' setting. Additionally, this research highlighted that each stakeholder relationship is mediated to a degree by seven specific central practices that indeed influence DMOs' pursuit of distinct crisis management roles. These roles also stretched much farther than originally observed in the extant literature (i.e. knowledge brokers and boundary spanners (Aalbers *et al.*, 2004; Blackman & Ritchie, 2009, 2011; Hargadon, 1998, 2002)) to include four additional crisis roles reflecting the expanded scope under which DMOs actually participate and are held accountable during different crisis events.

The conceptual framework initially suggested four additional factors thought to influence DMOs' overall TCM approach, those are crisis type, environmental context, institutional characteristics and organizational learning from past crisis experiences, each of which proved to have some effect on TCM, but would benefit from further directed research towards individual factors. Several DMOs, did not, for example, have prior crisis experiences to learn from before experiencing the crisis presented for this study thus their ability to learn from past crisis experiences was not applicable. In addition to the four originally posed factors, a change in tourism landscape; new knowledge and information, the introduction of new technology and communication; the presence or loss of expertise and physical resources; and finally, the entrance or absence of stakeholders.



## 6.2 Implications for Research Methodology

Two implications of the case study methodology and multiple-case research strategy were evident from the exploratory and complex nature of this research. First, case study research provided a more than suitable means of expanding our understanding of the complexity of different types of crisis phenomena and how DMOs these. Case study methodology proved flexible enough to manage both the singular and multiple accounts presented to represent each organization's crisis experience, including perceived attitudes and behaviors of a diversity of stakeholders and numerous management activities. The results from taking this methodological approach have in brief successfully led to the expansion of our knowledge of a specific organizational group (DMOs) within and across a particular phenomenon (crises).

Second, the case study design successfully enabled this research to adopt an exploratory approach (Hyde 2000; Yin 1993) leading to a 'pre-structured' case methodology approach that has expanded current TCM theory (Easton 1998; Perry 2001) through thick, rich descriptions or narrations of DMOs' crisis experiences in different crisis events. Further, the *multiple*- vs. a *single* case study approach allowed the researcher to explore more rigorously the differences within and between cases, with the goal of replicating findings across cases and the ability to make analytic generalizations.

## 6.3 Implications and Recommendations for Practitioners

Several implications and recommendations for industry practitioners are drawn as a result of this research. First, because the research indicates a wide variety of key stakeholder groups exist in DMOs' TCM and that varying levels of salience are observed across those relationships, tourism practitioners would be wise to adopt a hybrid stakeholder analysis approach (Hardy *et al.*, 2013) that begins with normative and classical stakeholder management but has the flexibility fold-in additional stakeholders based on different crisis environments. Further, given DMOs' coordination and collaboration with government bodies at different levels (most commonly at the local level) was the most prevalent across crisis type, the opportunity for DMO managers and executives to assess and potentially test these relationships perhaps through scenario planning or a more simplistic question and answer session, will likely prove beneficial towards mitigating confusion and unmet expectations in an actual crisis.

Additionally, new knowledge regarding the expanded roles DMOs' adopt in their TCM approach suggests tourism organizations should take the time to evaluate or re-evaluate the tangible and intangible resources necessary to fill one or are all of these roles. To save critical time during crises, perhaps hours/days in a natural disaster or months/years in a political crisis, these

evaluations should be coupled with a realistic pre-assessment of the organization's likelihood to adopt any of those six roles. This process should in turn lead to strategic resource acquisition and development of relationships with key stakeholders as appropriate.

With respect to ORM, the resilient DMOs in this study exercised differing adaptive capacities and planning behaviors. Crisis leadership, along with stakeholder involvement and engagement were two new and extremely important indicators of DMOs' adaptive capacities across crisis experiences. From this perspective, practitioners would be wise to pay close attention to employees' individual leadership styles and skills and their potential to positively or negatively affect the DMO's chances of survival through perhaps ineffective decision-making or the inability to get key stakeholders 'on-board' with TCM directives. Lastly, because the DMOs in this study eventually, following organizational learning, sought to increase their organizational resilience through activities related to all of the adaptive capacity and planning indicators, minus innovation and creativity, we see an apparent need to make changes to DMOs' TCM strategy by seeking a level of organizational resilience that preemptively incorporates ORM versus solely in hindsight, after time, resources and the potential opportunity for knowledge creation and sharing are lost.

#### **6.4 Limitations of this Study and Directions for Future Research**

The delimitations of this research were noted and justified in Section 1.6. Limitations in a multiple-case research methodology and steps taken to address these limitations were discussed in Section 3.7. Given this research utilized a multiple-case case research design and case study research methodology, future research into the experience and role of DMOs in crisis may seek to use alternative exploratory methodologies (e.g. observation), or test the conceptual models developed with alternative quantitative and qualitative methodologies in general. Further, the context of this research is limited to the data gathered from nine U.S. DMOs and four crisis management plans. Due to the smaller self-selected sample used in this study, the research design was unable to control for certain variables such as DMO type, size, structure and even seniority or position of interviewees, thus limiting the comparative examination of DMO responses in terms of, for example, organizational structure and funding and/or by interviewee role. Future empirical research into the crisis experiences and crisis plans of other U.S. local DMOs, other countries' local DMOs, as well as DMOs at the state and national levels will extend the scope of this research.

An additional limitation concerning the U.S. DMO context of this research is that it focuses on the crisis experience and perceptions of only the DMO in a crisis environment. Future, to add depth and breadth to our understanding of DMOs' roles in crisis management specifically, and TCM in general, research needs to investigate the experiences and perceptions of non-DMO organizations,

beginning with those identified as key stakeholder groups in this study. Additionally, this research focused on TCM and specific underlying management fields, organizational behavior, stakeholder management, and knowledge management and learning from an organizational versus individual perspective. This means, that although interviews were conducted with DMO personnel, individual responses were analyzed more as representative of the DMO as a whole entity and less as individual personal perspectives. However, given the reality that human beings develop and carryout TCM, based on at a minimum, their own personal experiences, background, knowledge and skill set, future studies may choose to concentrate on individual experiences and capacities as drivers of TCM. For example, this research conceptualized DMO stakeholders as ‘family’, elaborating further certain stakeholders’ ‘parenting’ style and relational dynamics in terms of trust, loyalty and reciprocity. Scholars may extend the application of this conceptualization to ascertain if and how individual employees of those stakeholder groups reinforce or diverge from the relational categories in which their organization is placed. Moreover, this study was conducted on the premise each DMO’s current active business state gave credence to the success of its TCM strategy, however, organizational culture in terms of empowerment, collaboration, trust, leadership and modes of learning within the context of TCM were not explored.

Future empirical researchers could begin this investigation by exploring the applicability of path-goal theory and leadership effectiveness (House, 1971, 1996), to discern what contingency factors influence DMOs’ crisis leadership, and if any one leadership style can be linked more strongly to success in one specific type of crisis versus another. For example, study into individuals such as NOLA CVB’s President and CEO who received a World Travel Market Globe Award for his “instrumental role in restoring the city as a tourism destination following Hurricane Katrina, and his tireless work to return New Orleans to its position as premiere destination through planned events, safe guarding and creating thousands of travel and tourism jobs in the process” would help scholars discern the extent to which certain individual leadership qualities influence the success of TCM.

In this same train of thought, research that seeks to uncover the differences in organizational culture among DMOs through, for example, Fyall’s (2011) ‘15 Cs’ framework to destination marketing/management might also prove useful in illustrating how individual employees contribute and mold tourism organizations’ crisis responses. Tourism scholars may seek to examine the barriers or facilitators of stakeholder collaboration or stakeholder engagement in TCM, including perhaps DMOs’ capacity to recognize and engage ‘fringe’ (Hart & Sharna, 2004) or ‘neglected’ stakeholder groups (Hardy *et al.*, 2013). Further, the concept of DMOs in a stakeholder family environment needs to be evaluated and empirically informed in terms of, for example, the trust, resources, loyalty and attitude DMOs actually have with key stakeholder groups before and after

crisis events. Additionally, although there are a rising number of studies focusing on knowledge management in TC, scholars have to explore the codification versus personalization strategies for knowledge creation, storage and dissemination resulting from DMOs' TCM. For example, there is a need for research on how do employees' individual information processing capacities affect the speed, quality and format of the information being disseminated? Broadly speaking, this research has highlighted key areas of DMOs' approaches to managing crises that would greatly benefit from more focused inquiry in the tourism science and management disciplines.

It is also important to note that although the interviewees participating in this study were either first-hand witnesses to DMOs' crisis experiences or attested to having access to adequate information and knowledge of the crisis event, discourse from seven of the nine DMOs was provided by one DMO employee, implying the data captured may be slanted or biased toward one individual's recollection and perception of those events. This limitation is acknowledged, particularly in respect to the two case studies (Tucson CVB and GSOBT) where the researcher was able to interview two and six DMO employees respectively, and where both corroborating and conflicting accounts were noted and clarified. Future empirical studies may increase the depth and coverage of this research area by securing access to more or all employees in one DMO or organization. Additionally, while gaining access to real-time crisis observations may be tricky, particularly during the prodromal to intermediate stages, certain crisis types such as political or perhaps economic may lend well to action research. For example, action research conducted on long-term political crises, such as those currently experienced by IDT (rejected merger) and Tucson CVB's SB 1070 could provide additional knowledge to TCM development and decision-making, especially with respect to the roles of DMOs as whole, individual employees and other tourism and crisis stakeholders.

Another limitation of the research was its exploration of DMOs' crisis experiences solely in the context of natural/physical or manmade disasters, and political, malevolence and megadamage crises. Future studies looking to test the conceptual models resulting from this research would be wise to consider expanding the scope of their work to include other types of crisis, such as those falling under the economic, organizational misdeeds, stakeholder challenges or rumor categories.

## **6.5 Reflection of this Research**

Documentation of the methodology, research design, and research strategy development and implementation processes provided reflection opportunities throughout this PhD research (Phillips & Pugh, 2005). Beginning with the research proposal through completion of the final thesis report, this researcher wanted to capture the reality of DMOs' crisis experiences. Several challenges

presented themselves, some expected, such as the possibility of a lower response rate, others not. Capturing each DMO's story posed challenges in terms of examining not only the facts, but deciphering, and when applicable separating, the attitude or behavior projected by interviewees or that of the individuals/entities they spoke of from the story being told. Another important lesson learned dealt with allowing adequate time for participants to express their interest in the study, as well as negotiating the actual interview, data collection and analysis process, including following-up with questions with interviewees. Additionally, the researcher significantly underestimated the time required to gather and analyze the multiple sources of evidence used in each DMO case, many of which took clever search methods to uncover. Overcoming challenges such as these presented a research training opportunity that ultimately sharpened the research capabilities and skills of this researcher.

At the outset of this PhD research, the notion of case research was introduced as the basis for the research design. An initial review of the literature and discussion with fellow colleagues regarding their experiences indicated a multiple-case research design could be a messy and complex process. Reflecting back, this researcher discovered that, in proceeding through the PhD research process, it is crucial, particularly with case research, that methodologies adopted be flexible enough to allow for unexpected challenges and events; very similar to the contingency approach many DMOs' are wisely adopting to address disruptive crisis events.

## **6.6 Concluding Comments**

DMOs have proven once again to be valuable entities not only in the preservation or resurrection of tourism destinations in the wake of a crisis, but in the coordination and organization of crisis responses for other critical community agencies and crisis stakeholders. It is in each destination's interest to facilitate adequate support for DMOs in their varied roles in crisis management beginning with creation of within- and cross-sector relationships that will strengthen the adaptive capacity and crisis planning of the DMO. By implementing relevant recommendations in this thesis, DMOs and tourism and crisis stakeholders will be able to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their crisis management strategies, ultimately improving destinations' ability to respond to large scale crises as well as smaller scale disruptions. History has proven each crisis event undoubtedly affects residents, businesses and destinations as a whole. No city, town or organization is safe from crisis. By taking steps to safeguard tourism investments and infrastructure in addition to implementing TCM and ORM that is useful and efficient in multiple crisis environments, DMOs will be able to negate or reduce the damage caused by such events.

*Maybe instead of hearing "We never thought it would happen to us" we'll here "Although we hoped it wouldn't happen to us, we never took for granted that it could." And regardless of the continent you're on-- one would hope that one of the first things tourism organizations would establish in developing countries would be crisis management. – President, GSOBT*

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## APPENDIX A

### INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE EMAIL

Subject: National Study - Challenges in Disaster and Crisis Management!

Dear [organizational contact],

Over the past decade travel and tourism organizations have been severely impacted by disasters and crises. My colleagues, Dr. Ulrike Gretzel at the University of Wollongong and Dr. Brent Ritchie at the University of Queensland and I recognize the critical role Destination Marketing Organizations, Chambers of Commerce and other destination tourism agencies play in these situations. For this reason we want to help organizations like yours by conducting a study to understand the unique challenges your organization may have experienced in dealing with different types of disasters and crises. Preliminary research revealed that your organization has in recent years experienced the effects of different disasters or crises, making you an extremely valuable participant in this international research study.

This research involves one-on-one interviews with key personnel that have knowledge of the challenges your organization experienced during a specific or multiple crises. These interviews should last approximately 15-30 minutes via phone or Skype, or can be substituted with an online questionnaire. One group interview with the same key personnel will also be conducted by myself at your organization, another location of your choosing, or via videoconference, and should last approximately 1 hour.

Full details of the study and the researchers' contact information can be found on the participation information sheet attached to this e-mail. Should you have any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

This is a fantastic opportunity for your organization to have experts review disaster and crisis management challenges specific to your organization and to provide you a full report (as a courtesy for participating) that will help your organization identify links, resources and opportunities to create or improve your disaster and crisis management plans or strategy.

Please contact me to further discuss your participation in this study. I look forward to hearing from you!

Kind Regards,

***Michelle R. Scarpino***

Institute for Innovation in Business and Social Research (IIBSoR)

Laboratory for Intelligent Systems in Tourism (LIST)

PhD Candidate & Tutor, Faculty of Commerce

**University of Wollongong**

**Northfields Ave, Bld 40a.181, Wollongong, NSW 2522**

mrs959@uowmail.edu.au

(This study has approval from the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee; the reference code of the Ethics form is HE12/398)





## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

*Disaster and Crisis Management Challenges in Destination Marketing Organizations*

This is an invitation to participate in a national research study conducted as part of Doctoral research at the University of Wollongong. The study focuses on understanding the challenges specific organizations such as yours have experienced during a disaster or crisis. Selected personnel across your organization (human resources, public relations, IT etc.) will take part in brief individual interviews (or an online questionnaire) and one group interview. Each participating organization will receive feedback in a final report regarding study findings. The aim of this report is to help your organization identify links, resources and opportunities to create or improve your disaster and crisis management plans or strategy. There is no cost to participate in the study or to receive the results from the study. The researchers involved in this research and their contact information are as follows:

Michelle Scarpino	Dr. Ulrike Gretzel	Dr. Brent Ritchie
PhD Candidate	Primary Supervisor	Associate Supervisor
Faculty of Commerce	Faculty of Commerce	School of Tourism
University of Wollongong	University of Wollongong	University of Queensland
Tel: +01 832 632 7007	Phone: +61 02 4221 4823	Phone: +61 07 3346 7308
<a href="mailto:mrs959@uowmail.edu.au">mrs959@uowmail.edu.au</a>	<a href="mailto:ugretzel@uow.edu.au">ugretzel@uow.edu.au</a>	<a href="mailto:b.ritchie1@uq.edu.au">b.ritchie1@uq.edu.au</a>

For your organization to take part in the study simply contact Ms. Scarpino to briefly go over the details of the employees participating and to set a tentative group interview date. Ms. Scarpino will contact each interviewee to establish a mutually convenient date and time for their interview session. Individual interviews can be conducted via phone or Skype, or have the option to be substituted for a short online questionnaire. Apart from allocating approximately 15-30 minutes per individual interview or questionnaire and (1) one hour group interview session, there is no identifiable risk associated with this research. Participation is completely voluntary. Your organization and its individual participants may withdraw their participation in this research within 7 days of each interview. A decision to decline to be interviewed or to withdraw from the interview will not impact upon any existing or future relationship with the researchers and the University of Wollongong or University of Queensland.

Your organization and its individual participants should retain a copy of this *Participation Invitation and Information Sheet* for your records. Although the interviews will be recorded, individual interviewees' names will not be associated with any comments contained in the final report or related publications but referred to as a participant or respondent. The collected data will be stored for five years in a locked cabinet in Building 40 on the UOW Campus.

As the topics and line of questioning covered in both individual and group interviews requires individuals to recall the events of a particular disaster or crisis event, Ms. Scarpino will provide all

interviewees the name, phone number and contact information to a counseling service that is trained to help address any emotional distress the interviewing process may elicit. Counseling information will be provided respective to your specific location.

This study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) of the University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the UOW Ethics Officer at [rso-ethics@uow.edu.au](mailto:rso-ethics@uow.edu.au) Phone 0242 213386. If you have any queries concerning this research, please do not hesitate to contact us on the contact details specified above.



## SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

### *Disaster and Crisis Management Challenges in Destination Marketing Organizations*

Questions similar to the following will guide the conversations during each interview. You will be asked about your position at your DMO, general information about the DMO, as well as the crisis your DMO experienced including crisis planning and post crisis after-action and learning activities.

#### **Introduction**

Introduction of the interviewer and the participant; introduction to the topic and aims of the research.

#### **General information**

1. What is your current job position in your DMO and what does that entail?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. How long have you been working in the tourism industry?
4. Where you in this position when [crisis X] occurred?
  5. If no, what position where you in at the time?
  6. How did you come by the crisis experience information you are going to share today?
  7. Did you work for a different employer?

#### **Crisis Experience Described & Organizational Learning**

I understand you have some knowledge or where present when [crisis X] occurred. I'd like to understand how your DMO or department approached the crisis by establishing a chain of event.

*Building a sequence of events –*

8. Can you please briefly describe the crisis event your DMO experienced, including the date(s) in which it occurred and how long before it 'hit' did you know it was coming?
9. What was the first major step/action your DMO/department took to manage the affects or potential affects of [crisis X]?
  10. What were some of the challenges that you faced during this step?
  11. If you could go back, do you think something should have been done differently?
  12. Do you feel the DMO's approach was limited in any way?
  13. Based on the actions and outcomes of this step, do you think your DMO/department learned anything that could be useful for future?
  14. What was the next step?

*\*Questions above repeated until a sequence of events has been established and recorded.*

15. Reflecting back on the sequence of events you just described, were any existing/emerging stakeholders (types of stakeholders are defined at this time) involved in any of these steps?
  16. If yes, what stakeholder(s) and which type were they (existing/emerging)?
    17. To what extent did your DMO interact with that stakeholder as part of your crisis management activities?
    18. How would you describe that relationship before (if applicable) during and after the crisis?
  19. Was there anything your department or DMO did you think could have been done differently regarding the actions taken with that stakeholder at that would have made crisis management more efficient or successful?
  20. Was there anything you believe the stakeholder could have done differently regarding the actions taken with your department or DMO that would have made crisis management more efficient or successful?
21. Prior to or during the crisis, did any existing/emerging stakeholders request help or information from your organization that required some action from your department?
22. Reflecting back, what would you say were the main principles of your DMO's crisis management approach?
  23. Why do you think that is?
  24. Would you say your current crisis management approach takes the same focus or is centered on same principles?

#### **Crisis Management Plans**

25. Does your DMO and/or department have a crisis management plan of any form?
  26. If yes, how long have you had this plan in place?
  27. What does the plan cover?
  28. Was the plan revised following the crisis event you described earlier?
  29. Is the plan reviewed and/or updated on a regular basis (i.e. annually, bi-annually, only following as crisis event)?
  30. Does the plan reference any other organizational plans your DMO has in place?
  31. Who has access to the plan?
  32. Would it be possible for me to access a copy of the plan for research purposes (the confidentiality review and use of plans was reiterated to interviewees)?

**RESEARCH CONSENT FORM***Disaster and Crisis Management Challenges in Destination Marketing Organizations*

I,.....of..... have been provided with information about the research being conducted by Ms. Michelle Scarpino, a Doctorate of Philosophy candidate and her supervisors; Dr. Ulrike Gretzel at the University of Wollongong and Dr. Brent Ritchie at the University of Queensland and hereby consent to participate in this study and an audio-recorded individual and group interview. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used as part of the descriptive research and/or any publications proceeded from it, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

I understand that if I consent to participate in the research, I will be asked to participate in an in-depth individual interview or complete a questionnaire and a group interview about my knowledge of the challenges or problems experienced by my organization, [name of organization] during a specific or multiple crises. I understand that my personal identification will be confidential and will not be published.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My decision to discontinue the interview or withdraw my data will not impact my relationship with the researchers, the Faculty or the University of Wollongong or the University of Queensland. I understand that I have seven days to withdraw the data from the date of my interview.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Michelle Scarpino at 04.4766.1700 or her supervisors; Dr. Ulrike Gretzel at 02.4221.4823 or Dr. Brent Ritchie at 07.3346.7308. I understand that if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way in which the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Office on 02 4221 4457.

I would like to participate in the:

- ☐ individual interview or questionnaire
- ☐ group interview
- ☐ both the individual interview or questionnaire and the group interview

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_