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The Question of Homeland Security in Rural America

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Abstract

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MS, Hodges University, 2008

BA, California State University, 1964

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Following the issuance of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in 2009 by the Department of Homeland Security, it remains unknown whether homeland security programs have been consistently implemented in the nation's rural areas. Research findings have been inconsistent and inconclusive on the degree of implementation. Two problems may result from inadequate implementation of these programs: weakened national security from the failure to protect critical infrastructure in remote areas and a threat to public safety in rural towns. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and describe the reasons for possible noncompliance through purposeful interviews with 10 law enforcement officials and emergency managers in selected Midwestern rural towns. The study's theoretical foundation was based on Putnam's theory of social capital, which holds that community cohesion develops in direct relation to the adaptation of social networks that promote mutual cooperation during times of need. The research centered on the question of how rural emergency managers and law enforcement officials justified noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* of 2009. The interviews and materials were transcribed and analyzed with qualitative analytic software using open, axial, and selective coding to identify themes and patterns. The study's key findings disconfirmed conclusions reported in previous studies and confirmed compliance with the *Guidelines* in the studied rural towns. Implications for positive social change include informing policymakers, emergency managers, law enforcement officials, and researchers. Application of social capital principles in all the nation's remote areas may enhance national security and improve rural public safety.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughters, Heather and Amber; their husbands, Jon and Robb; and my bright, beautiful, and talented grandchildren, Elinor, Katherine, Joe, and Charlie. Their encouragement was a great motivator toward my completion of this paper. I am most grateful for their patience during visits when I had to take time to work on research or submit assignments instead of being with them. I know they are all proud of this achievement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

Almost 14 years after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and another half dozen years following the issuance of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* (Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2009), the question of whether a homeland security program has been consistently implemented on a nationwide basis remains unanswered. Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD-8), which directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop all-hazards preparedness guidelines designed to organize and coordinate national preparedness strategies, to facilitate a capability and risk-based planning process for use by all government levels, and to establish readiness standards to measure progress as well as a system to assess the nation's preparedness capability to respond to major incidents, including acts of terrorism (DHS, 2009). Limited available literature on this subject indicates that rural communities in previously surveyed Midwest states had not complied with those federal guidelines for a variety of reasons. Although the U.S. Constitution places primary responsibility on the central government to provide for the safety and security of all Americans (Kozak, 2011; U.S. Archives, 2011), in a 2006 lecture at the Heritage Foundation, then-DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff made it clear that the essence of Homeland Security was recognizing and managing risks. He followed that statement with the explanation that the DHS would focus more on risks that were probable and less on those that were possible. Secretary Chertoff added that it would be physically and financially impractical to guarantee every person and every property protection from all

risks, at all times, in all places (Chertoff, 2006). In his closing remarks, Secretary Chertoff stressed that the role of state and local government in disaster preparedness and response is one of primacy and common sense, not just a matter of federal responsibility as stated in the Constitution. Secretary Chertoff argued that any attempt to execute a national plan not built on state and local capabilities is unlikely to succeed (Chertoff, 2006).

The reported reasons for noncompliance varied; they included lack of funding (Marion & Cronin, 2009), concerns related to cost effectiveness (Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010), insufficient personnel, inadequate training and equipment (Bryant, 2009), local officials not understanding their responsibilities (Oliver, 2007, 2009), and separation or remoteness (Stigler, 2010). This variety of rationales for noncompliance reflected inconsistent and inconclusive findings by previous studies, all of which called for further research on this subject. An identified pattern of noncompliance in other selected rural Midwest towns, villages, or hamlets following the completion of this study confirmed a condition that poses a threat to U.S. national security and to the public safety of those affected communities.

The intent of this case study was to confirm or disconfirm the validity of previous research findings with the purpose of developing a common rationale for noncompliance or compliance, as well as the objective of projecting common generalizations to other affected rural communities (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). Since the nation's inception in 1787, a primary responsibility of the central government has been to provide for the safety and security of all Americans as stated in Article 4, Section 4 of the U.S.

Constitution, which specifies, in part, that the central government will guarantee each state of the union a Republican form of government as well as protection against invasion and domestic violence (Kozak, 2011, p. 58; U.S. Archives, 2011, p. 7). On the Tuesday morning of September 11, 2001, however, the central government failed to fully implement the safety and security measures necessary to prevent 19 Islamist terrorists from ramming three hijacked U.S. commercial airliners into the Twin Towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Alexandria, Virginia, and to cause the crash of a fourth airliner into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Passengers on United Airlines Flight 93 believed that their airliner was intended to be flown into the White House or Capitol Building in Washington, DC, and therefore caused it to crash (Ward, Kiernan, & Mabrey, 2006).

On August 16, 2001, some 26 days earlier, Zacarias Moussaoui, who would have been the 20th hijacker, was taken into custody by U.S. Immigration agents after he attracted the attention of a flight instructor at a Pan Am Flight Academy in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Moussaoui, a native Moroccan, had expressed an interest in learning how to fly an airliner but not in how to take off or land. During questioning, he admitted to being an al-Qaeda member and confessed that his role in the attacks was to fly a fifth commercial airliner into the White House at some later date. Of the 20 identified terrorists who took part in the 9/11 attacks, one was from Lebanon, another was from Egypt, and a fourth was from the United Arab Emirates (Ward et al., 2006). The 16 other terrorists were all from Saudi Arabia, a country the United States regards as an ally in the Arab world (Mahan & Griset, 2008).

The attacks of 9/11 reflected a degree of commitment, involving detailed long-term planning, funding, training, and collaboration by al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan who coordinated the joint operations beyond two continents and an ocean. The attacks were executed effectively in spite of a pattern of terrorist activity against U.S. interests worldwide that had developed and escalated since the Iran hostage crisis in 1979. On 9/11, the intended targets were symbols of America's financial, economic, military, and political strength (McEntire, 2009). These previously undetected attacks against the homeland served to shatter the prevailing illusion that America was invulnerable to attack from external forces. They happened despite previous implementation of what were deemed impregnable security measures designed to prevent attacks such as those inflicted on the U.S. Navy fleet at Pearl Harbor in 1941 (Piddock, 2014). Much as U.S. political and military leaders had either ignored or misread the incidents that led up to the Pearl Harbor attack, the U.S. intelligence, diplomatic, military, and law enforcement communities failed to make critical connections between seemingly separate incidents that eventually led to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Although both attacks shook the foundation of America's national security networks, the attackers' objectives differed. After these disasters, blame and responsibility for the attacks were rightly placed on the inability of U.S. political leaders and heads of the key intelligence, diplomatic, and military organizations to effectively read the threats as they developed at the time. In the case of the September 11 attacks, however, independent researchers such as Bergen (2011), and members of the 9/11 Commission (2004), found that blame must also be shared by the federal law enforcement community, which simply failed to shift its focus

from the conduct of primarily criminal investigative work to investigating terrorist threats, as well as by the George W. Bush administration, which chose to disregard the threats that had developed over the preceding decade (Haddow, Bullock, & Coppola, 2011).

Almost immediately after the attacks, the George W. Bush administration and Congress proceeded to direct, enact, and implement a number of security measures designed to prevent any such future attacks and to bring the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks to justice. Among the measures enacted were the USA Patriot Act of 2001; the Transportation and Security Act of 2001; and, the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which established the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003. Upon becoming operational in March 2003, the new DHS was directed by President Bush to produce and distribute the *National Preparedness Guidelines* for use at all government levels to help in developing preparedness strategies and reporting major incidents (DHS, 2009). These guidelines included the initial National Response Plan (NRP), which was subsequently replaced by the National Response Framework (NRF), and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The NRP and the NIMS were completed in 2004 and then issued nationwide to all levels of government, including Tribal Nations, in 2005 to help them in the development and implementation of preparedness programs designed to protect residents and critical infrastructure in urban areas, small towns, and rural communities. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks and the Katrina Hurricane disaster in 2005, states such as California, Nevada, Texas, Florida, and North Carolina saw the safety and

security value of adopting the federally proposed guidelines, along with the revised NRF to tailor state preparedness programs suited to their needs (DHS, 2009).

Some of those programs, like one implemented by the State of Florida (presented in this paper as Appendix D), are regarded as models for other states to copy. Most states chose to develop and implement measures designed to protect urban areas having high population density and vulnerable infrastructure. Others determined that the implementation of emergency preparedness measures in small towns and rural areas was not justified by the cost (Chenoweth & Clarke, 2009). As a result, some states, including New York, decided to apply available homeland security resources primarily in their urban areas (Bryant, 2009). This inconsistent implementation of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* appeared to have prevailed in a number of Midwest states, thus creating a national security and public safety problem (DHS, 2009). As stated, the intent of this case study was to examine the rationales cited by rural leaders in those areas that had not adopted the national preparedness guidelines despite the probability that their rural communities could be subject to future natural or manmade disasters. The previously described condition of noncompliance explained the study's identified problem. The study's purpose illuminated the reasons for the prevailing national security and public safety problems in the studied rural communities. This study's findings may be compared with those of compliant communities to foster improved safety conditions that promote positive social change. Positive social change may result from new policies that emerge following the identification, exploration, and understanding of the reasons

for noncompliance with national preparedness guidelines that affect national security and public safety in rural areas (Bryant, 2009; DHS, 2009).

As stated above, the identified inconsistency in compliance created two social problems related to public safety and security. One weakened national security by failing to protect critical infrastructure in rural areas, and the other threatened public safety in Midwest towns and rural communities where local leaders had not established any additional safety measures since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (DHS, 2009). This problem was underscored by an apparent lack of literature addressing noncompliance in some rural areas. The available literature was limited to five studies concerning this subject published within the past 5 years. Second, the findings in those five studies provided different reasons for noncompliance. A study by Bryant (2009) generalized the challenges of emergency management in rural communities and small towns, underscoring their historical lack of compliance with the national preparedness guidelines. Bryant's study stressed the theoretical relevance of social capital to the concept of emergency management in rural areas. Marion and Cronin (2009) found that 22% of Ohio's small town and rural police chiefs had not established any new safety and security measures since the 9/11 attacks due to lack of funding. In his study, Oliver (2009) concluded that the primary reason for noncompliance was likely a lack of understanding by local leaders of their roles, duties, and responsibilities in the post-9/11 era. Chenoweth and Clarke (2009) asserted in their study that federal resources allocated to the states were not being distributed evenly by state and urban leaders, who appeared predisposed to protecting their own jurisdictions. Stigler (2010), however, determined

that noncompliance in small towns and rural communities in Wisconsin might have been due in part to a lack of local resources but had just as likely been due to regional remoteness. The purpose of this case study was to resolve these disparities by finding consensus regarding the reasons following face-to-face interviews, instead of through the conduct of surveys (Yin, 2014).

Problem Statement

In spite of the fact that terrorism and natural disasters continue to pose serious threats to homeland security and emergency preparedness, some questions have been raised as to why the *National Preparedness Guidelines* of 2009 have not been adopted by many small towns or rural communities in some Midwestern states, whereas they have been implemented by the vast majority of the nation's metropolitan and urban centers (Chenoweth & Clarke, 2009; DHS, 2009; Florida Division of Emergency Management [FDEM], 2008-2013). A preliminary review of available literature led to the conclusion that the inconsistent condition of compliance created two social problems: (a) weakened national security due to failure to protect critical infrastructure in rural areas, and (b) threats to public safety in Midwest towns and rural communities where local leaders had not established any new safety and security measures since the 9/11 attacks. The problem was also made apparent by the limited literature available on the subject of noncompliance with the implementation of emergency preparedness strategies in some rural areas. Even more so, the problem was apparent in the lack of consensus among the researchers who published those studies on the reasons for noncompliance in their areas of inquiry (Bryant, 2009; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010). A study

by Bryant (2009) generalized that challenges of emergency management in rural areas were related to resource limitations, separation and remoteness, low population density, and a general lack of communication.

Marion and Cronin (2009) found that 57 of Ohio's 260 small town and rural police chiefs had not established any new security measures since the 9/11 attacks due to a lack of funding. In his study, Oliver (2009) concluded that the primary reason for noncompliance was a lack of understanding of local leaders' specific roles, responsibilities, and duties in the post-9/11 era. Chenoweth and Clarke (2009) asserted in their study that federal resources allocated to the states were not being distributed evenly by state and urban leaders, who appeared predisposed to protecting their own jurisdictions, leaving rural areas to manage with available resources. A more recent study, Stigler (2010), determined that the status of noncompliance in small towns and rural communities in the state of Wisconsin might be due partly to a lack of resources but was more likely attributable to regional remoteness. This is generally what was known about the problem; what were not known were the common reasons for continued noncompliance in rural communities and small towns in some Midwestern states. Absent a law or regulation to mandate the implementation of preparedness strategies in rural areas, universal compliance becomes an ethical, moral, and commonsense responsibility for local leaders. Compliance, then, is based on the need to provide equal safety and security for all Americans, whether they live in urban or rural areas. The existing literature, although limited, provided the foundation for this study, which focused on

exploring the reasons and examining the differing rationales for varying levels of noncompliance with national preparedness guidelines (DHS, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and describe the reasons that a number of rural communities in the Midwest were not complying with implementation of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* issued in 2009 (DHS, 2009). By extension, the guidelines applied to all rural and remote communities throughout the U.S. and its territories. As developed, the guidelines provide strategies intended to help rural communities and small towns develop security plans that prepare them for, respond to, and recover from manmade or natural disasters. When viewed in this context, this study was unique because it addressed an under-researched area that available literature was unable to fully explain (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2009; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010), and also because it explored the potential implications that noncompliance may have for national security and public safety issues (DHS, 2008b, 2009). Results of the study findings will be shared with participating communities, as well as with other local, county, state, and federal emergency planners, for use as a basis for comparison. Other practical contributions likely to be derived from the study's results include enhanced knowledge of the underlying forces that currently resist the concept of compliance (Yin, 2014).

Research Questions

Qualitative Central

How did rural civic leaders (mayors, police chiefs, fire chiefs, emergency managers, and city attorneys) in selected Midwest communities justify noncompliance with *National Preparedness Guidelines* that were issued for implementation in 2009?

Subquestions

RQ1—Qualitative. How had noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in the post-9/11 era reflected in the ability, or inability, of the studied rural communities to meet their governing goals and resource needs as they related to local public safety and national security matters?

RQ2—Qualitative. What role did funding play in the ability or inability of these rural communities to fully implement the *National Preparedness Guidelines*?

RQ3---Qualitative. What role did regional remoteness play in decisions made by these civic leaders not to implement the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in their communities?

RQ4—Qualitative. What understanding did civic leaders have about their responsibilities and duties regarding the implementation of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in rural areas?

Theoretical Framework for the Study

Currently, no established theory exists for homeland security or emergency management (Bellavita, 2010; McEntire, 2004). This is due to the multifaceted responsibilities of the DHS. The same reason holds true for the discipline of emergency

management, the primary function of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) within the DHS, which comprises only one of those facets (DHS, 2008a; Reese, 2013). McEntire (2004) examined 19 theoretical elements and established theories he thought reflected a relationship to the discipline of emergency management. McEntire's final analysis failed to find one theory or combination of elements that encompassed the full range of the discipline's functions. Since then, academics and practitioners from the Naval Post Graduate School in Northern California (Bellavita, 2010) and the Congressional Research Service in Washington, DC (Reese, 2013) have found and adopted a theoretical relation between Putnam's (2000) social capital theory and its positive benefits when applied in rural communities. The origin and source of social capital can be traced to the works of Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) as he traveled through early America. Among other things, he observed that Americans were prone to meet periodically in public squares to discuss issues of mutual concern in furtherance of the democratic process. During the 20th century, L. J. Hanifan (1916) made a reference to social cohesion and personal investment in the community as goodwill, mutual sympathy, and social interaction, which normally result in benefits for individuals as well as for the community as a whole (Smith, 2001-2009). Along with the exploration of rationales for noncompliance with emergency preparedness guidelines in the studied rural communities, a collateral effort was made to determine the extent that those communities had adopted the principles of social capital theory (Putnam, 2000).

More currently, the three authorities most commonly associated with social capital are Bourdieu (1983) with regard to social theory, Coleman (1988) in discussions

of social context in education, and Putnam (2000), who launched social capital as a popular focus for research and policy discussions (Smith, 2001-2009). The resurgence of interest in social capital as a remedy for today's social problems draws on the assumption that those problems are reflections of a weakened civil society. The argument promoted by supporters of social capital theory is that a low level of social capital in a given community leads to a rigid and unresponsive political system. Putnam, writing from a political perspective, argued that it is better to have more social capital than less as a precondition for effective government and economic growth. Putnam explained that social capital is about the value of social networks that tend to bond people with similar interests and bridge diverse people with norms of trust and reciprocity (Claridge, 2004). These are the social values that facilitate collaboration, cooperation, coordination, and communication during emergencies, particularly in rural communities (Bryant, 2009).

Nature of the Study

The qualitative approach to this inquiry involved a multisite single-case study that aligned with the inquiry's stated objectives. This approach provided for the formulation of interview protocols designed to facilitate the development of answers to the research questions, the coding of the data collected, and the analysis and interpretation of the data to develop themes that would lead to an understanding of the meaning of the case. The selection of this design followed the rationale that the concept drives the research, and that the study's purpose drives the analysis (Patton, 2002). The research questions were open ended and formed to elicit specific answers from eight to 12 rural civic leaders in four Midwestern states. Those answers provided varying reasons for noncompliance with

emergency preparedness guidelines that were developed to enhance the safety and security of communities (Creswell, 2013). However, lack of funding was likely to be offered as the primary reason for noncompliance with federal preparedness guidelines based on an assessment of threat, risk, vulnerability, and population in a given community. As such, the levels of threat, risk, vulnerability, and population varied within each study site, but regardless of funding, it was still important to determine the particular reasons for noncompliance at each of the studied sites. The research findings provided a view of the noncompliance problem in the studied sites from a regional perspective.

Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Emergency Management Defined

Given the widespread use and misuse of terminology in politics and the media, for the purposes of this study, it is important to define the meanings of certain terms that are commonly used within the disciplines of homeland security and emergency management, such as *terrorism, antiterrorism,* and *counterterrorism*, as well as to clarify the roles they play in the disciplines of homeland security and emergency management.

Terrorism has many usable definitions, and its meaning often depends on what federal agency is defining the term. Regardless of their individual definitions, they are all based on the federal law, which is codified as follows:

> Title 22, of the U.S. Code, Section 2656 (d) defines terrorism as the premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. International terrorism involves citizens or the territory of more than one country.

> Terrorist groups are groups or sub-groups that practice international terrorism. (White, 2006, p. 6)

Antiterrorism can be said to emerge from an understanding of, and considered responses to, terrorism and therefore includes those measures designed to protect populations and infrastructure from terrorist acts. By its nature and design, antiterrorism is a defensive measure or series of measures intended to reduce the vulnerability of possible targets to such acts. These defensive measures often include limited response and containment capability by DHS or FBI officials (DOD, 2007). Conversely, counterterrorism can also refer to offensive strategies intended to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to acts of terrorism (White House, 2011). These offensive measures can be established strategies designed to deny terrorists opportunities to carry out their tactics (Department of Defense [DOD], 2007).

Curiously, the Homeland Security Act of 2002 does not contain a specific definition of *homeland security*. However, the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* of 2002 defined homeland security as "concerted national efforts to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, to reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, minimize the damage, and recover from attacksthat do occur" (Office of Homeland Security [OHS], 2002, p. 2). This, however, is not so much a definition as it is a strategy. As comprised, the enterprise of homeland security is difficult to define because of its many facets, of which emergency management is but one (Bellavita, 2010; Reese, 2013).

The discipline of *emergency management* is simpler to define, due not just to its founding in policy statements, but also to the articulated principles that guide the process.

Simply defined, emergency management is the discipline in which practitioners identify and assess risk and develop strategies to avoid that risk. The federal government plays a key role in the process when state and local jurisdictions are unable to deal with a disaster because its scope overwhelms available resources. In summary, emergency management is the discipline that deals with the identification and analysis of public hazards, assesses the public's mitigation of and preparedness for that risk, and coordinates the resources to respond and recover from natural or manmade disasters (Bullock, Haddow, Coppola, & Yeletaysi, 2009, p. 2).

The External Threat Defined

Al-Qaeda, which is Arabic for "the base," was established by Osama bin-Laden in 1988 for Arabs who fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union, whose troops invaded that country to support a faltering procommunist government. Once the jihadists succeeded in expelling the Soviet forces, bin-Laden sought other goals through which he could use his army of followers. Among his developed goals were to expel all Westerners and nonbelievers from Muslim countries, fighting the United States and its allies, and overthrowing Muslim governments deemed apostate or nonIslamic (Gunaratna, 2003). Al-Qaeda's ultimate goal, however, remains the establishment of a Pan-Islamic Caliphate based on Sharia law that extends from the Iberian Peninsula to the Philippine Archipelago. This is the geographical area that comprised the Empire of Islam during its peak of conquest between the 7th and 11th centuries (Karsh, 2006; O'Connor, 2009).

Psychologists such as Post (2004) and Victoroff (2005) have observed that although terrorists tend to form a heterogeneous group, there are some common traits

among substate group members. For example, they hold extreme opinions and emotions regarding their belief systems. Terrorists are driven by personal stakes such as perceived oppression, persecution, or humiliation at the hands of identified governments. In addition, they seem to exhibit a low level of cognitive flexibility, which includes low tolerance for ambiguity, distaste for complexity, and disregard for multiple layers of reality that lead to a mistaken sense of causality and a need to blame others. Finally, terrorists harbor a capacity to suppress all moral constraints against harming innocents due to acquired, individual, or group influences. Terrorists' belief system allows them to constrain individual morals as long as they believe that they are doing God's work (Mahan & Griset, 2008; O'Connor, 2009).

The Internal Threat Defined

Just as dangerous as the threats posed by foreign nonstate actors, are those posed by homegrown terrorists. Americans were first introduced to international terrorism in the early 1970s, but it was not until the early 1980s that terrorists began to produce a rising number of victims in the United States. Although the overwhelming number of bombings and shootings were single-issue terrorist acts and criminal vendetta shootings, those incidents involved criminal low-level activity that still served to capture public attention and teach the lesson that terrorism is not just something that happens somewhere else. A general typology of domestic terrorist groups operating at the time included White leftists, Black militants, and right-wing extremists. In 2002, an FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) arrested six suspects in Buffalo, New York, for supporting known jihadists. This incident was labeled as domestic terrorism because it occurred in

the US (White, 2006). In contrast, the 9/11 attacks were classified as international terrorism because of their origin outside the US. White leftist and Black militant groups such as the Weathermen and the Black Panthers were driven by a revolutionary ideology and the aim of changing political policy through direct threats against the central government. They tended to embrace Marxism, target the economic status quo, select symbolic targets of capitalism, and be based in urban areas. By 1989, these groups had been eradicated by law enforcement through penetration, conviction, and imprisonment (White, 2006). White right-wing extremist groups such as the Aryan Nation, Christian Identity, and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) are antigovernment, anti-Marxist, and very religious. Their purpose is to defend the status quo, or return to an earlier period. Their common belief is that the Bible will guide their actions, and a gun will defend those actions. These groups support the economic system but not the concept of distributing the nation's wealth. They prefer to establish bases in rural areas and focus their attacks on symbols of federal and state government authority. Their political beliefs accept only the county sheriff as the legal authority, and their social views reflect anti-Semitic, anti-Black, anti-Catholic, and anti-minority sentiments (White, 2006). Unlike left-wing groups of the 1980s, right-wing extremist groups prevail to this day as neo-Nazis, Skinheads, Survivalists, Christian Patriots, Posse Comitatus, the New Order, Militias, and perpetrators of "Hate" crimes. Although these groups' ideologies may differ, they tend to employ the same tactics with the use of arson, bombs, and firearms. What is important to understand about these internal and external threats is that they are ever present in America's urban and rural areas (Doak et al., 2014; Piddock, 2014).

Homeland Security Strategies in the Post-9/11 Era

Among the George W. Bush Administration's immediate domestic reactions to the 9/11 attacks were implementation of the USA Patriot Act of 2001, which provided U.S. intelligence and federal law enforcement agencies with enhanced authority to conduct investigations of suspected terrorist activity; and implementation of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, whose provisions created the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (Bullock et al., 2009; McEntire, 2009). In international affairs, on October 7, 2001, President Bush, with consent from Congress as required by the War Powers Resolution of 1973, ordered the invasion of Afghanistan after U.S. intelligence advisors determined that the architect of the 9/11 attacks was al-Qaeda leader Osama bin-Laden, who was being provided a safe haven by the Taliban, a terrorist organization controlling the government of that country at the time. The George W. Bush Administration promoted the invasion of Afghanistan as a war of necessity. The public was informed that the reason for the invasion was to capture bin Laden, dismantle al-Qaeda, and remove its safe haven by eliminating the Taliban. During the following 2 years, the Taliban was diminished as a military threat, and although many members of the al-Qaeda leadership were killed, bin-Laden and his second in command, Ayman Zawahiri, were able to escape into Pakistan due to a change of focus by the Bush Administration (Kamien, 2006; Mahan & Griset, 2008; Woerner, 2013).

In March 2003, as the DHS was becoming operational, the George W. Bush Administration shifted military forces from the war in Afghanistan to be used in the invasion of Iraq. The reasons provided to the world for the invasion of Iraq were to keep

Saddam Hussein from acquiring or building a nuclear weapon and to prevent Iraq from becoming a future base for terrorist attacks against the US and its Western allies. Critics of the George W. Bush Administration, however, have pointed out that because no U.S. interests were being directly threatened, and no evidence of nuclear production was revealed, the invasion of Iraq was one of choice because it did not meet the requirements of a just war under international law. In spite of its false premise, the Iraq war did not end until December 2011, following the loss of thousands of American and allied lives, at a cost of over a trillion dollars in the 8-year period. The legacy of the Iraq war is that political issues were not resolved and Iraq is again on the verge of a civil war between Sunni and Shiite factions due to divisions underscored by centuries of sectarian violence (Crowley, 2014; De Luce, 2014).

In a recent statement regarding the war in Afghanistan, President Barack Obama announced that it would end for the US in December 2014. The president signaled that with the killing of Osama bin-Laden in May 2011, and the training of that nation's security forces to control a potentially resurgent Taliban, there was no justification for the continued presence of U.S. military forces in that country beyond an advisory role, and then only if requested by the host country (Borosage, 2014; Crowley, 2014; De Luce, 2014). However, following an agreement signed in December 2014 between President Barack Obama and Afghanistan's newly elected President, Ashraf Ghani, the US will continue to maintain a force of 10,000 troops in that country for another 2 years, with these troops serving primarily in support and training roles. To some observers, President Obama's decision to authorize a more active role for the remaining U.S. forces suggested

a lingering concern about the Afghan army's ability to fight. The agreement also authorizes the U.S. forces remaining in that country to carry out military operations against al-Qaeda and Taliban targets (O'Donnell, 2014).

Assumptions

However scientific or objective it may be, any attempted study is likely to be grounded on a particular researcher's assumptions, which are usually the byproducts of ingrained socialization, personal observations, education, and experience, all of which serve to form the researcher's specific set of core beliefs and overall worldview. Whether individually accepted as aligned paradigms that are proven, assumptions are difficult to leave at the door before commencing research on a scientific research project. A researcher benefits from open recognition of these personal philosophies to ensure that the study is not influenced in a way that prevents a valid outcome. In this study, my personal assumptions were based on my observations, experience, and formal training, which led me to the original idea that developed into my study's premise (Simon, 2011). In turn, that original idea helped form the research problem, as well as the research questions and how the information was to be sought to answer those questions (Patton, 2002). One such assumption was that I would employ the logic of inductive reasoning while studying the topic in context to generate an outcome. In the end, this process allowed me to describe my study findings in detail, just as the research questions drove my field experiences (Creswell, 2013).

Assumptions are not always within a researcher's control but should be used to guide the study's purpose when they are recognized (Creswell, 2013). However, simply

recognizing assumptions is not sufficient to justify their probable truth. Appropriate action must be taken to address them; otherwise, the study may not progress as originally planned (Simon, 2011). For example, an assumption brought to this study was based on the concern that rural civic leaders would not answer the interview questions honestly in order to avert blame for lack of compliance with implementation of national emergency preparedness strategies if a disaster did strike their rural or small town community.

Having recognized this assumption, I determined that an expressed promise of confidentiality and anonymity would more likely preserve the validity of their responses and thus the integrity of the study (Creswell, 2013). Another assumption recognized in this study was that some civic leaders in communities without implemented emergency preparedness plans might not have been able to develop those safety and security strategies for valid reasons. They might have been noncompliant not necessarily because they did not care about their residents, but because they actually lacked the necessary funding, personnel, equipment, and/or training to implement any preparedness guidelines. I also assumed that rural residents should not be treated differently than large city dwellers simply because of their choice of habitat. In applied research, it is assumed that societal problems can be understood and solved with knowledge. In action research, it is assumed that people in certain settings can solve problems by studying themselves. In summary, during the literature review, I examined ideas, likely theories, methods, and various interpretations as an evaluator. Throughout this study, I questioned the validity, reliability, and generalizability of my evaluation, as well as the hidden assumptions that surrounded my data collection efforts (Patton, 2002).

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are the characteristics that tend to limit the scope and define the boundaries of a study (Simon, 2011). Unlike assumptions, however, where the researcher may only have some control, or study limitations, where the researcher has no control, a study's delimitations and scope are in a researcher's control. This is so because a study's characteristics include the choice of objectives, the research questions, its theoretical perspectives, the population selected, and the method of inquiry chosen to examine the problem. From the initial abstract idea to the study methodology, findings, and analysis, delimitations work to set a boundary on what the research questions will be able to determine (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

For this study, I chose to pursue my conceptual idea, which was that disparities exist between the nation's urban and rural areas in how post-9/11 emergency preparedness strategies are being implemented. This idea was only partially confirmed by limited available literature. In addition, the findings of those few studies were determined to be inconclusive and inconsistent. The identified problem was followed by the aligned theory of good governance and mutual assistance during times of need (Montoya, 2011; Putnam, 2000). To collect the information required by the research questions, I determined who the selected participants should be based on the professions and positions that they held in their respective rural communities (Creswell, 2013). Finally, I decided to delimit my study to a geographical four-state area in the nation's Midwest (Simon, 2011). Even with these imposed delimitations, I remain optimistic that the study findings will prove useful in filling the current literature gap and providing potential

remedies that may be applicable to rural communities in other states (Patton, 2002; Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

Limitations of the Study

Limitations are those variables that will always be out of a researcher's control and are readily evident in all components of the dissertation process. For example, if a researcher's problem requires an investigation of only a single facet of the national preparedness guidelines as they apply to rural communities, then the information that is collected will only be as good as the questions being asked. In this case, the findings may not be applicable to medium-size or larger metropolitan areas, and if the study calls for the purposeful sampling of preselected civic officials, then validity of the findings becomes dependent on the truthfulness of their responses. In addition, the findings may be limited to only those rural towns and communities to which the study's findings may be generalized (Simon, 2011). This study was limited by a specific geographical area because it would have been impractical to examine the entire 97.5% of land area the U.S. Census Bureau has classified as rural (US Census Bureau, 2010). This land area is home for approximately 55 million people, or 18 % of the entire U.S. population (National League of Cities [NLC], 2014; US Census Bureau, 2010). An evident limitation of the dissertation process is that a study usually reflects only a review of the stated problem during the short period of its examination (Simon, 2011).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this qualitative case study resided in the aim of discovering and describing the reasons why an undetermined number of rural communities in the

Midwest were not complying with implementation of the 2009 *National Preparedness Guidelines* (Bryant, 2009; DHS, 2009; Stigler, 2010). The study's findings may also apply to rural communities in other U.S. states and territories. The issued *National Preparedness Guidelines* provide strategies intended to help rural communities develop security plans that will prepare them to respond to, recover from, and mitigate against, manmade or natural disasters (DHS, 2009). A prevailing perception in the field of homeland security and emergency management is that the nation's safety net, even following the presidential directive of 2003, is still in a state of mixed compliance, with most urban jurisdictions complying whereas leaders in rural communities do not seem to know what their duties and responsibilities are in regard to the implementation of emergency preparedness measures in their jurisdictions (Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Oliver, 2007, 2009). This study was designed to collect data from identified civic leaders that were analyzed and interpreted to gain an understanding of the factors influencing noncompliance in some areas of the nation's rural regions and not in others (National Association of Development Organizations [NADO], 2005). Intended practical contributions of the study were to advance knowledge about the subject, to provide guidance to homeland security officials and emergency managers in affected states, and to offer instructional value to local and rural civic leaders, who may use the study's findings for comparison with their current programs or simply use them to develop new and appropriate strategies for their rural communities.

Humankind has suffered terrorism in one form or another for thousands of years (Chaliand & Blin, 2007), and although militant Islamic terrorism has only been practiced

by certain Middle East groups for the past 35 years (Mahan & Griset, 2009; McEntire, 2009), it is likely to continue until the current generation of terrorists is eliminated, educated, or provided some economic, social, or political concessions (Crenshaw, 2005; Hoffman, 2006). Terrorism experts Crenshaw and Hoffman have argued that terrorists simply want a seat at the policy-making table, while others counter that the current strain of terrorists wants access to the table only to blow it up. In either case, it seems unwise for concerned rural civic leaders to ignore the continuing threat from terrorism, and too dangerous for them to turn their backs on the threat it poses to all the nation communities, regardless of size (Giblin, Schafer, & Burruss, 2009).

Implications for Social Change

This study was purposeful not only because it addressed an under researched area that the available literature did not fully explain (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010), but also because it explored the implications that noncompliance with the DHS preparedness guidelines might have for national security and public safety issues (DHS, 2009). Results of the study will be shared with the participating communities, as well as with other local, county, state, and federal emergency planners for use as a basis for comparison. Other contributions likely to derive from the study's results include enhanced knowledge of the underlying forces that currently resist the concept of compliance (Bryant, 2009; Putnam, 2000). Several other implications for social change may result from addressing a problem that concerns national security and the status of rural public safety, in that the study may prompt the development of new policies or studies (DHS, 2009). As long as humankind has to deal

with earth, wind, fire, and rain, the nation will experience some form of natural disaster (Pfeiffer, 2014). And as long as the current strain of terrorist activity remains a threat, Americans will continue to see acts of terrorism committed in civilized settings. In a more peaceful world, preparedness guidelines would likely not be necessary, but in the currently conflicted international environment, they have become a necessity for all of the nation's communities, urban and rural (Giblin, Schafer, & Burruss, 2009).

Summary

The intent of *Chapter 1* was to describe the study's focus; to introduce the problem as it developed following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; and to state the central government's responsibility to serve and to protect Americans from the continuing threat of terrorism. This description was followed by an explanation of the strategies developed to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against all natural or manmade hazards (DHS, 2009). Through description of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the chapter established the need for today's homeland security strategies to counter the continued threat of terrorism (Piddock, 2014). This chapter also defined related operational terms, as well as the continuing problem of noncompliance with nationally issued preparedness measures in some rural communities (Bryant, 2009; McEntire, 2009). Definitions were followed by discussion of the study's purpose, as well as its nature, scope, limitations, significance, and implications for social change (Simon, 2011; Yin, 2014). In summary, this chapter served as an introduction to the safety and security problems that the nation's emergency managers face today (McEntire, 2009; O'Connor, 2009). In addition to providing background on the problem and stating its significance to

the homeland, this chapter set the foundation for a more in-depth exploration of the causal reasons for the prevailing safety and security issues confronting rural America. The chapter also described the considerable efforts U.S. counterterrorism experts and emergency managers have made to prevent future terrorist attacks on the homeland, as well as to prepare for and recover from natural disasters effectively (Bullock et al., 2009; Haddow et al., 2011). Although emergency preparedness has become a less urgent matter for some observers in the years since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, a report by the Heritage Foundation reminds counterterrorism experts as well as the public that the threat continues, by recounting 60 terrorist plots that have been thwarted since the initial 9/11 attacks (Piddock, 2014; Zuckerman et al., 2013). An objective observer can only speculate as to when committed terrorists will abandon their efforts to attack hardened targets in urban centers, and instead turn their attention toward unprotected rural areas. In *Chapter 2,* I analyze, synthesize, and assess the available literature on the question of homeland security in rural America.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The 9/11 attacks served to introduce the concept and probable permanence of what Americans have now come to understand as *homeland security*, by exposing the vulnerability of a free and open society to foreign and domestic threats (Piddock, 2014). Although it can be assumed that the American illusion of invulnerability existed prior to September 11, 2001, the thought that a rational foreign government would ever consider exploiting it did not seem to occur to this nation's leaders at the time (Piddock, 2014). History has also shown that American political leaders did not give much thought to the possibility that a group of irrational nonstate actors would attempt such a bold operation. Upon reflection, the 9/11 attacks illuminated the confliction of a national sense of security based on illusion, with an act designed to produce insecurity, driven by the seemingly delusional goal of reviving a long-lost Islamic empire (Gunaratna, 2003; Karsh, 2006; Piddock, 2014). In spite of its organizational reach in 2001, core al-Qaeda was unable to achieve that goal. In June 2014, however, a former al-Qaeda affiliate in Iraq declared itself to be a worldwide Caliphate and renamed itself the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Although the Obama Administration, the United Nations, and some news organizations refer to the same terrorist group as ISIL, which stands for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the group decided to rename itself the Islamic State during the same period (Sanchez, 2015).

Understanding the threat to the homeland in general and to the nation's small towns and rural communities in particular requires an understanding of the ideological

motivations behind terrorism (FEMA, 2004), as well as the groups that pose that threat by adopting those ideologies. Implications for the nation's adaptation toward homeland security are primarily derived from public unease regarding the threat of terrorism, which was of little concern before the 9/11 attacks but is now one of five major federal law enforcement issues facing the country today. The other four are drug trafficking, firearms trafficking, financial fraud, and human trafficking (Department of Justice [DOJ], 2011). Americans now agree that the central government should address these problems with all the resources at its disposal (PEW, 2013; TIME, CNN/ORC Poll, 2013).

Almost immediately after the 9/11 attacks, homeland security assumed a new meaning following the actions of the George W. Bush Administration and Congress. The rush to assess and control damage was not the product of forethought, but a reaction to the fear of a follow-up attack. In the wake of the initial attacks, Congress and the Bush Administration were propelled to act quickly in efforts to develop strategies that were specifically designed to prevent any follow-up attack. They acted without the benefit of knowing when or where such an attack might occur, but they did direct federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies to initiate investigations with the purpose of identifying perpetrators of the attacks and bringing them to justice. The government's reaction was conducted in tandem with the invasion of Afghanistan, al-Qaeda's home base (Hashim, 2006).

The Afghanistan war continued even after the killing of Osama bin-Laden, the chief architect of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Similarly, on the domestic front, the concept of homeland security remains an evolving process. Much has been

written about the causes and reasons for the 9/11 attacks, along with underlying questions of how U.S. joint internal security systems allowed them to happen. As in most passing events of this nature, the view always seems to be clearer in retrospect. In this study, I was peripherally concerned with the consequences of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars; and more in the legacy of militant Islamic ideology adopted by Islamic groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which have been spawned by the now diminished al-Qaeda central organization that is still operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Crowley, M. 2014; Crowley, P. J. 2013; O'Donnell, 2014). This study's intent was to examine the levels of implementation of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in some of the nation's rural communities and small towns following the review of available literature that specifically addressed the subject of preparedness for natural and manmade disasters in those remote areas (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010).

In spite of the threats that natural and manmade disasters continue to pose to the nation's communities, the question of homeland security for all rural communities and small towns remains unanswered. In light of this unanswered question, I sought to determine what valid rationales prevailed to explain why a majority of the nation's communities had adopted the *National Preparedness Guidelines* issued in 2005 and 2009 (DHS, 2009) whereas many rural areas in the Midwest had not (Bryant, 2009; Caruson & MacManus, 2005). The prevailing condition of inconsistent compliance has created two related social problems. First, it has affected national security by creating a gap in the nation's antiterrorism network by failing to protect critical infrastructure in rural areas.

Additionally, it has threatened public safety in Midwestern communities where local leaders decided not to implement any new safety and security measures following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The problem was identified in five previous studies, which resulted in five different findings concerning rationales for noncompliance (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010).

The purpose of this case study was to further explore and describe the rationales offered by rural civic leaders for noncompliance in previous studies, as well as to compare their dependability and confirmability with those provided by participants in the Midwestern rural areas that were studied. The *National Preparedness Guidelines*, which were first issued in 2005, then revised and reissued in 2009, outline strategies intended to help rural communities develop and implement programs that will prepare them for effective response to and recovery from manmade or natural disasters (DHS, 2009). This study addressed an under-researched social problem and, by extension, explored the social implications that continued noncompliance may have for national security and public safety. The available literature served to establish the relevance of the identified problem. For example, studies by Bryant (2009) and Caruson and MacManus (2005) listed the many challenges of implementing emergency management strategies in small towns and rural communities, emphasizing their historical lack of compliance with other national programs and implying a degree of separation from rural and national center direction. Bryant's study addressed the practice of separation in rural communities, which the U.S. Census Bureau (2010) describes as the physical distance between households,

and drew a relationship between the theory of social capital as defined by Putnam (2000) and the concept of emergency management as practiced in rural communities. This relationship also served to illustrate what is known about the problem in rural areas, but left unknown the common reasons for noncompliance in the rural communities that were previously studied. What I intended to do in this study, then, was to explore that question further in order to arrive at a common understanding of those reasons.

The underlying consequences of the U.S. military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq are that although one provided Americans with a sense of justice following the death of Osama bin-Laden, both seem to have created a proliferation of terrorist off-shoots that embrace the al-Qaeda ideology. That ideology is driven by the desire of ISIL to establish an Islamic Caliphate in the Middle East based on Sharia Islamic law (Kamien, 2006; Karsh, 2006; Sanchez, 2015). This was Osama bin-Laden's and al-Qaeda's initial and continuing goal in other areas of operation within the Middle East and Africa (Gunaratna, 2003). After the expulsion of Soviet forces from Afghanistan by the Taliban in 1989, al-Qaeda and its off-shoots considered the US the main obstacle to achieving their stated goal. In addition to their primary goal, militant Islamists have demanded that all U.S. troops be removed from what they consider sacred Muslim land, that apostate leaders of Muslim countries be eliminated, and that the Jewish state of Israel be expelled from Palestinian lands (Kamien, 2006). Because none of those goals have been realized, Islamic jihad is likely to continue for the foreseeable future unless and until the current generation of militants is captured, killed, or pacified through education or economic assistance (O'Connor, 2009; Woerner, 2013).

The events of September 11, 2001 were a manifestation of al-Qaeda's held intent. This prompted the central government to develop and implement strategies designed to deter, detect, and disrupt terrorist attacks against the homeland (Bullock et al., 2009). Just as the foregoing background information has served to provide a chronology of the events that led to the necessity for homeland security, it is just as important to understand the evolution of emergency management in America as it relates to external and internal threats. Thus, it should be understood that homeland security is the direct result of terrorist threat recognition and its applicability to domestic manmade or natural disasters (Doak et al., 2014; McEntire, 2009). Since 1997, the U.S. Department of State has identified and listed 62 groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs). Most of those terrorist groups have claimed to be Islamic based (Department of State [DOS], 2013a). However, only a small number of those groups are considered direct threats to the homeland or to U.S. interests abroad (DOS, 2013a; Piddock, 2015). The groups that do pose a direct threat to U.S. interests are Hamas, Hezbollah, al-Qaeda in Afghanistan (AQ), al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM), al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which broke away from core al-Qaeda in 2014 and renamed itself the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). A related group operating in Syria is the al-Nusrah Front, which has merged with ISIS (DOS, 2013b; Sanchez, 2015). Recently, al-Shabaab, an al-Qaeda-linked terrorist group that operates in Sudan and Somalia, has urged Muslims throughout the world to attack shopping malls in the US, Canada, Great Britain, and other Western countries just as that group did in Nairobi, Kenya in 2013 (DOS, 2013c; Meldrum, 2015).

Literature Search Strategy

Much effort was expended on the search for pertinent studies on the status of homeland security and emergency management in rural America following the issuance of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in 2005 and 2008 (DHS, 2009). Among the Walden University Library sites searched were Academic Search Premier, American Constitution Society for Law and Policy, *American Journal of Political Science,* Criminal Justice Policy Review, *Journal of Criminal Justice and Behavior,* National Interest Online, *Political Research Quarterly, Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice, Journal of Conflict Resolution,* and the ProQuest Dissertation and Thesis Database. The Walden Homeland Security Digital Library (HSDL) database provided only one source that originated from a graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School of Homeland Defense and Security (HLDS). This source was one of the five studies I was able to locate during the literature search that supported my initial hypothesis that noncompliance in rural America was likely due not only to a lack of resources, but also to remoteness and perceptions of separation (Stigler, 2010). Those studies helped me to gain an understanding of the rationales for that noncompliance and provided a basis for comparison of those rationales with those developed in this study. As a result of finding few general sources and no dissertations on the topic of inquiry in the Walden Library databases, it was necessary to use other sites such Google Scholar and rely heavily on textbooks, academic articles, and government documents to support my initial concept. These combined sources helped me understand the probable reasons for the problem of noncompliance and provided a sense of direction on how to address the problem. Among the government sources relied upon

for pertinent information regarding threats to the homeland, along with reactive and proactive strategies to confront those threats, were the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (HLDS), and the Homeland Security Digital Library (HSDL).

Key search terms used to locate pertinent literature regarding the topic of inquiry included *terrorism*, *antiterrorism*, *counterterrorism*, *homeland defense*, *homeland security*, *emergency management*, and related theories. These terms were also used in combination with *rural areas* or *communities* and interchangeably in Walden's Library, as well as in the Internet databases queried. I considered it fortunate that each of the five studies located provided a basis for a developed research question. Despite the paucity of pertinent literature regarding the subject of inquiry, I was able to structure the study to describe the problem, explain its contradiction to compliant rural areas, and welcome the opportunity to generalize findings in noncompliant communities to other regional rural areas, which may serve to enhance national security and rural public safety.

Literature Related to Theoretical Foundation

Theory frames how individuals view their social world, whether they do so inductively or deductively. Because a theory's primary purpose is to explain, my study was to focus on a theoretical explanation for noncompliance or compliance with the implementation of emergency preparedness measures in rural communities, which would inform me about the reason why either process is occurring. The theoretical foundation

that aligned with my study was social capital as advanced by Putnam (2000). Social capital theory is based on the concept that community cohesion and stability rest on a firmer foundation when residents establish networks of exchange that promote mutual trust through cooperation, collaboration, and communication. The more common community exchanges and networks become, the healthier a community becomes, both politically and socially. The underlying assumption, then, is that a community that cultivates and nurtures the "civic virtues" of social capital will be healthier in all ways, as opposed to one that does not (Putnam, 2000, p. 7).

For much of the past decade, experts in the fields of homeland security and emergency management have made efforts to develop theories to guide these disciplines without success (Bellavita, 2010; McEntire, 2004; Reese, 2013). The consensus among experts is that homeland security is a multifaceted enterprise involving many disciplines, of which emergency management is one (Reese, 2013). Even when considered separately from homeland security, emergency management incorporates multiple principles and disciplines involving players from first responders to political leaders, which have been difficult to isolate into one common theory (McEntire, 2004). Experts at the Naval Postgraduate School, North Texas University, Eastern Kentucky University, and the U.S. Congressional Research Service have found that the theory of social capital provides a related and workable theoretical base that is applicable to all communities, but particularly to rural areas (Bellavita, 2010; McEntire, 2004; Reese, 2013). The concept of community governance has been present since early Americans began living in small communities for the necessary reason of survival that is made possible by mutual aid

under various conditions (Putnam, 2000). Historically, this mutual aid was formed on the basis of cooperation, reciprocity, and trust. Although other contemporary theorists such as Bourdieu (1983-1989), Coleman (1986-1990), and Fukuyama (1995) have measured success in education, social class inequalities, and economics through the application of social capital, it was Putnam (1995-2004) who, writing from a political perspective, drew a relationship between social capital and community cohesion (Smith, 2001-2009).

The selection of this theory was made on the basis of its applicability to the study and the absence of any other theory that was specifically developed for this topic of inquiry. In addition, social capital theory made sense in terms of its history, its simple application, and practice. Social capital theory relates to the present investigation of the question of compliance with nationally directed emergency preparedness measures in rural communities. The value of social capital becomes more meaningful when a local leader considers the challenges of applying such emergency measures in remote and separated rural communities where cohesion based on cooperation, reciprocity, and trust is essential to a community's general welfare and development (Bryant, 2009; Putnam, 2000). Rural emergency managers, when designated as such, must therefore rely on volunteerism, limited funding, limited training, and often inadequate equipment to meet the challenges posed by seasonal natural disasters or potential manmade incidents. Among other objectives, this study determined the extent to which the practice of social capital in a rural community affected the overall welfare of that studied community. To that end, the research questions were structured to elicit responses from participants that reflected the general health of the community they represented.

The previously cited sources representing topical peer reviewed literature were journal articles published by Marion and Cronin (2009) who found that 57 of Ohio's 260 small town and rural police chiefs had not established any new security measures since the 9/11 attacks due to a lack of funding. That same year Oliver (2009) contended in his study that the primary reasons for noncompliance in many of the nation's rural towns and communities were due to local civic leaders' lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the post-9/11 era. Oliver's contention seemed to be based on the rationales offered by that study's participants that although added responsibility had been assigned to them, it came with no sense of direction or added resources. Contemporary researchers Chenoweth and Clarke (2010) argued that the primary reason for a general lack of compliance with emergency preparedness guidelines in rural areas was the result of a governance decision made by state and urban leaders more interested in protecting their densely populated metropolitan centers than adjoining less populated rural areas. Chenoweth and Clarke argued that federal resources allocated to the states were not being distributed evenly by state and urban leaders apparently predisposed to protecting their particular jurisdictions. A more recent study by Stigler (2010) concluded that a lack of resources might not be the primary reason for noncompliance with implementation of the national guidelines in Wisconsin's small towns and rural communities. Following field work that allowed him contact with civic leaders in the state's rural areas, Stigler's study added that noncompliance in those remote areas may not be due to a lack of resources, but more likely to regional remoteness and separation. Although limited, the existing literature provided the essence of the research questions by articulating what is known

about the problem. What this literature did not provide were consistent reasons for noncompliance, thus setting the foundation for this study, which focused on exploring the reasons and rationales for noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* (DHS, 2009).

Bryant's (2009) in-depth study in Missouri identified the challenges of emergency management in rural areas as resource limitations, regional separation and remoteness, a low population density, and a general lack of communication. Those findings lent credence to the reasons cited in her colleagues' studies, but as a group they failed to explain why some states had successfully implemented emergency preparedness strategies in their rural communities and others had not (FDEM, 2008-2013). Bryant explained that resource limitations included a lack of available human, financial, cultural, political, and social capital. Human capital, she argued, is limited in rural areas due historically to urbanization and decades-long declines in population as a result of young educated people moving to urban areas seeking better job opportunities. Bryant added that financial capital was usually concentrated in aging rural populations, and lost when urban heirs inherited and moved those assets. She concluded that these declines in human and financial capital tend to limit the preservation of rural culture, as well as the general development of political and social capital. Chenoweth and Clarke (2010) further argued that the lack of political will in a small rural town was evident in instances of unequal access to the basic resources necessary to maintain a vibrant community. The principles of social capital theory thus become essential to the social cohesion and political health of rural communities when it is necessary to meet the challenges of emergency

management. Similar findings were reported earlier by Caruson and MacManus (2005) in their study of Florida's homeland security preparedness issues prior to that state's adoption and implementation of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* (DHS, 2009; FDEM, 2008-2013).

The National League of Cities (NLC, 2013) defined rurality by the distance between residents, or separation and remoteness. During disasters, this remoteness results in longer response times, less favorable outcomes for residents in need of emergency attention, and longer periods of recovery due to the cost ratio of allocating resources to residents served. Based on this economic equation, urban centers are served first. Federal and state funding programs take into consideration population density when allocating funds; as a result, densely populated areas receive more funds for recovery and mitigation purposes. The consequence for rural areas is that recovery following disasters is usually addressed reactively instead of proactively. In those instances, limited local financial capital will be spent on an unanticipated disaster response, thus requiring the marshaling of local social capital to facilitate recovery after an event; with little human or financial capital left to spend on mitigation. Preparedness activities are also difficult to fund when populations are small and spread out, thus making it difficult to alert and educate remote households about an impending incident. Rural communities must therefore rely on radio, television, or telephone messaging to receive such impending disaster information timely (Caruson & MacManus, 2005; Giblin, Schaefer, & Burruss, 2009).

In efforts to improve their emergency preparedness standards, some small town and rural communities have sent their emergency services volunteers to free federal or

state training programs, only to find that the training materials and lessons reflected the meeting of urban needs which were based on urban resources. This was discovered after volunteers had attended training sessions at their own expense. While at the training site, they became part of training scenarios that did not test rural incidents, that also assumed equipment and personnel capabilities that were unrealistic in rural areas, and involved mass casualties, or acts of terrorism not common in their small towns. The assumption by trainers appears to be that rural emergency managers are smaller versions of their urban counterparts. The reality is that rural emergency managers are faced with challenges that are unfamiliar to their urban counterparts (Giblin et al., 2009). For those reasons, rural communities must rely on trust and social capital (Putnam, 2000). They need support from their volunteers, as well as training and equipment that is tailored to their needs. Yet, federal government guidelines require training and preparation for hazards that may never occur in rural areas. This condition supports the argument that local hazards and needs should dictate local resource allocation. To resolve this issue there will have to be a better understanding by federal and state agencies of the realities facing rural emergency managers (Bryant, 2009; Caruson & MacManus, 2005; FDEM, 2008-2013).

However accurate the foregoing findings were in generalizing the challenges of establishing emergency preparedness measures in rural communities, they did not answer the question of why some states had included rural communities in their emergency preparedness plans, and others had not. Those previous studies did, however, provide an introduction to the relationship between social capital principles and their value to rural communities in meeting their emergency management challenges (Bryant, 2009; Caruson

& MacManus, 2005; Giblin et al., 2009). In describing social capital theory, Putnam presented that society's bonds tend to break down when people stop supporting one another through participation in common social and political activities. Putnam's social capital theory focused on the various aspects of social relations, which include local norms, values, networks, and the roles they play in community cohesion. To Putnam, community is central to his theory of social capital, which he related to civic virtue, or a network of reciprocal social relations that included political participation and being active in local associations. These social relations, he argued, tend to form community ties, as well as develop tolerance and the trust of others. Putnam went on to explain how social capital has a positive effect on educational performance, public health, crime rates, race relations, economic productivity, community development, and even human happiness. Putnam offered that these are some of the virtues that benefit communities when they connect with friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

Throughout his work, Putnam (2000) argued that a civic community is usually characterized by the degree of civic engagement, political equality, solidarity, trust, tolerance, and the associational life it practices. To summarize the validity of his theory, academics, scholars, and government analysts throughout the nation are in consensus that interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit a strong social fabric (Reese, 2013). Absent any existing theories on homeland security or emergency management, some institutions have found a relational link between Putnam's social capital theory and emergency management. They base the link on the science of social institutions and relationships that develop structure and stimulate

interaction of collective behavior within a community for the common good, which includes safety and security (Bellavita, 2012; McEntire, 2004). In qualitative studies, the link between the research literature, the research questions, and a theoretical relationship is not always self-evident. As a way of confirming this link, my field research determined that noncompliance or compliance with emergency preparedness measures within rural communities was due, in large part, to the degree of adopting and exercising of social capital principles (Putnam, 2000).

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

The few studies found that related to key concepts of this study were quantitative in nature, except for two which were qualitative case studies (Marion & Cronin, 2009; Stigler, 2010). The quantitative studies sought to confirm the hypotheses of preparedness noncompliance in rural communities within the states of Florida, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, and other unnamed Midwestern states through the use of survey instruments. Each of the quantitative studies (Caruson & MacManus, 2005; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Giblin, Schafer, & Burrus 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009) reported a different finding as a causal reason for noncompliance, which ranged from a lack of funding, training, personnel, and equipment, to a misunderstanding of roles in the post 9/11 era. Short of repeating those studies at the same sites, there was little evidence to confirm the validity of those findings. A mixed-methods study conducted by Pelfry (2009) applied that methodology to identify and assess areas of strengths and weaknesses regarding the application of emergency preparedness guidelines in local communities. Pelfrey used interviews, as well as surveys, to collect research data from local agency representatives in an unnamed

Midwestern state. The two qualitative case studies conducted by Marion and Cronin (2009) and Stigler (2010), reflected the most reliable findings. That was due to the researchers' fieldwork, which involved interviews and observations of participants and peers who were rural chiefs of police in the states of Ohio and Wisconsin. Those studies revealed the additional rationale of geographical separation and remoteness as a likely cause for noncompliance. The strengths derived from those studies were the basis for this study's research questions, which recognized a previous problem related to the issue of noncompliance in the studied communities. That recognized strengths, along with the stated willingness of local officials to adopt applicable preparedness guidelines in their rural communities, provided the basis for this study's research and interview questions. What those previous studies also articulated in common was a need for further study of this particular subject. Those same strengths, however, also revealed the weaknesses of those previous studies as reflected in their inconclusive and inconsistent findings, which served to justify the need for this study. What is known about those previous studies (Caruson & MacManus, 2005; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Giblin, Schafer, & Burrus, 2009; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Pelfrey, 2009; Stigler, 2010) is that the rationales for noncompliance varied from a lack of funding, equipment, and personnel, to remoteness, and local leadership not understanding their roles and responsibilities in the post 9/11 era. The previously reported conditions were critical to my determination of the type of approach for this inquiry, and why I believed that a qualitative case study would provide the most meaningful results (Yin, 2014).

A Brief History of U. S. Civil Defense and Homeland Security

Homeland Security Described and Defined

The phrase *"National Homeland Security Agency"* first appeared in a January 2001 report submitted by the 14-member Hart-Rudman Commission formed during the Bill Clinton Administration in 1998 (Bullock et al., 2009; Reese, 2013). The phrase *homeland security* not only serves to describe a nation's civilian security concept, but also its common purpose. *Homeland defense* refers to the military aspects of national security, and although assigned different missions the two functions normally work together in efforts to keep the nation safe and secure. Absent a statutory or regulatory definition, the meaning of the phrase must be derived from a variety of scholarly and legal sources. Foremost among the sources reviewed is the meaning stated by President George W. Bush in 2002 as contained in the *National Strategies for Homeland Security*, which define homeland security as a concerted national effort to prevent any terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, minimize damage, and help recover from attacks that may occur (Caudle & Yim, 2006; DHS, 2008b; Reese, 2013). The initial understanding of risk assurance between the central government and the states, which required local governments to assume a primary role in domestic security with the federal government assuming a secondary role, begin with the birth of the nation and continued throughout the 20th century. During that time, however, much confusion affected *Civil Defense* and emergency preparedness due to the lack of a single national operating plan. This organizational condition resulted in uncoordinated

responses from agencies with differing policies, leadership, and operating agendas (DHS, 2006).

Homeland Security 2001-Present

The civil defense philosophy continued throughout the Cold War, through the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, and after other attacks against US interests in East Africa and the Middle East (Ward et al., 2006). Immediately following the September 11, 2001 attacks, a significant change in the concept of homeland security took place as the phrase Civil Defense was displaced by the phrase *Homeland Security* (Haddow et al., 2011). Congressional legislation and executive orders enacted and issued after the 9/11 attacks led to implementation of strategies designed to protect the homeland with a more proactive concept. That new concept incorporated all aspects of national power, which included diplomatic, intelligence, federal, state, local, and tribal organizations, as well as the private sector which owns 85% of the nation's critical infrastructure (Bullock et al., 2009). In 2002 the U.S. military also assumed an expanded role in national security. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) was established under the direction of the Department of Defense (DOD) with the mission of homeland security, homeland defense, and civil support. NORTHCOM's primary mission is to defend the land, sea, and air approaches to the US from Alaska to Central America and surrounding water 500 nautical miles beyond those land areas (Haddow et al., 2011). NORTHCOM's duties are to deter, prevent and defeat threats, as well as and any type of aggression aimed at the US, its territories, and interests. For that purpose NORTHCOM has established and maintains quick reaction forces of highly trained Army and Marine Corps personnel

ready to respond to a range of potential threats. NORTHCOM'S authority is specified in Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution, which states in part that "the Congress shall provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States…and to call forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions" (Kozak, 2011, p. 47; U.S. Archives, 2011, p. 9). Except under certain conditions, and with limitations, the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 prohibits any U.S. military branches from becoming directly involved in law enforcement operations other than in logistical support. The Posse Comitatus Act excludes the U.S. Coast Guard, which serves as a subagency in the DHS, and the National Guard, which serves under a state governor's authority, unless mobilized by the president to maintain order during a national incident (Bullock et al., 2009; Haddow et al., 2011; Schertizing, 2009).

After the 9/11 attacks, the concept of homeland security no longer assumed a reactive response to natural or manmade disasters. Those attacks made homeland security a proactive concept to be carried out by first responders from different organizations, whose interests were national security, antiterrorism, counterterrorism, emergency preparedness and management, crime prevention and investigation, intelligence, strategic and tactical coordination, as well as threat mitigation and risk assessment (Kamien, 2006; Ward et al., 2006). This concept included the principle of balancing domestic safety and security with civil liberties, and public safety with freedom, an operational challenge that continues to this day (ACLU, 2009; DOJ, 2009). Liberal critics have complained that the current balance weighs more to safety and security than to civil liberties and freedom (ACLU, 2009).

Emergency Preparedness in the Post-9/11 Era

The most significant laws enacted in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, were the Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001; the USA Patriot Act of 2001; the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002; the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002; the Homeland Security Act of 2002; and the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness, and Response Act of 2002 (Bullock et al., 2009; Haddow et al., 2011). Of these laws the most controversial have been the USA Patriot Act, the establishment of the TSA and support of state-run, but DHS funded Fusion Centers (ACLU, 2011; Andino, 2008). In addition to granting new discretionary powers to the federal executive to immobilize any future attacks, the Patriot Act made specific changes to existing federal statutes. Those changes broadened the definition of terrorism, increased the penalties for terrorists, and expanded the government's authority to use electronic monitoring devices when terrorism was suspected. The Act facilitated the practice of information sharing among and between intelligence and law enforcement agencies, and also granted police surveillance authority under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). Objections to the Act have centered on the expanded authority granted to law enforcement, which critics argue restrict the civil rights of citizens and non-citizens alike (Kamien, 2006; Ozdogan, 2007; White, 2006).

The USA Patriot Act of 2001 is codified into 10 titles, each containing descriptive sections of the law. The most controversial sections of the law reside in Title II, which was designed to improve surveillance by granting federal agents authority to intercept communications between suspected terrorists (DOJ, 2009). Title II also facilitates the

application of roving wiretaps, allows criminal justice agencies to share information, and expands intelligence gathering. The Act's authority allows agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to seize materials and records from private businesses and public institutions are of particular concern to civil rights groups. For the past 14 years, Title II of the Patriot Act has been at the center of a controversy where critics see it as a symbol of government expansion, particularly within the executive branch (ACLU, 2011; CATO, 2011b). Critics not only viewed the expansion of authority as a threat to civil liberties, but tend to equate the potential for abuse with actual abuse of that power. This view is formed on the concept of a limited government that fears any expansion of executive authority is likely to lead to abuses of power, which will outweigh any potential benefits. Coupled with this view is the idea that the access to expanded information sources increases executive power, and what follows with that increase in efficiency is more effective use of that power (Kamien, 2006). Critics argued that the Act's provisions go too far in threatening civil liberties while expanding police powers. They also expressed concerns regarding the government's ability to collect and share noncriminal or nonterrorist information with other agencies during the conduct of investigations. Their most pressing concern, however, has been the enhanced authority of the government to monitor the activities of its own citizens (ACLU, 2011; CATO, 2011a; White, 2006).

Supporters of the Patriot Act, in contrast, have asserted that counterterrorism is strengthened by combining intelligence and law enforcement to form a more effective national defense system (Kamien, 2006). Proponents of the Act further argued that the law provides critical tools to law enforcement in their efforts to counter the threat of

terrorism. They also advance the argument that this merger creates an intelligence conduit among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to eliminate the information gap that existed prior to the 9/11 attacks (9/11 Commission, 2004). Supporters of this view point out that those critics fail to draw a distinction between a potential for abuse, and the actual abuse of power. They add that the few abuses of federal powers that have been reported and identified since enactment of the law have been corrected (Kamien, 2006). Proponents of the law caution that proposing a prohibition against such expansion of executive authority would be a mistake in the face of the terrorist threat still confronting the nation, and that a more appropriate response to this conflict of interests is continued vigilance and oversight (Rosenzweig, 2006). Supporters of the Patriot Act cap their argument with documentation showing that 61 terrorist plots have been thwarted since September 11, 2001 through application of the law's provisions (DOJ, 2013; Heritage Foundation, 2011; Zuckerman, Bucci, & Carafano, 2013).

Although the Patriot Act made significant amendments to more than 15 federal statutes, it was passed in the House and Senate without hearings or debate, and was not accompanied by any committee reports (ACLU, 2011; Ozdogan, 2007). Specific changes to the existing federal statutes included: a broadened definition of terrorism; increased penalties for terrorist acts; expanded government authority to use pen registers and wiretapping devices; increased scope for search warrants and subpoenas by lowering standards for probable cause; facilitated sharing of information between law enforcement agencies; expanded police surveillance authority under the Foreign Intelligence

Surveillance Act (FISA); and, restricted some civil rights of citizens and noncitizens alike (CATO, 2011a; CATO, 2011b; Ozdogan, 2007). There is little argument that the attacks created a post-9/11 era that required examination and reevaluation of the implications the attacks had on the American psyche. While Americans examined their commitment to democratic principles, the central government was working in haste to protect them from further attacks. Those government efforts, however, required Americans to accept some restrictions on their freedoms of speech and movement. The most notable of these restrictions have been increased surveillance of personal communications, more searches of homes and personal belongings, the potential detention without the benefit of habeas corpus, and the facing of possible proceedings before a military tribunal without the standard protections of due process as guaranteed by civil courts (DOJ, 2009; Ward et al., 2006). Under these conditions, the tradeoff between civil rights and personal security seems to rest on the notion that although the nation's openness may have added to the planning and execution of the terrorist attacks, Americans' desires to live in a peaceful and orderly society should favor greater acceptance of limitations on personal freedom of movement, freedom of association, freedom from unlawful searches and seizures, and freedom of speech. Three years after the 9/11 attacks, Davis and Silver (2004) asked the question of how many rights Americans were willing to sacrifice in exchange for perceived safety and security from the threat of terrorism. That study's findings indicated that the greater the perceived threat by participants, the lower became their support for civil liberties. Those findings, however, tended to be offset when study participants indicated their trust in government was low, and the lower that trust was, the less willing

they were to give up their civil liberties, regardless of the threat level faced (Davis & Silver, 2004).

In the initial aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the American public was more receptive to the government's new security measures than it was about civil liberties. As time passed, however, the older attachments to privacy and individual liberty steadily regained their rightful position in public opinion polls. Although recent polls indicate that security still trumps civil liberties, this gradual shift in public opinion reflects the nation's long-term commitment to their civil rights and liberties. A poll by TIME/CNN/ORC in May 2013, confirmed this trend. To the question of whether participants were willing to give up some civil liberties if they were necessary to curb acts of terrorism, 57% of all respondents in 1995 answered yes, but in 2013 that percentage was down to 40%. In response to the question regarding government monitoring of personal communications, the response in 2001 was 54% in favor, but down to 38% in 2013 (PEW, 2013). Finally, to the question of what concerned participants more, the enactment of new and stronger antiterrorism policies, with the potential for more excessive restrictions of civil liberties. Of the respondents, 61% indicated they were opposed to enactment of new excessive policies, and 31% hoped the government would not enact any new antiterrorism laws or policies that affected their civil liberties (TIME/CNN/ORC Poll, 2013).

To guard against abuse and excessive use of these executive powers, provisions of the Patriot Act included 4-year sunset dates for purposes of legislative and executive review. Debates regarding the law's provisions, therefore, were the most vociferous during the sunset years of 2005 and 2009 (ACLU, 2009; DOJ, 2009). Arguments for the

law's continued implementation were led by a majority of Congress, the president, members of the intelligence and law enforcement communities, noted legal and social scholars and conservative think tank members, who have argued that since its date of enactment the law has helped prevent over sixty terrorist attempts against the homeland (DOJ, 2013; Heritage Foundation, 2011; Zuckerman, Bucci, & Carafano, 2013). Arguments from those opposed to all or some of the law's provisions and prefer to have them repealed or revised include ethicists, a smaller number of Congressmen, and organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the CATO Institute. They present that government agents have consistently abused the additional powers granted to the executive branch by the law. In an effort to moderate these opposing arguments law professor Paul Rosenzweig (2006) at George Mason University, reviewed the Patriot Act's provisions, along with other related government programs regarding civil liberties. Rosenzweig concluded that instead of posing a threat to civil liberties, the laws and programs he reviewed promised a significant benefit in the current terrorist environment. And rather than focusing on the possibility of executive abuse, Americans should instead make efforts to construct suitable oversight and response mechanisms that will serve to empower executive action and effectively check abusive practices. In the long-run, that effort will be more "likely to enhance Americans' security and liberty" (Rosenzweig, 2006. p. 1027).

Although that advice was offered in an attempt to moderate opposing positions, it does not appear likely that either argument will be quieted soon. For practical purposes, al-Qaeda central, the group responsible for the 9/11 attacks, has been decimated and most

of its top leadership has been killed. In addition, al-Qaeda central no longer has the organizational and logistical reach it had in 2001 (Baker, 2014; Borosage, 2014; Zakaria, 2013). However, its legacy is an ideology that has spawned a new generation of terrorists now operating in the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula, and much of Africa, with a revisionist worldview driven by a radical delusion of reestablishing a lost Islamic empire (Karsh, 2006). As long as they view the US as their primary obstacle to that goal, the Patriot Act will continue to be implemented with the accepted justification that it keeps America secure. In a terrorist free environment, Americans would choose civil liberties over security, but in the currently conflicted world, public sentiment indicates that they prefer enhanced security now, with minimal government intrusions into their civil liberties (PEW, 2013; TIME/CNN/ORC Poll, 2013).

Public complaints lodged against the DHS are focused primarily on its funding of state-operated *Fusion Centers* (ACLU, 2007; ACLU, 2008; Andino, 2008). As defined by the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan, Fusion Centers are effective and efficient mechanisms designed to exchange critical law enforcement and intelligence information, maximize all participant resources, streamline operations, and to improve the ability to fight crime and terrorism by merging data from a variety of sources (CRS, 2007; DOJ, 2006). In this definition, fusion emerges as the fundamental process by which the sharing of homeland security related information and intelligence can be facilitated (9/11 Commission, 2004). The idea is to manage and disseminate the information to the responsible agencies for appropriate action. The short-term goal of Fusion Centers is to provide a colocated mechanism where intelligence, law enforcement, public safety, and

all private sector partners can come together for the common purpose of safeguarding the homeland and preventing major criminal activity (FBI, 2009a; FBI, 2009b). A regional policeman, fireman, agricultural inspector, or financial sector representative should not have to search his agency's database or other sources for information when it is likely that the intelligence has already been collected by a Fusion Center in his jurisdiction (Masse & Rollins, 2007). Following a specific recommendation by the 9/11 Commission, Fusion Centers have been established in every state of the union (DHS, 2008b). Some large states have established four or more centers to comply with information sharing mandates after the 9/11 attacks. They are state owned and operated (DHS, 2008b), but are primarily funded by DHS grants, and thus the basis for complaints from liberal groups that contend these centers collect information on people who may not be involved in criminal or terrorist activities (Carter & Carter, 2009; Rollins & Connors, 2007).

Unlike Fusion Centers, *Joint Terrorism Task Forces* (JTTF) normally do not generate public complaints, although they too are ancillary products of the 9/11 attacks. Essentially, a JTTF is a law enforcement unit that uses an interagency approach to counter domestic terrorism. These units are led and funded by the FBI (DOJ, 2013) and are comprised of representatives from federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. The Department of Justice defines a JTTF as a cell of highly trained, locally based, and committed investigators, analysts, linguists, SWAT members, and other experts from dozens of domestic law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Their primary purpose is to investigate leads from all sources, including area Fusion Centers, and to insure the timely collection and sharing of intelligence critical to antiterrorism and major crime

prevention. JTTF members may also provide security at major events, work undercover, and conduct surveillance of suspected terrorist or criminal activity. Certain types of illegal activity such as money laundering, drug trafficking, human trafficking, gun trafficking, extortion, smuggling, and corruption of public officials often involve coordination with other offices over a large geographical area. This type of cooperation is also necessary during the conduct of counterintelligence to detect espionage, sabotage, or assassinations planned by a foreign government or nonstate actor. During the conduct of these types of investigations, the exchange of information on a vertical and horizontal plane is critical to the operation's success (Doak et al., 2014).

Today there are over 100 JTTFs throughout the country permanently staffed on a full-time basis by members of the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the U.S. Secret Service (USSS), the U.S. Marshal's Service (USMS), the intelligence branches of the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines, as well as by members of regionally assigned state and local law enforcement agencies (Ward et al., 2006). At last count, total nationwide JTTF membership was estimated at 4,000 participants with over half of those being federal agents (DOJ, 2013). Prior to joining, all participants must sign a memorandum of understanding accepting the JTTf's joint mission of reacting to terrorist-related activity and proactively investigating domestic and foreign terrorist groups or individuals who may be targeting people or infrastructure in the particular JTTF's operating area. All nonfederal agents are subjected to background investigations to gain top secret clearance

before they can participate in a task force. JTTFs work under the FBI's definition of terrorism, which the agency defines as an unlawful act, a threat of force or violence, that is committed by a group of individuals against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (Doak et al., 2014; DOJ, 2013).

The difference between a Joint Terrorism Task Force and a Fusion Center is that a JTTF is sponsored, led, and funded by the FBI. A JTTF is both regionally and nationally focused and deals exclusively with terrorism matters (DOJ, 2013). A Fusion Center, is sponsored, led, and funded by the host state with grant support from the DHS (DOJ, 2006). Fusion Centers are state and local-centric, but deal with terrorism, criminal, as well as public safety matters. And most importantly, Fusion Centers produce intelligence for dissemination to appropriate agencies, including JTTFs, for determined action, but they do not conduct investigations. Some Fusion Centers are colocated with JTTFs or FBI Field Intelligence Groups throughout the country, but more commonly situated regionally within a state (DOJ, 2013). The foregoing descriptions of laws and strategies were designed to deter, detect, and disrupt terrorist activity in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. The most visible of these strategies were enacted and implemented by the George W. Bush Administration and continue in the post 9/11 era with only minor changes. Some have proven to be effective, others have created internal debate, and the DHS, which comprises the largest component of this antiterrorism effort, is still a work in progress (Carter & Carter, 2009; DHS, 2006; Kopp, 2012).

Emergency Management As Prescribed by the DHS

The preceding pages have presented the threats that terrorism, as well as natural disasters, continue to pose to the homeland. Also described above are some of the most high-profile strategies that the U.S. has developed and implemented to counter those threats. Further description of these strategies, along with explanations regarding their intent and anticipated effect, is provided in the following pages. These then, are the emergency management methods and procedures that the DHS has prescribed with the objective of securing the homeland (DHS, 2008b; DOJ, 2013). Constitutional scholars point out, however, that although the central government may prescribe the national implementation of such strategies and procedures, the 10th amendment to the U.S. Constitution makes that process a states' rights prerogative (Kozak, 2011; U.S. Archives, 2011). Essentially, the DHS has little leverage, other than funding, to force states to adopt and implement strategies and procedures deemed effective to secure their urban and rural areas (Bullock et al., 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009). To withhold homeland security funds from noncompliant states would defeat the purpose of filling the gap in the nation's security network. This policy would then shape the question of whether homeland security is intended only for high population urban centers, and not for low-density rural areas, such as those in some Midwestern states (Bryant, 2009; Ward, et al., 2006).

Although some of the laws and policies that were enacted and implemented in the wake of the 9/11 attacks did provide the intelligence and law enforcement communities more effective tools to track and apprehend terrorists, those laws and policies did not resolve the organizational problems dealing with homeland security and emergency

management. To rectify this condition, in December 2003, President George W. Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD), which directed the DHS Secretary to take a leading role in the development of a *National Preparedness Goal* to define preparedness as a coordinated national effort involving all levels of government, the private sector, nongovernment organizations, individual citizens, and called for the strengthening of capabilities that would address the full range of homeland security missions, including preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation (Bullock et al., 2009). The National Preparedness Goal was first released in March 2005, along with a revised version of the *National Response Plan* (NRP) and the *National Incident Management System* (NIMS). The NRP was an all-hazards plan designed to establish a single, comprehensive framework for the management of domestic incidents (DHS, 2009). The plan addressed the prevention of terrorist attacks and the reduction of vulnerability to all natural and manmade disasters. In addition, the NRP provided guidelines for minimizing the damage and seeking assistance in recovering from an incident. NIMS was created in tandem with the NRP to provide a systematic and consistent nationwide procedure for use by all federal, state, and local government representatives during the conduct and reporting of incidents that would also work effectively and efficiently when preparing for, responding to, and recovering from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity (GAO, 2014; Haddow et al., 2011; TISP, 2006).

The National Preparedness Guidelines

Since their initial issuance date of 2005, the *National Preparedness Guidelines* have been stated as a process to organize and synchronize federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial efforts to strengthen national preparedness against all-hazards (DHS, 2009). Critical elements of the guidelines are the establishment of readiness metrics to measure progress for assessing the nation's overall preparedness capability to respond to all incidents, especially those involving acts of terrorism. Two other important elements of the guidelines are the Target Capabilities List, which defines 37 specific capabilities that all communities, the private sector, and all levels of government should possess in order to respond effectively to disasters, whether natural or manmade (DHS, 2009). And the other is the Universal Task List which provides a menu of some 1,600 tasks that can facilitate efforts to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from the major events represented by the *National Planning Scenarios* provided by FEMA (DHS, 2009). Of course no single community is expected to perform every task. In summary, the *National Preparedness Guidelines* adopt an all-hazards approach to preparedness, and are risk-based, but primarily they are a unified and systematized call to action at all levels of government, with the mission to plan, organize, equip, train, and evaluate effectiveness (Bullock et al., 2009; Haddow et al., 2011).

The National Response Framework and National Incident Management System

The National Response Framework (NRF), a revision of the *National Response Plan,* was developed to provide basic emergency management strategies at all levels of government as a common structure (DHS, 2009; White House, 2003). The NRF's basic

purpose is to ensure that all levels of government, the private sector, and nongovernment organizations, work together and operate under a common set of emergency principles (DHS, 2009). In addition, the NRF provides guidelines for first responders, decision makers, and supporting entities on how to conduct a unified response to an incident (Bullock et al., 2009). The NRF was partly written for appointed political leaders, governors, mayors, county and city officials, and those who have a responsibility to provide effective disaster preparedness and response capability to a community (Bullock et al., 2009). While the NRF provides the structure and operating mechanisms for a national-level policy that concerns incident management, the *National Incident Management System* (NIMS) provides a systematic and proactive approach that guides departments and agencies at all levels of government and the private sector to work in a collaborative effort to prevent, prepare for, respond to, recover from, protect against, and mitigate the effects of incidents regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity, with the objective of reducing loss of life or injury, damage to property, and damage to the environment (DHS, 2009). Due to its importance in NIMS and emergency management, the *Incident Command System* (ICS) was designed as a flexible management system that enables effective and efficient control of an incident by integrating the combination of personnel, facilities, equipment, procedures, and communication at a given site (DHS, 2009).

Most incidents are handled adequately by local first responders and emergency managers, but the system becomes more applicable during disasters that may traverse multistates and jurisdictions, in which cases command and control becomes an issue. A

major earthquake in California, a great flood or extensive tornado damage in the Midwest (NOAA, 2014a), a Category 4 Hurricane that churns in the Gulf of Mexico, or travels up the East Coast (NOAA, 2014b), requires emergency management leadership at the same or different sites to ensure coordination, collaboration, cooperation, and communication of all response units at affected locales. The ICS provides structure to facilitate activities in the five major functional response areas that include operations, command, planning, logistics, and finance administration (DHS, 2009; Moteff, 2014).

Emergency Management in Rural Areas of the Midwest

Some experts, such as Oliver (2007, 2009), contended that although state and local officials now play a critical role in the post-9/11 era of homeland security, they remained unsure of their specific responsibilities and duties in the current threat environment. Marion and Cronin (2009) argued that if rural leaders' new role is to become law enforcement and intelligence officers, they lacked the necessary funding, training, expertise, and equipment to do the job right. Yet Oliver, Marion, and Cronin did not explain how it is that states such as Florida have been able to develop a comprehensive plan with the same formulaic allotment of homeland security funds as other states, and implement the *National Preparedness Guidelines* as they were originally issued in 2008 (FDEM, 2008-2013). These arguments prompted the study question: Why the *National Preparedness Guidelines* that were first issued in 2005, and which were revised and reissued in 2008, have not been consistently implemented in all of the nation's municipalities, including small towns and rural communities? Finding the answer to this question drove the premise of this inquiry. The proper place to begin the

search for that answer was a review of the available literature that addressed the topic, along with federal and state documents that clearly present preparedness guidelines for all communities. Following a review of that pertinent literature, an objective researcher will conclude that the guidelines are understandable, that state and local responsibilities are clear regarding their application, and that funding is allocated nationally to states, based on assessed threat, risk, vulnerability, and population (DHS, 2009). The same researcher could also review an example of their effective adaptation and implementation of the guidelines in model states such as Florida (FDEM, 2008-2013).

The issued guidelines provide strategies intended to help rural communities and small towns develop security plans that deter, detect, respond to, and recover from manmade or natural disasters (DHS, 2009). Their intent, purpose, and function have been described in the foregoing sections and supported by the government and academic sources referenced, but when compared to findings of the various studies, the results of those studies do not provide entirely valid responses to the question of noncompliance. For example, as described in the foregoing sections, the guidelines are specific in how to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against disasters. They also provide guidance on the structure and set-up of incident command, along with descriptions of responder duties and responsibilities in all hazards regardless of size and scope. Essentially, the *National Preparedness Guidelines* were developed to provide any size community the flexibility to adopt, borrow, and establish broad or limited emergency preparedness measures in direct relation to its security needs (Bullock et al., 2009; DHS, 2009). Yet Bryant (2009) pointed out in her findings the many challenges of establishing

emergency preparedness measures in rural communities, at the same time underscoring rural communities' historical lack of compliance with nationally issued guidelines (NLC, 2013; NADO, 2005).

The challenges of emergency management that Bryant (2009) presented in terms of differences between rural communities and urban centers can be categorized into four major themes of challenge: a limitation of resources; separation and remoteness; low population density, and a lack of communication with neighboring communities. These are some of the basic themes that underscored the research questions and drove this study. Bryant's conclusions, however, did not explain how states such as Florida and Maryland (FDEM, 2008-2013; Kamien, 2006), have been able to adopt, develop, and also implement variations of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* on a statewide basis that utilized funding allocations based on threat, risk, vulnerability, and population; a formula applicable to all communities nation-wide, whether large, small, or rural. Although Congress has recognized that small towns and rural communities do not receive the same attention as urban centers do, no changes have been made regarding the way homeland security funds are allocated (Bryant, 2009; DHS, 2008b; FDEM, 2008-2013). In their article, Chenoweth and Clarke (2010) argued that the primary reason for the general lack of compliance with national preparedness measures in rural areas was a governance decision made by state and urban leaders more interested in protecting their jurisdictions. To sustain their argument they presented data showing that from 1993 to 2000, 94 % of injuries and 61% of deaths resulting from a terrorist attack occurred in urbanized areas throughout the world (Chenoweth & Clarke). Their argument is premised

on the idea that if terror strikes, it will occur in an urban setting high in population with more available infrastructure targets. What they failed to understand is that terrorists continue to adjust their target selection from hard to soft. As urban area targets are hardened and the threat is reduced, the risk to rural or softer targets increases in proportion. The 9/11 attacks and the Boston Marathon bombings in urban areas lend credence to the argument presented by Chenoweth and Clarke. However, that argument ignored the physical and moral need to protect residents and infrastructure in a given state's rural communities.

The major themes surfaced by these studies were that noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* prevailed in some rural Midwestern communities, but the rationales for noncompliance differed with participants and geographical regions. What is known about the problem is that it has created national security and public safety issues. What are not known about the problem are the common rationales for existing noncompliance. Each study presented findings that varied from a lack of funding, personnel, training, equipment, to separation and remoteness. This study's findings have done much to fill this knowledge gap following purposeful contact with those participants responsible for the implementation of such security and safety measures in the rural sites.

The above cited sources and related literature review were used to determine the saturation point regarding the question of homeland security in the nation's rural areas. Their reported themes underscored the questions that drove this study. Their conclusions, however, failed to explain how some states have been able to adopt variations of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* on a state-wide basis without the type of concerns

voiced by the respondents in the reviewed studies. Compliant states have done so by utilizing funding allocations based on the formula that was established by Congress in 2006 (Kopp, 2012; Moteff, 2014), that is based on assessed threat, risk, vulnerability, and population. The formula is applicable to all communities nationwide, whether they are large, small, or rural. The literature search strategy involved the use of all Walden University databases, the Internet, as well as articles and books that focused on the topic under investigation. Academic sources provided the bulk of references used in this study, followed by government publications and textbooks previously read during coursework. Walden University databases provided many of the sources cited in this study.

Summary

The preceding pages restated the problem and purpose of this case study, along with a background and brief history of homeland security, its definition, and why it is necessary in today's conflicted world (DHS, 2009). Following those presentations were a brief description of the threat that external and internal terrorism continues to pose to the security of the homeland, and how the US is responding to those threats (DOJ. 2009). This chapter's introduction cited the central government's constitutional responsibility to protect the homeland from invasion and domestic violence (Kozak, 2011; U.S. Archives, 2011), then explained some of the cited reasons for militant Islamists' avowed hostility toward the US following its involvement in Central Asia and the Middle East. The involvement exposed the nation to external and internal terrorism, which prompted the development of domestic countermeasures following the 9/11 attacks, including the USA Patriot Act, and establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, 2008a;

DOJ, 2009). These countermeasures have thwarted 60 terrorist attempts against the homeland since the 9/11 attacks (DOJ, 2013; Zuckerman et al., 2013). In exchange for the enhanced security these countermeasures have provided, Americans have had to limit some of their civil liberties (DOJ, 2009; TIME, CNN/ORC Poll, 2013). That explanation was followed by a short history on the evolution of US civil defense and homeland security (DHS, 2008a; Schertzing, 2009). Following an overview of the external and internal threats that confront the nation today (DOJ, 2011), the discussion then provided a description of the emergency management disciplines as prescribed by the DHS (DHS, 2009). That discussion also provided an explanation of the operational principles most states have adopted from the *National Preparedness Guidelines*, as well as what has not been implemented in noncompliant states and rural communities. The degree of noncompliance, as noted by previous studies, was compared to successful adaptations of the *National Response Framework* by states such as Florida and Maryland (FDEM, 2008-2013; Kamien, 2006). Inconsistencies that resulted from that comparison informed the research questions that drove this study to determine the reasons for those inconsistencies (Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010). In summary, this chapter discussed the social problems of noncompliance that were revealed by the limited available literature, which addressed them (Bryant, 2009). *Chapter 3,* which follows, describes the methodology that was employed in an effort to arrive at a more definitive answer to the question of homeland security in America's small towns and rural communities (Yin, 2014).

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Following a review of available literature and evidence of what appears to be a pattern of inconsistent implementation of emergency preparedness strategies in some rural communities throughout the Midwest (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010), I sought to identify the key factors that have precluded full compliance in the selected study areas, with the objective of developing common reasons that can be generalized to other rural regions to improve implementation. The attacks of 9/11 served to shatter the prevailing illusion that America was invulnerable to attack from external forces. They happened despite the previous implementation of what were deemed impregnable security measures designed to prevent such attacks (Piddock, 2014). An immediate response from the George W. Bush Administration and Congress resulted in the enactment and implementation of security measures designed to prevent future attacks and to bring the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks to justice. Among those measures was enactment of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which established the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In March 2003, President George W. Bush directed the newly formed DHS to develop and distribute *National Preparedness Guidelines* for use by all government levels in implementing protective strategies and reporting major incidents (DHS, 2009). These guidelines included the initial National Response Plan (NRP) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, most states, such as California, Texas, Illinois, Florida, and New York, accepted the value of adopting the

federally proposed guidelines to tailor preparedness programs suited to their needs (FDEM, 2008-2013). Other states such as Ohio, Wisconsin, and Missouri chose to develop measures designed primarily to protect urban areas having high population density and vulnerable infrastructure (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Stigler, 2010). Yet others determined that implementation of emergency preparedness measures in small towns and rural areas were not justified by the cost (Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010). This inconsistency of implementation created two social problems in affected areas: one concerns national security in general and the other relates to public safety in rural communities in particular (DHS, 2009).

Prior to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, responsibility for protecting the nation from external threats fell within the purview of the Department of Defense (DOD). During this same pre-9/11 period, responsibility for the response to, and recovery from, internal disasters was assigned to a number of federal agencies, each with varying agendas, which responded reactively to natural and manmade disasters with minimal cooperation, collaboration, coordination, or communication (DHS, 2008a). Soon after the 9/11 attacks, however, homeland security became a proactive endeavor conducted by professionals from many fields in the newly established Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The DHS also inherited the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), the primary federal agency responsible for the establishment and conduct of emergency management protocols designed to deal with all hazards that may affect the nation's communities (DHS, 2008b). This case study focused directly on the question of emergency preparedness in rural communities, and collaterally on the causative

relationship between the central government and its responses to the continuing terrorist threat. Establishment of the DHS and subsequent enhancement of FEMA's emergency response and management responsibilities are evidence of this causative relationship (DHS, 2009; FEMA, 2011; Yin, 2014).

A qualitative case study approach was chosen as the most effective method to explore and describe the reasons why some rural communities in the Midwest (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010) were not complying with implementation of the national preparedness guidelines, first issued in 2005, then revised and reissued in 2008 (DHS, 2009). Since their first issuance, the national guidelines have provided strategies intended to help rural communities and small towns develop security plans that prepare them for and allow them to respond to as well as recover from manmade or natural disasters. These strategies were recommended for national adoption in accordance with a community's particular needs in relation to assessed risks, threats, vulnerabilities, and available resources. When viewed in this context, this case study addressed an under researched topic that available literature had not fully explained (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010) and also explored the implications that noncompliance might have for national security and public safety issues (DHS, 2008b, 2009). When the study is complete, the findings will be shared with participating communities, as well as with other local, state, and federal emergency planners for use as a basis for comparison. Other practical contributions likely to be derived from this study's results include enhanced knowledge of the underlying forces that previously resisted the concept of compliance,

along with findings that may lead to the adoption of generalized practices by other currently noncompliant communities (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014).

In spite of the fact that acts of terrorism and natural disasters continue to pose serious threats to homeland security and emergency preparedness, questions have been raised by the above cited experts (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Stigler, 2010) as to why the *National Preparedness Guidelines* of 2008 have not been adopted by small towns and rural communities in some Midwestern states while they have been implemented by the vast majority of the nation's metropolitan and urban centers, as well as most rural areas (Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; FDEM, 2008-2013). This inconsistent condition of compliance creates two social problems. One weakens national security by failing to protect critical infrastructure in rural areas, and the other threatens public safety in Midwestern towns and rural communities where civic leaders did not establish any new safety measures following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009). This problem was highlighted first by an apparent gap in the literature specifically addressing the subject of noncompliance in some rural areas, and second by a lack of consensus among the cited researchers on the reasons for that noncompliance (Bryant, 2009; Stigler, 2010).

As is common in qualitative research, in my role as the researcher I functioned as the primary tool for purposes of data collection and analysis. An interview protocol was developed posing a set of open-ended questions based on the reasons for noncompliance previously reported in the five cited studies that made up the core literature for this study (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009;

Stigler, 2010). The interview questions were posed to rural civic leaders selected by purposeful sampling methods responsible for implementation of emergency preparedness measures. To assist in the analysis process, the qualitative data analysis software named Atlas.ti was used. Constant vigilance was employed throughout the study to ensure and maintain the ethicality and trustworthiness of the research process. Particular attention was also devoted to ensuring the internal and external validity of the study. Selected study participants were asked to execute an informed consent form that stated their rights and guarantee of confidentiality. Because I did not intend to target vulnerable or protected populations, it was not anticipated that any challenges with ethics, confidentiality, or human subject issues would be of concern.

Research Design and Rationale

This qualitative research was based on a holistic single case study design that aligned well with the inquiry's stated objectives of developing an in-depth description and analysis of an identified problem by examining the operational processes at selected sites of suspected noncompliance (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). This approach provided for: the formulation of interview protocols designed to answer the research questions; coding of the data collected; and, analysis and interpretation of the data to develop themes that led to an understanding of the study's findings. The selection of this design followed the rationale that the concept drives the research and the study purpose drives the analysis. The interview questions were open-ended and formed to elicit specific answers from eight to 12 civic leaders in four states who provided reasons for noncompliance with emergency preparedness guidelines that were developed to enhance

the security and safety of their rural communities (Patton, 2002; Rudestam & Newton, 2007; Yin, 2014).

Since 2001, Pew Research Center surveys have reflected the concerns of Americans when over 53% of respondents have indicated that they believe it is necessary to give up some civil liberties in order to curb terrorism. Another 81% have favored the use of undercover activities to penetrate suspected terrorist groups, and over 67% have favored closer monitoring of banking, credit, and funding sources as well as Internet chat rooms to reveal any indications of terrorist activity (PEW, 2013). With this indicated public support, it seems that preventing terrorism, mitigating its impact on the nation's communities, and responding effectively to any attack that occurs should be a high priority for federal, state, and local leaders (PEW, 2013). Yet the question remained: Why did civic leaders in some rural communities choose not to provide proper security to their residents? This reported condition prompted the bases for the research questions.

The *Central Question* that drove this study was as follows: How do rural civic leaders in the selected Midwestern communities, which include mayors, police chiefs, fire chiefs, emergency managers, and city attorneys, justify noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* that were issued for implementation in 2009? In my personal experience, I have found that some sheriffs in Midwestern states do not have significant emergency preparedness responsibilities. In other instances, the sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer in the county and carries out those duties. As such, sheriffs' law enforcement training is usually determined by the status they hold in the county, as is NIMS and other emergency preparedness training in the post-9/11 era. More often than

not, counties rely on state troopers or large police departments to provide any mutual-aid during major incidents. Law enforcement jurisdiction and response was a question I asked of rural leaders during the interview process to determine what they had done since the 9/11 attacks to make their communities safer. Responses reflected the variable perspective of each respondent, but it was anticipated that their justifications would center on issues of funding, training, personnel, remoteness, or lack of understanding of their respective roles in the post-9/11 era. However, it was also anticipated that valid justifications for exposing their communities to public safety threats would not be forthcoming. In addition, their responses were not expected to explain how other rural communities in other states have implemented appropriate emergency preparedness strategies with similar limitations. To seek the proper answers, I based the subquestions on findings developed by the core studies cited in the literature review. Each subquestion reflected a particular finding from each of the studies as a reason for noncompliance.

For example, *Subquestion 1* was stated as follows: How was noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in the post-9/11 era reflected in the ability or inability of those rural communities to meet their governing goals and resource needs as they related to local public safety and national security issues?

Subquestion 2 was posed as follows: What role had funding, or lack thereof, played in the ability or inability of those rural communities to fully implement the *National Preparedness Guidelines?*

Subquestion 3 was stated as follows: What role had regional remoteness played in decisions made by local rural leaders not to implement the national preparedness guidelines in their communities?

Finally, *Subquestion 4* was posed as follows: What understanding did rural civic leaders have about their duties and responsibilities regarding implementation of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in their communities?

The intent of these subquestions was to further specify the purpose of the central question by refining its intent. The subquestions were considered a means of asking the central question in a piecemeal fashion to further analyze the issue of noncompliance as it related to the research process (Creswell, 2013).

Much of the literature reviewed that addressed the question of noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in some of the nation's rural communities was published by academics who based their conclusions on survey-based studies and government documents. Those peer-reviewed articles were explored in the preceding chapter. The reviewed government publications that addressed the benefits of compliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* included those produced by the DHS (2008-2013) and FEMA (2011). These documents provided the legal history for establishing the DHS in 2002, along with the subsequent issuance of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in 2005, which were revised and reissued in 2008. Their initial ineffectiveness was made public during the disorganized response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The DHS (2009) described the provisions of the *National Preparedness Guidelines,* along with outlines for the development of strategies specifically applicable to state and local

governments. A good example of how the guidelines can be adopted, tailored, and implemented effectively by states that are confronted with seasonal disasters are the guidelines developed by the Florida Department of Emergency Management (2008-2013). The FDEM guidelines describe the state's plan following implementation of its version of the *National Preparedness Guidelines.* This example shows what a model state can do with the national guidelines to create statewide interoperable response plans for its urban and rural areas.

Role of the Researcher

The credibility of a qualitative research study hinges on the skill and competence of the researcher conducting the fieldwork and ongoing analysis of the information being developed. Among the qualities I possess as an effective researcher are a grounded understanding of the subject and the setting under investigation. Following a long career as a federal agent, I also developed good investigative and interview skills that proved useful with individuals from various social levels and different professional settings. Through these skills, I honed my ability to draw people out with a sense of empathetic engagement while maintaining a balance of nonjudgmental and objective awareness regarding interviewees. I collected data by examining documents and interviewing the participants. As the primary data-collecting instrument, I used a self-designed interview protocol to answer my research questions, with the objective of developing a holistic account of the subject I was investigating. I accepted that a well-conducted case study would place demands on my intellect and personal biases due to the interaction between theoretical issues and the data being collected. As a case study researcher, I exercised my

ability to ask purposeful questions, be a good listener, remain reflexive and adaptive, have a good understanding of the topical issues, and avoid biases by being aware of them, all in an effort to ensure that the conduct of the research remained ethical.

The conceptual origin of this study was evidence that some rural civic leaders had not implemented recommended safety and security measures in their communities to protect local residents. This study was designed with the objective of confirming or disconfirming that original concept. This research, however, can also be considered a valid premise for a study seeking social change. By triangulating multiple data sources, observations, collection methods, and relational theories, I was able to overcome the question of bias that can surface from the single-theory, single-research-method, single-perspective, and single-analysis interpretations that are usually associated with these types of studies. In addition, I anticipated that any personal research bias would be checked by the exercise and maintenance of high research ethics that complied with Walden University's IRB standards. These standards include honesty and responsibility for original scholarship to ensure study validity and reliability. Controlling my personal biases involved an in-depth understanding of the research problem and purpose, as well as respect for participants in their normal sites. Checking my research biases required constant awareness of their presence throughout the research process, as well as immediately addressing their potentially negative consequences for the study if and when they surfaced. During the development of the study proposal I had no contact with anticipated participants who were to be purposefully interviewed as a result of the positions they held in the selected communities. A review of the research proposal

revealed no ethical operational issues or any challenges to the field interview process. The participant interviews were voluntary, and the documents reviewed were sources open to the public. I projected that the study findings would justify the study premise and also produce sufficient data to answer the research questions. Primary biases that drove my role as the researcher derived from 23 years of experience as a federal agent and a familiarity with antiterrorism. Another was a related belief in the value of national security. This belief encompassed the moral conviction that the safety and security of rural residents are every bit as important as those of urban dwellers.

Methodology

This case study focused primarily on the question of noncompliance with federally issued preparedness guidelines. The theoretical framework that aligned with this study was Putnam's (2000) theory of social capital, which refers to connections among individuals within a community who develop social networks with norms of reciprocity, and the trustworthiness that arises from them (Yin, 2014). Putnam articulated a series of "civic virtues" (p. 7) that emanate from this type social exchange. Among those virtues are political and civic engagement, informal social ties, tolerance and trust, social justice, mutual aid, and communal coherence (p. 19). Putnam added that social capital becomes especially relevant in meeting various emergency management challenges in small towns and rural communities, and that these civic virtues are stronger when they are embedded in a community's network of reciprocal social relations. Putnam cautioned, however, that a society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital (p. 19). The theoretical premise of this approach is that the reason why civic leaders in

some Midwestern rural communities had not taken steps to adopt *National Preparedness Guidelines* is that levels of engagement and social ties are stronger in a local setting and can cause resistance to federal and state directives (Caruson & MacManus, 2004; DHS, 2009; Putnam, 2000). After considering this theoretical premise, the reasons for noncompliance with implementation of safety and security measures in some small towns and rural communities remained unclear, but the theory of social capital shed some light on the resistance to change (Putnam, 2000). The intent and purpose of this study, therefore, was to develop the necessary information that would explain the reasons for noncompliance in the identified small towns and rural communities. This theoretical framework holds that lives and infrastructure in rural communities are just as vital as those in urban centers, and offered insight into the reasons for the reported noncompliance.

Sample Selection Strategy

I used purposeful sampling to identify and recruit participants. As is common in this type of qualitative research, small samples of uncertain population representation were taken with the objective of saturating the concept, and to explore its relationship to other concepts so that it became theoretically meaningful (Reynolds, 2007; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). The framing of research questions specific to participants was found to be beneficial to the research process. This strategy limited inappropriate generalization and helped me to recognize the diversity among participants. Finally, it also helped me focus on the specific actions, events, and processes in the actual context that they were researched and studied (Maxwell, 2013).

Participants in this study were unknown to me, and were selected on the basis of the positions they held in the rural communities selected for this study. These participants were mayors, city attorneys, emergency managers, fire chiefs, or police chiefs. They were identified by the positions they occupied and the authority they held to develop and implement emergency preparedness programs in their communities. The number of interviews was limited to 12 or no more than two representatives from each of four sites in the Midwestern states of Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, and Kansas. The recruitment of participants began with their identification from state and local records, followed by telephone calls to confirm names, addresses, and their willingness to participate in the study. That process was followed with presentation of a formal letter extending individual invitations to each representative of the communities selected for study, who expressed an interest in participating. An acknowledgement of acceptance was secured with a signed consent letter, which informed them that participation was voluntary. This was followed with a conversation confirming the place, date, and time for the interview (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). The literature review revealed no indication that these prospective participants were ever used as subjects in past studies. I anticipated that the samples chosen for this study would suffice to provide saturation of the data sought. To summarize, the study participants were contacted by telephone, then presented with a consent letter if they decided to participate in the study. Three prospective participants refused my invitation to participate once the field research process had begun (Patton, 2002).

Instrumentation

The data collection process was preceded by a review of emergency management documents, which pertained to the particular state and rural communities selected for the study. That review identified the prevailing policies for the adoption and implementation of emergency preparedness measures statewide, and whether they were inclusive of rural communities. Applicable federal documents detailing *National Preparedness Guidelines* were also reviewed and are clear as they apply to all municipalities nationwide. For the most part, however, the reviewed documents imply that states that adopted the national guidelines also implemented strategies inclusive of small towns and rural communities. Although federal homeland security funds are allocated to states based on threat, risk, vulnerability, and population density, the federal government cannot force states to ensure that rural areas are protected from natural or manmade disasters (DHS, 2009; Kozak, 2011; Reese, 2009). These documents, along with the studies described in the literature review, were instrumental in the formulation of this study's research and interview questions. The interview protocol guided the data collected from participants and established the extent of compliance with emergency preparedness measures in the selected research sites. The interview protocol is referenced in Appendices A and B.

I conducted all participant interviews professionally and in accordance with ethics best practices. The interview protocol was formulated with open-ended questions that followed a careful assessment of the available literature and the various federal policies currently in effect, to determine what local policies were in place. I was confident that interviews conducted with rural civic leaders would develop the necessary information to

answer the research questions. My written notes of the interview process supplemented the recorded interviews, which varied in duration from 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were conducted in participants' choice of setting. Following their analysis, the data collected from the interviews produced a better understanding of the reasons why some rural communities had not complied with implementation of *National Preparedness Guidelines.* Findings of this study will be provided to participant communities for their comparative and adaptive use. At the time the study was initiated, it was not anticipated that follow-up contacts would be necessary after completion of the initial interviews and data analysis except to offer the study's findings (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

Data Analysis Plan

My data analysis plan aligned the research problem, the research method, and the study's results. The plan included the issues of identifying and soliciting participants, of preparing research protocols and other data collecting tools, as well as the formulation of procedures pertaining to the study as recommended by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The research analysis began with the first piece of information collected and continued until the subject was saturated (Patton, 2002). Although I could not guarantee that I would be able to completely saturate the subject, I anticipated collecting sufficient information to answer the research questions. In this case study, I analyzed information related to programs and processes conducted by individuals in the Midwest region. This data analysis plan specified a method of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data, which was aligned with my case study approach. Although some of the sources reviewed held that there is no fixed formula for the conduct of analysis (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2002;

Yin, 2014), my intent was to conduct data collection and analysis concurrently, as suggested by Miles et al. (2014).

This case study employed the basic strategies of first reading all pertinent notes, memoranda, documents, and interview transcripts. These readings were followed by open, axial, and selective coding, which helped describe, classify, and interpret data collected (Creswell, 2013). The final step in this study's analysis plan involved the development of patterns and themes from the data collected in order to formulate a valid narrative of the interpreted information. To facilitate this process, qualitative computer software was used to help with the coding, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data. However, it was understood that I would be responsible for the actual coding and the analysis of that data (Patton, 2002). Miles et al. (2014), noted that coding drives ongoing data collection as a form of continuing analysis, which I adopted as a strategy.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The purpose of trustworthiness is to support the argument that my research findings are valid. By accepting this premise I believe that the trustworthiness of this study design is the standard by which my research results will be judged. For this reason, trustworthiness in this case study was an ongoing process requiring constant bracketing of my biases and assumptions, along with the corroboration and confirmation of collected data. By extension, validation of the research provided judgment of the study's overall trustworthiness, which added value of substance and ethical standards to the process. The validation strategies I employed in this qualitative study stressed quality, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To summarize, the trustworthiness of

this study was founded on the credibility and validity of my research, which required me to be especially mindful of validity issues during the data collection and analysis processes. The issues of external and internal validity, reliability, and construct validity required my awareness during the entire research process, but they did not consume too much of my concern because I ensured the study's integrity by practicing truth and honesty in all that I did. That way I assured future readers that nothing in my study would be false or invalid.

The exploratory process of this case study took place in a specific region of the country to determine the extent of compliance with *National Preparedness Guidelines* in rural communities. This exploratory research examined emerging patterns that formed themes, reviewed document explanations, and addressed rival explanations, in efforts to test the study's internal validity. The research design ensured the study's construct validity and reliability. Indications are that this study's results may be transferable, and its operational process reliable to the extent of providing similar results in other regions, such as the four state areas of Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, and Idaho (Yin, 2014). Transferability may also be applicable to the four-state region encompassing Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona. Both of these regions have similar patterns of densely populated urban centers and dispersed populations in rural areas, which may indicate similar noncompliance issues. These are the demographic conditions that prompted the research questions that drove this study. To ensure proper documentation of this study's dependability and repeatability, pertinent data will be maintained in research logs, tapes,

and computer external drives. Digital records reflecting the analysis that was conducted will be maintained in a selected computer software program (Miles et al., 2014).

Ethics Procedures

Prior to and during the research process, I addressed ethical concerns with the simple commitment to do no harm. Another effective practice I adopted following years of experience as a federal agent, is to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Abiding by these professional codes guided me to be true to this study, thereby preventing it from becoming false. By adding respect and consideration, along with an assurance of confidentiality, to participants, validation of the study was also assured. Before arriving at that point, however, the start of formal research required the review and approval of the study proposal and related protocols by the Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which granted approval on June 25, 2015, with the assigned number of 06-25-15-0275903. Because the study involved the conduct of interviews with selected participants, the execution of an Informed Consent agreement with the study participants was necessary. This consent agreement is required by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and is intended for the protection of all study participants from abuse and liability. Potential risks for study participants may include unintended discomfort, as well as physical, emotional, or psychological stress. From the researcher's perspective, the consent agreement also serves to shift some responsibility to participants who may experience negative results from their participation. A copy of the consent agreement has been made part of Appendix A that is attached to this study (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014).

In efforts to prevent ethical issues, this study did not involve vulnerable members of the population, nor was data collected from my own workplace. This study's selected interviewees were public employees serving in elected or appointed positions in the selected rural communities. The information sought from them was open-source, and thus available to the general public. At no time were questions asked of participants about their work that might have led to the disclosure of behavior or views, which may have affected their employment status. All participant identities remained confidential during the research process and will throughout the storage period at conclusion of the study. This confidentiality will be extended to include the locations and names of the communities they represented. Interviewees and site locations will be identified and cataloged by code words and numbers known only to me.

During and after completion of this study, that information will be stored separately from other study documents and the data that was collected for analysis. The recordings and transcriptions of participant interviewees will be similarly stored in digital format, with copies saved on external drives. Encryption will preserve the data and also ensure privacy for the required 5-year period following completion of the study. This study was conducted in the region that encompasses the four-state region of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas. All participants were interviewed in their own settings, and remained unknown to me until the scheduled interview date (Yin, 2014).

Summary

In the initial paragraphs of this chapter, I reintroduced the threat that terrorism

still poses to the nation. I also stressed that the threat justifies the need for heightened vigilance by all Americans, but particularly by counterterrorism experts and emergency managers. Vigilance involves the need for implementation of preparedness strategies to counter that threat, as well as those threats posed by natural causes. The introduction was followed by a description of the research methodology employed to explore the reasons for noncompliance with implementation of *National Preparedness Guidelines* in rural communities within the selected Midwestern states. The study's research design and rationale reflects a strategy that aligned well with the investigation's objectives of developing an in-depth understanding of the reasons for noncompliance with safety and security emergency management measures as implemented by a majority of the nation's communities. The decision for selecting this study design followed the rationale that the initial concept drives the research, and the study's purpose drives the analysis. With an enhanced understanding of the reasons for noncompliance in some rural communities, it became possible to develop a consensus of rationales that influenced their compliance or noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* (DHS, 2009; Yin, 2014).

This study involved a review of all pertinent government documents, laws, and policies, as well as findings in available literature identified in *Chapter 2,* all of which provided the basis for the open-ended research questions. The Midwest region was ideal for this type of research due to literature confirmation that no similar research studies had been previously conducted in the states of Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, or Kansas. This environment provided sites that reflected responsiveness to a holistic, single case study that assessed levels of compliance in rural areas, and offered opportunities for the

application of emergency management strategies designed to meet the various needs of the affected communities (Yin, 2014). The assessment also gauged the level of social capital involvement in those communities to measure the level of preparedness and the response capability to manmade or natural disasters (Putnam, 2000). As the primary research tool, I was responsible for maintaining the validity and trustworthiness of the study. This was ensured by personal integrity and through the application of various triangulation techniques, as well as compliance with required IRB guidelines (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). Those measures were employed despite personal assurances that the study would be free of validity concerns. *Chapter 4,* which follows, provides an accurate description of the data collected, its analysis, and interpretation of the information which revealed the reasons for noncompliance with emergency management strategies in rural communities that were part of this case study (Yin, 2014).

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The general intent of this study was to seek an answer to the question of whether the *National Preparedness Guidelines* had been consistently implemented in selected rural communities within the Midwestern states of Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas since the last issuance of the policy in 2008 (DHS, 2009). More specifically, the purpose of this case study was to explore and examine the various rationales rural civic leaders offered in response to the five studies previously conducted in other Midwestern states regarding the question of compliance with the national guidelines (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010). For example, Bryant (2009) reported that the challenges of rural emergency management were based primarily on resource limitations, low population density, and aged or absent communications warning systems, coupled with separation and remoteness. Chenoweth and Clarke (2010) advanced an argument for cost effectiveness, noting that decisions had been made by urban leaders to apply homeland security allocations to metropolitan areas where denser populations and more critical infrastructure are situated. Marion and Cronin (2009) simply reported that noncompliance in their region of study was attributed to a lack of funding. In his studies, Oliver (2007, 2009) contended that the primary reason for noncompliance with national guidelines in the nation's small communities was a lack of understanding by local leaders of their duties and responsibilities in the post-9/11 era. And in his study, Stigler (2010) found that although the rationale for a lack of resources had validity, geographical remoteness and separation also played an important role in

how rural communities viewed and accepted nationally issued guidelines.

The related intent of this case study was to confirm or disconfirm the validity of the findings reported in the previous studies, and to establish a common rationale for noncompliance or compliance at the end of this study. One objective was to develop generalizations that would be applicable to other national regions having similar demographics. The above studies reported variances in the rationales for noncompliance that reflected inconsistent and inconclusive findings. What those studies shared in common, however, was a recommendation for further study on this subject. The overall purpose of this study, then, was to identify a pattern of noncompliance in the selected rural hamlets, villages, and towns within the four-state region of Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas, to confirm or disconfirm the common conditions that may pose a threat to national security and the public safety of the affected communities. If the findings of the previously reviewed studies were valid, then the prevailing inconsistencies in compliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* had created two social problems related to security and public safety. One problem weakened the nation's security by failing to protect critical infrastructure in rural areas, and the other threatened public safety in those same communities.

During the field research, I expected confirmation of general public perceptions of backwardness and poverty in rural communities. Among the perceived phenomena were lacks of good health care and treatment facilities, low-paying agricultural, manufacturing, or retail jobs, and limited educational and employment options, coupled with an exodus of younger residents seeking better educational and employment opportunities in urban

areas (Bryant, 2009). These conditions reportedly contribute to the designation of "last served" when a state allocates funds for emergency preparedness and recovery in case of a disaster. Even if these conditions are generally true, I was prompted to ask whether the general welfare and safety of rural residents are less important than those of people who live in urban areas (Bryant, 2009). Field research confirmed some of these perceptions but also disconfirmed others. The field research involved gaining an understanding of the nation's small towns, hamlets, villages, and townships following a review of literature provided by the National League of Cities (2014) and the U.S. Census Bureau (2010). These agencies estimated that 97.5% of the nation's land area is regarded as rural and is home to about 55 million people, or about 18% of the U.S. population.

My field research included a complete review of federal and state documents related to homeland security and emergency management (DHS, 2009; State of Iowa, 2015; State of Kansas, 2014; State of Missouri, 2015; State of Nebraska, 2014-2016). The document reviews were followed by interviews with emergency managers as well as law enforcement officials and fire chiefs at the local level in the selected communities. The document reviews revealed that the state emergency plans were mirror reproductions of the federal guidelines, as they outlined the National Response Framework (NRF) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). Emergency managers at state regional or district levels were directed to comply with NIMS requirements to ensure annual funding for homeland security, and qualify for special needs grants. The specific object of the interviews was to determine the levels of emergency preparedness in selected small rural communities along *Tornado Alley*. Tornado Alley is a wide corridor that runs north from

Texas and Oklahoma through Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa that also affects Missouri. This particular part of the Heartland was chosen for the study due to its continuing cycle of extreme weather patterns, which include tornadoes, severe storms, lighting strikes, flooding, fires, heat, cold, and drought, as well as the presence of antigovernment groups such as the *Sovereign Citizens* who do not recognize federal law, only the authority of the county sheriff. Communities selected for this study were situated along this corridor and were limited to those with small populations that numbered between 2,500 and 10,500 residents. See Figure 1 below for a rendering of wind currents that form tornado alley.

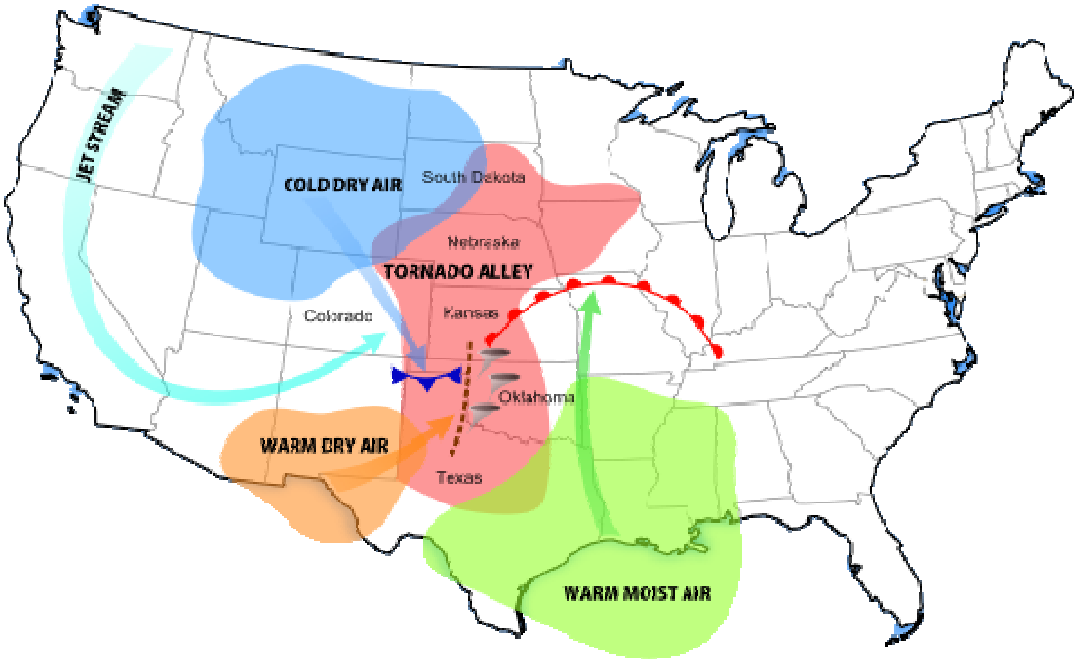

Figure 1. Illustration showing how Tornado Alley develops. From Tornado Alley diagram, by D. Craggs, 2009, retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tornado_Alley_Diagram.svg

The interview questions were designed to elicit information that revealed how the selected communities coped with the seasonal series of natural weather extremes commonly caused by the confluence of high cold air streams flowing down from the

Northwest, meeting with low warm air masses coming up from the southeastern part of the United States (NOAA, NWS, 2015). Although I intended to interview at least two participants from each state, by the end of 1 week I had interviewed four in Missouri, five in Kansas, and one in Iowa. The interviews revealed comments from participants that were rich with descriptions of the civic "virtues" of cohesion, cooperation, collaboration, and exchange prompted by a sense of reciprocity that is firmly based on common need (Putnam, 2000). For example, while I was interviewing an emergency manager in a rural Kansas community, he recounted how a week prior to my visit, a tornado had touched down on a neighbor's farm, destroying a large two-wing barn and uprooting a livestock fence, causing cattle to scatter. According to the emergency manager's account, soon after the tornado passed, neighbors appeared with the necessary machines to rebuild the fence, corral the livestock, and build a temporary shelter for the roofless farming vehicles. The temporary repairs would secure the tornado victim's property until his homeowner's insurance compensated him for permanent fixtures. This was the type of reciprocity and trust that appeared to bind residents of the studied communities. This finding alone could serve as a positive generalization to other regions with similar demographics in the U.S. and its territories.

The general research objective sought by this study centered on the unresolved question of compliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in rural America that were issued in 2009 (DHS, 2009). Initially, these guidelines were designed and issued in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to protect all communities from manmade and natural disasters. They were then revised following the response to the

Hurricane Katrina disaster in August 2005 (DHS, 2009). In particular, this study was driven by the *Central Question* of how civic leaders in rural communities justified noncompliance with the issued guidelines. That research question was influenced by the previously reviewed literature, and although presumptive in nature, it was intended to address only those communities that were actually found to be noncompliant. This study, however, found that all of the studied communities were compliant with the *National Preparedness Guidelines*. No evidence of noncompliance was found in any of the communities visited during the study period. This central question was answered by participant responses to interview questions that described the nature of disasters that had occurred in the community (*Interview Question1*), the threats they posed to local infrastructure (*Interview Question 2*), the protocols in place to respond to those threats (*Interview Question 7*), and acceptance of federal guidelines and assistance (*Interview Question 15*). Those responses indicated that the studied communities had already implemented the *National Preparedness Guidelines* and had been compliant with the guidelines' provisions since their initial issuance. A number of the emergency managers interviewed in Kansas and Missouri stated that they had been involved in the disciplines of homeland security and emergency management for the past decade.

Research Question 1 addressed how noncompliance with national guidelines reflected the ability or inability of rural leaders to meet their governing goals as they related to public safety and national security. In their responses to *Interview Questions 3, 4, 5, 6,* and *8*, all of the participants described the natural conditions and types of groups that threatened their communities. They explained how they jointly conducted their threat

assessments in line with national and state guidelines, established mutual-aid agreements, and identified the county, state, and federal agencies available for assistance. Members attending threat assessment meetings usually involved the Mid-America Council, which is composed of representatives from the four-state region, FEMA, state regional emergency coordinators, local emergency managers, law enforcement officials, and members of area National Guard units. At those meetings, attending members share their concerns concerning particular emergency incident needs.

As an example, a community in southwest Missouri experienced a particularly heavy snowfall last year that immobilized the town. The deep snow prevented the town's emergency vehicles, business owners, and residents from traveling safely over the roads. The town's emergency manager called the National Guard unit in the next county and asked the Guard to bring the necessary equipment to clear the town's roads, which it did. The question that was discussed at the following regional assessment meeting was whether it would be practical for FEMA to purchase a large snowplow for that town and house it in the local fire station, or enter into an agreement with the National Guard unit to make its equipment available when needed. The decision was made to submit a grant to FEMA requesting a snowplow to be used as needed and housed in a centrally located firehouse. The reasoning was that if the roads were impassable during a heavy snowfall, National Guardsmen who operated the unit's equipment would also have difficulty getting to the Armory and make the equipment operational.

Research Question 2 concerned the role that funding played in the ability or inability of rural leaders to implement the national guidelines. Participant responses to

Interview Questions 9 and *11* indicated that funding and lack of resources were always issues but that those shortcomings were usually overcome by local volunteerism, mutual-aid, and federal grants. The emergency managers interviewed in Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri offered the same response to these interview questions. Accepting that they had no control over the question of funding, they had long ago committed to carry out their duties as best as they could with the resources the state made available to them. Those resources, coupled with eligibility for FEMA grant applications to acquire special needs equipment, met all their funding needs. For example, interviewees M3-EM and K3-EM stated almost verbatim during their interviews that "additional funds were always welcome to fill vacancies and acquire more current equipment, but their limitation was not having a negative impact on their ability to perform effectively." To the specific question of whether direct funding from the federal government would improve their operational effectiveness, all of the participants responded that direct funding would have a negative effect on their operational flexibility due to administrative accounting requirements they deemed time consuming and nonoperational. This consensus was best explained by interviewee M2-LE/EM, who stated that "assuming responsibility for the receipt of direct funding from either the federal or state government would have a negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency operations due to the preoccupation of field coordinators with the maintenance of additional records for the expenditures of those funds." He added that "the two functions were incompatible because both were full-time jobs."

The intent of *Research Question 3* was to elicit information about the role that regional remoteness played in rural leaders' decisions not to implement the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in their communities. Participant responses to *Interview Questions 10* and *12* described a long history of cooperation with other local and regional emergency response agencies and indicated that a remote lifestyle was a matter of choice. As a result, rural residents found it easy to work with other like-minded people during times of need, thus expressing an active form of social capital to complement their chosen status of remoteness and separation (Putnam, 2000). In response to *Interview Question 12,* M4-EM, M5-EM, and K3-EM stated that they had no communication limitations with their regional coordinators or state capitals in case of an emergency. In fact, they proudly exhibited their state-of-the-art telecommunications systems, which they stated were satellite driven. Those emergency managers followed their presentations with the statement that, due in part to this capability, their overall effectiveness in response and recovery efforts regarding emergencies that occur in their communities had been significantly enhanced. Informal conversations that I had with local residents while waiting for a scheduled participant interview reflected confidence in the ability of their local leaders to provide for their safety and security prior to, during, and following an incident. A curious finding in response to this question was that none of the participants, whether emergency managers or law enforcement officials, considered themselves separated from urban centers or disconnected from social contacts in those areas due to their relative remoteness. Participants M5-EM, K1-EM/LE, and K3-EM stated that they

often travelled to regional urban centers to remain socially connected, or to participate in refresher training in their respective disciplines.

Finally, *Research Question 4,* which addressed the issue of whether rural community leaders understood their duties, roles, and responsibilities in the post 9/11 era, was fully explained by participant responses to *Interview Questions 13* and *14.* In their responses, none of the participants expressed concerns about limitations due to remoteness, having learned to be self-reliant following years of being confronted with natural disasters, regardless whether their population numbers ranged from 2,500 to 10,500. In their responses to *Interview Question 13*, participants stated that their personal roles in local emergency matters were those of on-site directors of operations. All participants expressed a clear understanding of their public safety and security roles in the post-9/11 era.

Table 1

Relationship of Study's Research Questions to Participant Interview Questions

Research questions	Interview questions
Central research question	Interview Questions 1, 2, 7, & 15
Research Subquestion 1	Interview Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, & 8
Research Subquestion 2	Interview Questions 9 & 11
Research Subquestion 3	Interview Questions 10 & 12
Research Subquestion 4	Interview Questions 13 & 14

Note. From Dissertation Chapter 1, p. 11, and Appendix B, p. 160.

This chapter will next review the setting where the field research was conducted, along with the demographics particular to this study. These general explanations will be followed by a specific description of the data collection and analysis phases of the study, and then a discussion about developed evidence of the study's trustworthiness. That discussion will be complemented with a description of the analyzed data's results. The final section will provide a summary of this chapter's contents, and offer a transitional introduction to Chapter 5.

Setting

Following the June 2015 approval by the University's IRB to conduct this study, I contacted potential gatekeepers in the selected states of Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska. After making travel arrangements, I began the field research phase of this study in July 2015. The geographical setting for this study was the corridor that extends from Texas and Oklahoma through Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Iowa. This corridor is commonly referred to as "Tornado Alley." The physical locations for the conduct of face-to-face interviews were the public offices of regional law enforcement officials and emergency managers who were situated in small rural communities along that corridor. In one instance the interview was conducted by telephone with M4-EM who was in route to his office from a regional conference. The field research revealed no organizational or personal conditions at the time of the study that may have influenced interpretation of this study's results. When presented to preidentified participants, the letter of consent proved effective not only as my introduction, but also in outlining the purpose and scope of the study. As a result, participants expressed an interest in participating in the study, all of

whom consented to a recorded interview, except for three, although all signed a consent form and agreed to answer the interview questions. A fire chief who also served as an emergency manager was interviewed outside his fire station as he prepared to answer a call.

During the field research phase I conducted 10 formal interviews and participated in several informal conversations with local residents regarding the state of emergency preparedness in their rural communities. Prior to initiating contact with participants, I took the time to study the pertinent federal, state, and regional documents concerning emergency preparedness policies, operational practices, and organizational structures in effect within each state. That preparation proved helpful during the interview process, especially in those instances when participants accepted my knowledge base. Due to a developed rapport with participants along with my understanding of the study issues, no conditions were noted that would have influenced the final interpretation of this study's results.

A remarkable finding during my informal conversations with local residents was the expressed faith and confidence in the ability of their local leaders to provide for the general safety and security of their respective communities. These informal conversations were held with state, county, and city employees, as well as local residents in the states of Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas. As a group, their comments reflected an understanding of the threats they faced seasonally and accepted the likelihood that at one future time or another they would be part of the volunteer group that responds to an incident. Contrary to previously reported findings by Oliver (2007, 2009) the field research confirmed that

local rural leaders did understand their roles and responsibilities prior to, during, and after a disaster, whether the cause was natural or manmade. At those times, local residents tend express a bonding with affected neighbors, often bridging social diversity to assist in the response, recovery, and mitigating processes. According to participants and residents of the communities studied, assistance during times of need is never an issue. As explained by K3-EM, what does create a series of logistical problems during an incident is an influx of uninvited volunteers from adjoining regional areas. Those problems are related to the provisions of sleeping and hygiene facilities, food, water, fuel, as well as with traffic congestion, coordination, communication, and conflicts in leadership. These types of problems became evident in 2011 after a deadly tornado devastated the western part of Joplin, Missouri, a town of 50,000 people situated in the Tornado Alley corridor. To prevent such future recurrences of uninvited volunteers, local and regional emergency managers from Kansas and Missouri were invited by the emergency manager in Joplin, Missouri to participate in a Mid-America Council meeting shortly after the tornado passed. At that meeting, operational guidelines for all contiguous states, adjoining communities, and regions, were established which directed outside emergency services not to respond to an incident site unless they are invited, and to bring only the personnel and equipment that is requested.

Demographics

The statistical characteristics of the populations studied included white, middle-aged, emergency managers, fire, and law enforcement officials who choose to live in the Heartland's rural communities selected for this study. The communities studied ranged

from 2,500 to 10,500 residents, most of who have lived in the same homes where they were born. This observation included the majority of the study participants. Newer residents were retirees or transfers from urban centers who sought a more pastoral setting in which to live. An example of such a resident was a participant who retired as a U.S. Marine Colonel and decided to buy a farm in rural Kansas along the Tornado Alley corridor. By circumstance he was elected county sheriff and also became the area's joint emergency manager. All of the formal interviews involved local professional emergency managers or law enforcement officials responsible for the implementation and execution of safety and security measures in their respective rural communities. All the participants interviewed were active, full-time professionals serving as emergency managers, fire chiefs, or law enforcement officers. Other local leaders such as mayors and city attorneys were not available for interviews, and those who were contacted indicated they had little to do with emergency management or preparedness programs in their communities.

Data Collection

As the primary tool for data collection, I conducted face-to-face interviews with ten rural civic officials responsible for the implementation and execution of emergency preparedness measures in their communities within the Midwestern states of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas. From federal Internet sites I collected and reviewed those public documents related to emergency preparedness for use by all of the nation's communities. From state sites I collected and reviewed those documents dedicated to a particular state's adaptation of the *National Preparedness Guidelines.* In all instances, the state documents were mirror versions of the federal publications. Although each of the

studied states had developed its own organizational structure in response to incidents, as well as a messaging system to alert citizens of impending threats, their operational manuals, such as the NRF and NIMS, were printed in language identical to that of the federal documents. At the state district or regional levels, which are comprised of 12 or more counties, the operational policies under which they currently operate strictly follow the state's guidelines. As an example, the State of Missouri lists nine appointed regional coordinators assigned to administer and ensure compliance with the state's guidelines in 114 counties. That level of compliance is necessary in order for the state to qualify for federal homeland security funding and to maintain eligibility for FEMA grant approval (State of Iowa, 2015; State of Kansas, 2014; State of Missouri, 2015; State of Nebraska, 2014-2016).

Prior to initiating the field interviews, I purchased a binder with eight pockets in which I inserted maps of the selected study states, and copies of each state's emergency preparedness plans, along with 10 sets of consent forms and interview questions that were assigned identification codes. The locations for conducting interviews were participants' offices in Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas. Most of the interviews lasted between 25 to 45 minutes, depending on the participant's schedule. The interview data was recorded and stored in an Olympus digital voice recorder, model number WS-821. A variation to the initial interview protocol occurred when a Nebraska participant referred to me by a gatekeeper declined to participate. This happened one other time in Kansas. Responses to the interview questions reached the level of redundancy by the tenth interview, so I determined it unnecessary to continue the process. The only unusual

circumstances encountered during the data collection phase were the refusal by a law enforcement official to allow me a telephone interview after he previously agreed to a face-to-face interview. Another was the failure of a rural emergency manager who granted me a telephone interview, but never returned the consent form. Other than those two variations, the field research was deemed successful after ten participants produced the data to answer the research questions sufficiently.

Data Analysis

The inductive nature of qualitative research analysis led this study from specific pieces of data to larger patterns of similar information, which helped form themes that facilitated the interpretation of that data. A review of the Stanford University (2010-2012) publication on the use of Atlas.ti for qualitative data analysis proved useful in the coding, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected. Following the user-friendly booklet, I was able to code types of threats to the studied rural communities, how to manage those codes, and align them by type, frequency, severity, and region. Patterns of codes included the extreme degrees of cold and heat, duration of droughts, the frequency of electrical storms and fires, storms that cause flooding, and extremist groups of the political right. According to local law enforcement officials and emergency managers, a militant group known as *Sovereign Citizens,* which is active in the Midwest, has created problems through acts of civil disobedience in local communities by refusing to obey first responder directives during emergencies. Sovereign Citizens do not recognize civil law because they consider themselves independent of government authority except for that of the county sheriff. In regard to the natural threats that the studied communities experience

seasonally, participants M2-EM and K3-EM conceded that although Nature's threats cannot be prevented, they have learned to prepare against and recover from their effects through the application of best emergency management practices.

An example can be drawn from *National Aeronautics and Space Administration's* (NASA) ability to track massive storms, bearing 80 to 100 mile fronts, across Kansas in a converted DC-8 that sends messages to regional ground stations. Those messages alert local emergency managers before the storm hits their area. A curious finding regarding this storm-chasing effort was that these storm fronts form in the late afternoon, at which time the plane circles and begins tracking them to report their direction. These high wind fronts may travel from Kansas to Iowa where they may drop six inches of rain in a short period of time, accompanied by multiple lightning strikes and flooding by morning. I had a chance to witness this type of overnight flooding while conducting field research in Iowa. When I asked local residents if the flooding qualified for regional or federal aid, they responded that it did not, that they were used to it and knew how to deal with the problem. Historically, the geographical area between Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri averages 50 days of such torrential storms each year (Bavley, 2015; Montgomery, 2015). The stated objective of the NASA experiment is to collect sufficient data to more accurately pinpoint where and when the next downpour will occur, thereby allowing emergency managers on the ground more time to prepare for the likely flooding that will follow, and to move people to safer areas (Bavley, 2015).

Due to the Midwest region's lack of mountains, hills, wooded areas, or large bodies of water, and the presence of other climatologically determined conditions as

illustrated in Figure 1, nature uses the void of those natural elements to provide dramatic scenes that reflect those conditions. Figure 2 below presents an illustration of a storm cell hovering over the Kansas plains. This is the type of storm cell that NASA tracks by aircraft throughout the Midwest during the stormy season. Figure 3 that follows, is a photo illustration of a lightning storm over Kansas City, Kansas as referred to by the above cited sources.

Figure 2. Photo image of super storm cell over Kansas plain. Open source print retrieved from Sean Heavey, Barcraft Media. Article 1334672-OC511.

Figure 3 that follows illustrates a photo image of an evening electrical storm over Kansas City, Kansas as it is viewed from Kansas City, Missouri (Antle, Lauria, Mirriam-Goldberg, & Locke, 2015). These storms can appear with little notice and bring with them massive fronts that drop great amounts of water after they introduce themselves with such electrical activity. The point being made is that rural and urban residents of the

Midwest must not only contend with these threats, but also with the flooding they bring and the tornadoes they create. M3-EM/LE stated that the main concern for emergency managers during the winter months is snow removal and an occasional accidental fire caused by an unattended appliance. He added, however, that if snowfall is heavy, then the spring thaw is prone to flood communities near rivers and lakes.

Figure 3. Storm cell preceded by lightning activity over Kansas City, Kansas, viewed from Kansas City, Missouri. Retrieved from the *Kansas City Star,* (November 5, 2015, p. 3C).

The only discrepant qualities that may require mention were the noted differences between participant statements and findings in the previously cited studies, which will be more fully contrasted in the Results section of this paper. The major themes that emerged from data analysis were the identification of the emergency management and law

enforcement personnel who serve the rural communities that seasonally experience extreme heat, cold, drought, lightning storms, fires, flooding, tornadoes, and extremist groups of the political right. The services provided by local law enforcement are the protection of life and property. Emergency managers help rural policy makers plan for response and recovery operations following an incident. Firefighters and emergency medical technicians complete the quartet of first responders in these rural areas where immediate response is critical. Atlas.ti was used to collect, organize, review, and interpret the data. This guidance simplified the coding process, which I eventually reduced from 172 to 10 major codes. One code identified and aligned the purposes and functions of the first responders in the local Homeland Security effort. Eight other codes defined the threats particular to each of the studied sites, and the tenth code described the actual services provided to each rural community.

The purposeful application of axial and selective coding allowed me to utilize categorical aggregation to facilitate the interpretation of the collected data with specific, issue related meaning (Creswell, 2013). Because this case study involved multisites, I was able to apply a variance of cross case synthesis of the collected data from different sites as an analytical technique (Yin, 2014). Although I have provided an explanation of the data collection process as a separate function from data analysis, I found the two processes closely related in purpose, due partly to the constant development of patterns and themes as the data were being collected (Patton, 2002). This iterative process is reflected in the analysis process I utilized during the study. My familiarity with the studied region, coupled with my subject knowledge base, proved instrumental in

facilitating the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. These advantages helped me focus on the issues being addressed through the interview questions. This avoided being led into local issues not pertinent or relevant to the subject under investigation. The interview questions served to develop the codes, patterns, and themes, which ultimately led to an interpretation of the data that was responsive to the study's research questions. The resulting interpretation allowed me to begin shaping the study's story. Participant responses to the interview questions were transcribed, after which the transcripts were processed and analyzed on my computer's hard drive. The data will be stored securely for the required five years in a file safe located in my home office.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

As stated in *Chapter 3* of this paper, the primary purpose of trustworthiness is to support the argument that a study's findings are valid. The validation strategies applied in this study stressed quality, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. By extension, validation of the study research provided judgment of the study's overall trustworthiness. In this study I viewed the implementation of credibility as assurance that the study was believable and trustworthy from the participants' perspective. Participants' openness and confidence in the accuracy of their responses to the interview questions did much to assure that they had provided honest answers to the inquiries. A review of each state's guidelines prior to conducting interviews was helpful in confirming the accuracy of participant responses. Although credibility represented only one criterion for judging the quality of this study by establishing trustworthiness from each of the participants' perspectives, it proved the transferability of the study's findings, and established the

extent to which the results could be generalized to other settings. The study's exploratory process took place in the four states of Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas, a region with urban centers and rural areas that are afflicted by extreme weather patterns and extremist groups. Indications from this study's results are that the findings are reliable and transferable to other regions situated in various parts of the US and its possessions.

My review of the four state's documents, and subsequent conduct of participant interviews, served to ensure this study's construct validity and reliability by using multiple sources of data, establishing a chain of evidence, and using key interviewees to review each participant's emergency management practices (Yin, 2009, 2014). In regard to confirmability, reviewers should be able to corroborate this study's findings through the use of triangulation, not only to reduce assumptions and biases, but also to recognize methodological limitations through the use of audit trails. In summary, no adjustments were necessary to the implemented strategies that provided evidence of this study's trustworthiness. This explanation conforms to the study's standards of validity and trustworthiness as initially presented in *Chapter 3*.

Results

This final section addressed each research question and its relation to each of the interview questions. In addition, each of the field interview questions was supported by the collected data, which included transcriptions and government documents. Also provided in this section are discussions of discrepant data found to be disconfirming of previously held assumptions. This discussion includes appropriate tables and figures designed to facilitate understanding of the relationships between research and interview

questions. The following narrative discusses the themes first introduced during the data analysis phase of the study, and how each of the field interview questions served to elicit information necessary to answer the research questions. Because all of the participants interviewed were professional first responders directly involved in executing state policy and directing operations, their statements gave credibility to the interview question responses. Upon arrival at the setting, I assigned codes to each of the states, sites, and participants. For example, M1-EM/F is code for participant one in the state of Missouri, whose primary position was emergency manager, with a background in fire fighting. Participant number five in Kansas, who was a certified emergency manager, as well as a captain of detectives, was coded as K5-EM/LE. Other participants were coded in accordance with their primary training and background. As an example, M3-EM was the third interviewee in Missouri experienced and trained solely in emergency management.

The Central Question that drove this study concerned how rural civic leaders justified their noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines*. This question was influenced by the five previous studies, which found varying degrees of noncompliance in each of the other studied Midwestern states (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010). Seemingly presumptive in nature, the question was found to be invalid in this studied region. This research question was disconfirmed by all participants in their responses to *Interview Questions 1, 2, 7,* and *15*. Those interview questions addressed the issues of disaster occurrences in their respective communities since the 9/11 attacks, their responses to those incidents, the assessed risk to and vulnerability of their infrastructure, the type of

regional assistance available, and general acceptance of federal guidelines. In their responses to *Interview Question 1,* interviewees M1, M2, M3, M4, I1, and K1 through K5 stated that the threats their communities faced seasonally were primarily natural and involved preparation and recovery from tornadoes, flooding, droughts, deep snow falls, wild fires, and wind storms. Emergency managers in Nebraska did not return my consent forms or telephone calls, so their comments will not be included in these findings. Another threat reported by M1 was the phenomenon of micro bursts, a form of linear wind shear that tears whatever is in its path when it touches the ground. Participants K1, K2, K3, and M1 reported that law enforcement occasionally encountered various forms of civil disobedience from members of the Sovereign Citizen militant group.

In response to *Interview Question 2*, all participants, except I1 and N1, reported that their critical infrastructure included local government buildings, electric grids, waste-water plants, area lakes and dams, as well as bridges, schools, school buses, and water supplies. Also critical to their rural status were clear ingress and egress roadways to their communities for emergency and supply vehicles. Participants' responses to *Interview Question 7* confirmed the implementation of mutual-aid agreements and letters of understanding with contiguous counties and states during a major disaster. Participant K4 added that Kansas state law required that in-state agencies should be contacted first during such major emergencies. To *Interview Question 15*, all participants, except I1 and N1, responded that they welcomed the issuance of federal homeland security funding and the *National Preparedness Guidelines*. As a whole, all participants stated that direct state or federal funding to their communities would not be practical due to the cumbersome

requirements to account for program funds. They added that the *National Preparedness Guidelines* provided them standardization for the preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation phases before, during, and following an incident. Participants acknowledged that the same guidelines provided protocols for setting up universal command centers and common reporting standards so that all responders become familiar with field operations when assigned to an incident.

Research Question1 concerned how noncompliance with the national guidelines affected local rural leaders' ability to meet their governing goals and resource needs as they related to national security and public safety. Participant responses to *Interview Questions 3, 4, 5, 6,* and *8* provided sufficient information to conclude that local leaders' ability to govern was not compromised in spite of having to develop threat assessments, execute mutual aid agreements, and also deal with area militant groups. In their responses to *Interview Question 3*, participants M1, M2, K2, and K4 stated that members of the Sovereign Citizens group had a history of challenging local laws by disobeying them. To *Interview Question 4,* participant M1 responded that the Mid-America Council conducted his area's threat assessments. Participants M2, M3, and M4, stated that they personally conducted the threat assessments for their areas of responsibility, as did I1, K1, K3, K4, and K5. *Interview Question 5* was posed to determine what federal, state, or county agencies had been contacted to help with threat assessments. All of the participants responded that their assessments followed the guidelines provided by FEMA. As a follow up to the previous question, Interview Question 6 was written to elicit information about the federal, state, or county agencies that offered assistance during actual disasters or

threats. Participant M1 responded that he relied on the National Weather Service and the State Fire Marshal's Office. The other Kansas and Missouri participants from M2 to M4, and K1, K3 to K5 stated they relied on mutual-aid agreements and volunteers. Participant K1 added that in the past he had called for specialized expertise from federal agencies in Kansas City, Missouri.

Research Question 2 concerned participants about the role that funding, and a lack of resources, played in local leaders' ability to implement emergency measures in their rural communities. *Interview Question 9* addressed how funding and remoteness affected their community's implementation of emergency preparedness measures. *Interview Question 11* pertained to what mutual-aid agreements communities had with regional agencies. In response to *Interview Question 9,* participants M1, M4, and K1 stated they relied on FEMA grants for any funding above what the state allows them for homeland security purposes. Participants I1, M2, K3, K4, and K5 stated that funding had always been an issue, and with additional funding they would be able to update their communications systems and provide their first responders with additional training. They added that more funding would also allow for the placement of more law enforcement officers to deal with area militant groups. Despite funding shortages, they stated that current operational funding was adequate and felt secure in the knowledge that FEMA grants were available when specific equipment was justified. Mutual-aid provided additional assistance when it was needed. In his response to *Interview Question 11,* participant I1 stated that he was part of the Homeland Security Council, and a six-county mutual-aid response unit with shared communication radio frequencies. Participants M1,

M2, M3, and M4 stated they were part of the regional Fire Chiefs Association, the Mid-America Council, and state-wide mutual-aid groups. Kansas participants K1, K3, K4, and K5, stated they were part of regional and state-wide mutual-aid groups that responded to meetings when called.

Research Question 3 was worded to ask what role remoteness played in rural leaders' ability to implement emergency preparedness measures in their communities since the attacks of 9/11. *Interview Question 10* was phrased to elicit information about a rural community's ability to respond to and recover from major incidents. *Interview Question 12* addressed the issue of limitations that rural communities experienced with communications due to their remoteness. In their responses to *Interview Question 10,* participants M1 through M4 stated they were part of local task forces comprised of fire, police, emergency medical technicians, and emergency managers. In addition, they stated that they were also part of disaster preparedness committees led by the Missouri Office of Emergency Management (MOEM) and FEMA. Kansas participants K1, K3, K4, and K5, stated they were part of local task forces comprised of first responders, as well as regional groups committed to developing emergency preparedness strategies. Iowa participant I1 stated that he relied on support from local volunteers, first responders, as well as regional mutual-aid members.

In response to *Interview Question 12*, participants K1 and K3 stated that rurality and remoteness limited their ability to hire a hazardous materials expert because they could not justify his expertise on an annual basis. As a consequence, they normally secured a contaminated area until such an expert was provided by an urban center.

Kansas participants K4 and K5 pointed out that because they served primary emergency managers for their communities, their greatest concern was to become ill or disabled and not be able to conduct their duties in case of an incident. Their other concern was that as local emergency managers, they were responsible for their own deployment and local coordination efforts when responding to an incident. Missouri participants M1 through M4 expressed their concerns with remoteness in terms of hours before mutual-aid could arrive to supplement their local resources. They pointed out that the nearest regional center was hours away and perhaps even longer if the incident affected highways and local ingress roads to their communities. Curiously, although their communities were often situated long distances from the nearest urban centers, not one participant considered himself as separate or remote from people in those regional centers. As a group, participants held the common belief that responses to emergency incidents should be a local matter unless the incident overwhelmed their capability, at which time they would rely on area volunteers and mutual-aid from the nearest urban center.

Finally, *Research Question 4* related to what understanding local leaders had about their duties and responsibilities in the post 9/11 era regarding the implementation of emergency preparedness measures in their communities. This study's results found that rural civic leaders had a complete understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding the protection of life and property in their communities. Their responses to *Interview Questions 13* and *14* attest to that understanding. *Interview Question 13* was worded to determine what role each of the participants played in case of a manmade or natural disaster. *Interview Question 14* related to the size of the population their offices

served. All the participants responded to *Interview Questions 13* and *14* with the statement that they were solely responsible for the overall coordination of disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation plans in their respective communities, which numbered between 2,500 and 10,500 residents. A concern expressed by participant M1 was that too often other responding agencies tended to overstep their authority and allow parochial interests to limit cooperation. Participant K2 offered that a command center established in accordance with NIMS guidelines overcomes incident leadership issues. In all, participants expressed few limitations to the conduct of their public safety roles and responsibility to those they serve.

Table 2 below, shows how the interview questions served to disconfirm or to confirm the research questions.

Table 2

Analysis Showing How Interview Questions Disconfirmed or Confirmed the Research Questions

Research questions	Interview questions
Central research question	Disconfirmed by IQs 1, 2, 7, & 15
Research Question 1	Disconfirmed by IQs 3, 4, 5, 6, & 8
Research Question 2	Confirmed by IQs 9 & 11
Research Question 3	Disconfirmed by IQs 10 & 12
Research Question 4	Disconfirmed by IQs 13 & 14

Note. From Dissertation Chapter 4, pp. 112-118.

What these findings revealed were that the conclusions reported in the previous studies (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010), were not generalizable. They were not transferable from the other

Midwestern states because the identified problems and findings must have been exclusive to those regions. In any case, this study proved that compliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* was ongoing and systematically implemented at the state, regional, district, and local levels of government in these four states. This study also proved that emergency management and disaster response is a career held by college educated and experienced personnel in these fields. At this point in the discussion, it was important to draw a contrast between discrepant cases and disconfirming information that was presented in the previously reviewed studies (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010), and the resulting findings of this study.

Although acknowledged that the study problem, purpose, research method, and interview questions developed for this study were influenced by the findings of previous studies (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010), this study revealed some discrepancies and illuminated disconfirming data that contradicted the findings of those previous studies. By accepting this study's analysis and interpretation of the data collected as trustworthy, these findings indicated that the conclusions reached by authors of the previous studies may have been relevant only to the sites being investigated at the time. Except for the role that funding has played in local leaders' ability or inability to implement viable emergency measures in their rural communities, as stated in *Research Question 2*, neither of the previous study findings proved dependable or reliable. For example, in this study's *Research Question 1,* rural leaders did not have to explain how they justified noncompliance with national security

and safety measures because it was found that they were already in full compliance. Local leaders' ability to meet their governing goals, as they related to public safety and national security, appear not to have been compromised as implied in that research question. *Research Question 3* was phrased to determine what role regional remoteness played in decisions made by rural leaders not to implement the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in their communities (Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010). This study found that regional remoteness or separation had little or no bearing on rural leaders' willingness or ability to implement adaptations of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* as directed and supported by their state-designated regional or district emergency managers.

Research Question 4 was concerned with the understanding local leaders had in regard to their duties and responsibilities to provide safety and security measures for residents of their rural communities (Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010). The results revealed that local leaders have had a very good understanding of their responsibilities to provide for the safety and security of their rural communities. The initial intent of these research and interview questions was to gain new information regarding the issue of noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines,* and to confirm levels of compliance in the region's rural study sites. Participant responses to the interview questions disconfirmed the *Central Research Question* as well as *Research Questions 1, 3, and 4.* Only *Research Question 2*, regarding the issue of funding, was confirmed.

Contrary to the findings reported by the previous and mostly quantitative studies, this qualitative case study found that the studied rural communities in the four-state regions of Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri had adopted applicable versions of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* issued in 2009 to achieve compliance with guideline provisions. The study also found that funding limitations had not restricted the ability of rural leaders to govern in relation to public safety and concern for national security. Another finding established that remoteness was a matter of choice, and that rural communities customarily relied on one another for mutual-aid during times of need with expressions of social capital (Putnam, 2000). An important finding in this study was that rural civic leaders had a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the post 9/11 era.

Initially, I had some concern that study participants may regard a few of the interview questions as affronts to their sense of professional competence and civic responsibility. As the professionals they represented themselves to be, the questions were accepted as candid academic critiques of their established operational standards. The participants interviewed were college trained and experienced emergency managers or law enforcement officials. Their normal responses to the interview questions reflected an in-depth knowledge of their respective duties, noting that a few had received training and earned experience in both disciplines. As the sole data collector for this study, I could not avoid making a mental note of the pride participants exhibited about their professions, and the openness with which they shared their understanding of the principles related to homeland security and emergency management. Those observations were reinforced by

the constant analysis of the data they provided, which seemed redundant after the 10th interview. At that point, I determined that the data being collected had reached the saturation point (Patton, 2002). The findings provided convincing evidence that despite being interviewed at different sites, and often in different states, the study participants expressed a clear understanding of their joint and individual roles in providing competent and effective emergency response capability to all the residents of their respective rural communities.

Summary

The introduction to this chapter provided a brief review of this study's purpose and the developed research questions. This review was followed with a preview of the chapter's structure and organization. The next major section described the study's setting in Tornado Alley along the Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska, Iowa borders. The study's purpose was to conduct field research along that corridor to determine how residents of rural communities, with populations between 2,500 and 10,500 coped with the threats posed by a seasonal cycle of disasters that include extreme cold, heat, rain, fire, drought, lightning strikes, tornadoes, and extremist groups of the political right. Face-to-face interviews with local emergency managers and law enforcement officials in selected rural communities explained that despite limited resources, they were able to meet all of the threats that nature and extremist groups imposed on them. When incidents overwhelmed local capabilities, mutual-aid and volunteers supplemented local first responders. Participant demographics relevant to this study reflected primarily white Middle Americans of all age groups in a pastoral environment that was either their place of birth,

or to which they later gravitated. Other than the variances in generational representation, no other evidence of ethnic diversity was noted.

The data collection process involved face-to-face interviews with participants in ten rural communities within a four-state area in order to a gain a richer narrative concerning operational policies and emergency management practices at each of the sites. There were no variations or unusual circumstances present in the data collection process. As the sole data collection tool, I was obligated to make unannounced visits to meet with participants after previously contacted gatekeepers proved ineffective. This solicitation technique proved useful as one participant offered to provide an introduction to a counterpart in another region or state. The data collected was recorded on a digital recorder and also written in response to a previously prepared questionnaire. My presence at all interviews, coupled with a good subject knowledge base, facilitated my ability to analyze and interpret the data collected. The discrepancies or variances in this study's findings were the result of contrasts with findings in previous studies that addressed the same problem, which initially shaped this study's problem and purpose statements, as well as the research questions. The face-to-face interviews of participants, coupled with my developed knowledge of the subject, formed to provide sufficient evidence of the study's trustworthiness.

This study's results confirmed one of the previous studies' findings (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2009; Stigler, 2010), as they related to funding and resources, and disconfirmed the others. I remind the reader that each of the above cited studies provided the basis for this study's primary research

questions. The four that were disconfirmed related to questions of local leaders justifying noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines,* how noncompliance affected rural leaders' ability to govern in relation to public safety and national security, and whether rural leaders understood their roles and responsibilities in the post 9/11 era. What this study's results also presented was the likelihood that the previous studies' findings were exclusive to the other Midwestern states and therefore not transferable to this study's research sites. Based on the results of this study's findings, it may be appropriate to expand on them for potential adoption by other US regions and its possessions having similar demographic profiles of urban centers and multiple rural areas. In *Chapter 5,* I make recommendations on how rural communities in those regions can implement effective emergency preparedness measures despite limited resources. The final chapter presents an interpretation of the study's findings, lists the study's particular limitations, and explains recommendations applicable to rural areas. *Chapter 5* also discusses the study's implications for social change, and presents conclusions drawn from the field research findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and to describe the various rationales that rural civic leaders in Upper Midwest states offered as their justification for not complying with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* that were issued in 2008 (DHS, 2009). The guidelines were issued after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, with the intent of providing assistance to all of the nation's communities in the development of their own security plans to prepare them for and allow them to respond to, recover from, and mitigate against natural or manmade disasters. The only available works in the literature on the subject of compliance with the national guidelines in rural communities are five studies conducted by Bryant (2009), Chenoweth and Clarke (2010), Marion and Cronin (2009), Oliver (2007, 2009), and Stigler (2010). Those studies presented findings that indicated that the primary reasons for rural noncompliance with the national guidelines were lack of funding, concerns related to cost effectiveness, rural leaders misunderstanding their roles in the post-9/11 era, and regional remoteness. The intent of this study was to confirm or disconfirm the validity of those previous studies' findings with the purpose of developing a common rationale for the findings of compliance or noncompliance. By extension, if these rationales were proven valid throughout rural America, which is estimated to represent as much as 97.5% of the nation's land area and is home to 18% of the nation's population (NLC, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014), the previous studies' conclusions implied that national security and rural public safety were being compromised. This implied condition

justified further research on the question of homeland security in rural America and thus influenced the purpose and title of this study.

The nature of this study derived from a qualitative multisite single-case approach that aligned with the inquiry's stated purpose and objectives. The selection of this approach followed the rationale that the concept drives the research and the study purpose drives the analysis (Patton, 2002). Each of the previous studies' findings influenced the formulation of open-ended research questions for this study that were designed to elicit the necessary information to achieve the study's objectives. For example, participant responses to the interview questions provided the necessary information that ultimately led to a clear understanding of the reasons for compliance. Indeed, this study's findings were instrumental in disconfirming a greater number of the previous studies' findings and confirming only a smaller number (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010), suggesting that the nation's security and rural public safety are intact and that programs in those areas are operating more effectively than earlier studies suggested.

Interpretation of the Findings

As stated in the previous paragraph, this study's key findings can be summarized as objective results that answer the stated research questions. For example, the central question, which was shaped by previous studies and addressed how rural civic leaders justified their noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines*, was disconfirmed (Bryant, 2009; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010). All participant responses to the interview questions reflected a pattern of compliance by

rural leaders, who described how they had used the national guidelines to prepare for and respond to disasters since the 9/11 attacks. Their descriptions included the types of incidents experienced, the vulnerability of their infrastructure, their response plans, and local mutual-aid agreements, all of which are components of the *National Preparedness Guidelines. Research Question 1,* which was also influenced by the previous studies (Bryant, 2009; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010), concerned how the issue of noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* affected participants' ability to fulfill their governing roles as they related to national security and public safety. This study's findings disconfirmed this question following purposeful interviews with participants, who responded from 10 different sites indicating that their ability to govern had never been compromised because they had been in compliance since the issuance of the federal guidelines. Those responses suggested that the studied communities had been compliant with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* since they were first issued in 2009 by their state emergency management directors in Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas.

This study's findings did confirm the assumption of *Research Question 2,* which presumed that lack of funding and lack of resources hindered rural leaders' ability to implement emergency measures in their communities. In all of the previous studies, participants had indicated that one of their rationales for noncompliance was related to the lack of funding (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010). In this study, all participants responded that although more funding would allow the hiring of additional personnel and purchase of new

equipment, what was allotted by the state adequately served their needs. They presented the view that resource limitations were challenging, but that collective aid by first responders, area volunteers, mutual-aid units, and federal grants to fund training and special equipment made up for resource or funding deficiencies.

This study's findings disconfirmed *Research Question 3,* which was also influenced by three of the five previous studies (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Stigler, 2010). This research question asked what role remoteness and separation played in local leaders' decisions not to implement emergency preparedness measures within their rural communities. Statements by interviewees K2-EM/LE and K3-EM offered that theirs was a style of living based on personal choice and a desire to assist neighbors and community members in times of need (Putnam, 2000). In their responses to *Interview Questions 9* and *12,* these same participants did not consider their rural communities separated or remotely situated from a major urban center. As a whole, they expressed strong feelings that responses to rural incidents are handled more effectively locally. Participant K4-LE/EM explained that the policy of a county sheriff assuming responsibility for responding to all emergency incidents within a county applied only to those jurisdictions where rural towns had no police departments and that the sheriff had also established substations in those communities.

This study's findings also disconfirmed *Research Question 4,* which concerned what understanding participants had about their duties and responsibilities in the post-9/11 era regarding the implementation of preparedness guidelines in their communities. One of the previous studies influenced this question (Oliver, 2007, 2009). This research

question was summarily discounted by the findings derived from participants' responses to the interview questions. Contrary to the previous studies' conclusions, this study's findings clearly indicated that rural leaders in this Midwestern four state region had a complete understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding national security and public in the post-9/11 era.

The findings also determined that most of the conclusions reported in the previous studies were not only inconsistent and therefore inconclusive, but also nongeneralizable. In this regard, the current study's findings have extended knowledge in this particular discipline when they are compared to those in the peer-reviewed literature as described in Chapter 2. Unlike the previous studies' conclusions (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010), this study's findings produced consistent and conclusive rationales for the studied communities' relative levels of generalizable and transferable preparedness.

For this study, I chose Putman's (2000) theory of social capital to help understand the phenomenon. Experts in the field of homeland security and emergency management (Bellavita, 2010; McEntire, 2004; Reese, 2013) examined a score of theories during the past decade in attempts to find a relationship between those theories and these disciplines without success. The problem appears to be that both homeland security and emergency management encompass too many multifaceted responsibilities and functions to be defined by any single theory. I did find Putnam's theory of social capital and its civic benefits useful as an analytical lens, particularly when its principles appear to have been adopted by and adapted to the studied rural communities. Putnam promoted the concept

of social capital theory by presenting the argument that minimal adaptation of social capital in a given community will lead to a rigid and unresponsive political system. Writing from a political perspective, Putnam argued that social capital in effect is a precondition of effective government and economic growth in a particular community. Claridge (2004), a supporter of Putnam's theory, explained that social capital represents the value of social networks that tend to bond people with similar interests and to bridge otherwise diverse members of the community with norms of reciprocity and trust. These, then, are the values that facilitate collaboration, cooperation, coordination, and communication in all communities during emergencies, particularly in rural areas (Bryant, 2009).

When viewed in this context, the theory of social capital aligned well with this study. Because a theory's primary purpose is to explain a particular phenomenon, this study's initial focus was providing an explanation for the variance of rural rationales concerning local levels of compliance or noncompliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines.* This focus addressed not only about why either process was occurring, but also why it was occurring in such an affirmative way. Social capital theory, as described by Putnam (2000), is based on the concept that cohesion and stability within a community rest on a firmer foundation when local residents establish social networks that promote trust through cooperation and reciprocity during times of need. Putnam argued that the more widespread these networks are the healthier a community becomes, both socially and politically. An assumption underlying this theory, then, is that a community that cultivates and nurtures the "civic virtues" of social capital will be healthier socially,

politically, and economically, as opposed to one that does not (Putnam, 2000, p. 7). Putnam explained that social capital represents the various aspects of social relations, which include local norms, values, networks, and the roles they play in community cohesion. This community cohesion is what Putnam relates to civic virtue, which is characterized by civic engagement, political equality, solidarity, trust, tolerance, and the associational life those virtues represent. The principles of social capital theory were thus recognized as essential to the social cohesion and political health of the studied rural communities when it was necessary to meet the challenges of emergency management posed by seasonal incidents. In summary, what this study's research determined was that compliance with national and state preparedness guidelines in the studied rural communities was due, in great part, to their general adaptation of social capital principles (Bryant, 2009; Claridge, 2004; Putnam, 2000).

As the field research developed, this adaptation was reflected in the responses all 10 participants made to the interview questions. For example, the make-up of *Interview Questions 1, 2, 7,* and *15* and their responses supported the central question. Following the study's intended structure, *Interview Questions 3, 4, 5, 6,* and *8* were aimed to support *Research Question 1*. In keeping with this research sequence, *Interview Questions 9* and *11* were used to support *Research Question 2.* To confirm compliance in the studied communities, the analyzed responses to *Interview Questions 10* and *12* expressed support for *Research Question 3.* And finally, *Interview Questions 13* and *14* related support for *Research Question 4.* Essentially, the study's findings indicate that all of the studied communities were in compliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines.*

Table 3, which is depicted below, encapsulates this study's results following analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Table 3

Status of State and Site Compliance With the National Preparedness Guidelines Following Interpretation of the Study's Findings

States and sites	Compliance status according to findings
State of Kansas	Full compliance
Sites K1, K2, K3, K4, K5	Full compliance
State of Missouri	Full compliance
Sites M1, M2, M3, M4	Full compliance
State of Iowa	Full compliance
Site I1	Full compliance
State of Nebraska	Full compliance
Site N1	*Unconfirmed

*The State of Nebraska was found to be compliant, but the regional director for emergency management in Lincoln, Nebraska did not respond to requests to participate in this study. Because he is a graduate of the Emergency Management Institute at Central Missouri University, it seems likely that Nebraska Site 1 is also compliant.

Limitations of the Study

Study limitations are those variables or restrictions that are always out of a researcher's control (Patton, 2002; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Fieldwork involves multiple sources of information because no single source should be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective on an issue (Patton, 2002). Interview data can be distorted by participants' personal biases, politics, or simple anxiety. Public records and documents may also bear limitations if they are incomplete or inaccurate. From its initial stages, this

study was bounded and framed by a number of limitations. They included an investigation of a single facet of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* as they applied to rural communities, which meant that the findings would not be applicable to the nation's urban centers. This study's unique and purposeful geographical site was also a limitation if it is accepted that there is only one Tornado Alley in the U.S. This is the corridor nature has shaped across Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Iowa that perennially produces extreme weather patterns throughout the region (see map on p. 93). The study was also limited by the purposeful interviews of participants who chose to live in that part of the Midwest and work as law enforcers, first responders, or emergency managers.

All of the participants indicated that they had earned college degrees along with years of experience in their particular fields. At no time during the field research process was any evidence revealed that raised any question about the interviewees' honesty or trustworthiness. Indeed, the candor and competence exhibited by the study participants convinced me that their responses reflected pride in their roles and responsibilities. Their responses to the interview questions contributed much to the study's trustworthiness because their accuracy helped to validate the overall findings. The credibility or believability of their responses provided assurance that the study results were trustworthy, from both the participants' and my perspective. In turn, the study's dependability and repeatability were supported by the triangulation of participant interviews, use of official documents, and my personal interpretation of data being investigated. This explanation is offered with the understanding that a limitation in the

dissertation process is that a study usually reflects only a review of the stated problem during the period of its examination (Simon, 2011; Yin, 2014).

Recommendations

As stated in *Chapter 1,* the purpose of this case study was to explore and describe the reasons why a number of rural communities in the Midwest were previously reported as noncompliant with implementation of the *National Preparedness Guidelines* reissued in 2009 (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2009; DHS, 2009; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010). Previous studies found that general noncompliance in other Midwestern study sites was due to lack of funding and resources, to local leaders not understanding their roles and responsibilities in the post-9/11 era, and to remoteness and separation from urban areas. The major themes presented by those previous studies were that the rationales for noncompliance varied with participants and geographical regions, resulting in inconclusive and inconsistent findings. Those studies also failed to explain how other states, such as Florida (FDEM, 2008-2013), have been able to implement the national guidelines with the same formulaic allotments of homeland security funds and include the state's urban and rural communities in their emergency incident plans. Florida, like all other compliant states, has implemented the national guidelines using allocated funds based on the national formula of assessed threat, risk, vulnerability, and state population (Kopp, 2012; Moteff, 2014). That initial contradiction shaped the premise that drove this study with an objective of confirming or disconfirming those initial findings. The study's objective proved valid by disconfirming most of the previous studies' findings and confirming only a small number of them. This outcome

could create opportunities for their transferability and future research. Examples include similar geographical regions of the U.S. Southwest and Northwest, as well as other rural areas in U.S. territories and possessions.

This study's strengths and limitations have proven valid and transferable to those four-state regions having a number of urban centers and multiple rural areas. Among this study's strengths are revelations of compliance by all the participants in the four-state region that was studied. For example, Oliver (2007, 2009) contended in a previous book and article that in spite of the publicized roles that rural leaders were to play in the post-9/11 era, they remained unclear regarding their understanding of the responsibilities and roles they had assumed following issuance of the *National Preparedness Guides* in 2009 (DHS, 2009). This study's findings appear to contradict Oliver's conclusions with statements from participants that indicated they knew exactly what their duties and responsibilities were prior to, during, and after an incident. In addition, the same findings confirmed that all of this study's participants had been compliant with the national guidelines since they were issued (DHS, 2009). The studies by Chenoweth and Clarke (2009) and Marion and Cronin (2009) reported that the lack of funding and equipment prevented rural communities from developing and implementing effective emergency preparedness measures. Those findings were also discounted by the current study, which found that although participants conceded a need for additional funding to hire more trained personnel, they were able to respond to all hazards with their current staff. When certain tools or equipment were needed, acquisition was usually realized following a grant from FEMA.

The two other studies that influenced this research were published by Bryant (2009) and Stigler (2010). Those studies reported on the challenges that local leaders faced when confronted with efforts to implement emergency preparedness measures in their rural communities. Among the challenges those studies reported were resource limitations, ineffective or aged communications systems, separation, remoteness, and low population density. All of which, they reported, made it difficult for rural communities to develop all-hazards capabilities at the local level. To some extent, those findings have been found to be valid. For example, low population density and remoteness tend to limit response and recovery times. Resource limitations may not allow a local response unit to have a hazardous materials (Hazmat) expert on its payroll, or to invest in more efficient communications technology and rural broadband initiatives.

This study's findings, however, made those challenges surmountable because all participants reported that low population density also made it easier for them to identify, locate, and respond to area residents during incidents with the current communications systems. These systems include *National Oceanic Atmospheric Administrative* (NOAA) battery operated radios capable of receiving alerts from regional emergency managers. Remote dwellings can also rely on conventional telephones, television and radio, as well as satellite-capable radios operated by emergency managers which provide information regarding ongoing weather or incident conditions. Participants K1-LE/EM and K3-EM explained that area residents within a local response unit's jurisdiction were often within minutes of assistance. In those instances when the incident was beyond local capabilities, contacted regional mutual-aid units were only hours away. This included local requests

for special equipment and expertise, such as a Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) specialist.

The ability of the rural emergency managers to meet reported challenges despite the limited resources available to them reflected strength of organization and effective response to all hazards that may have befallen their communities. Those two studies touched on the concept of social capital as an effective alternative to response and recovery involving incidents in their rural communities, although Stigler (2010) did not recognize it as such (Bryant, 2009; Putnam, 2000; Stigler, 2010). The strength of organization and response effectiveness underscored above raised the question that addressed: Why social capital principles revealed in this study were not considered as recommendations for change by authors of the previous studies?

An added strength of the study's findings was the applicability of its findings to other rural regions. The findings could also be applicable to the states that were subjects of the previous studies. They can be employed regionally, or state-by-state as a measure of comparison depending on the researcher's qualitative study purpose. The research method, time, purpose, and geography were added strengths to this study's outcome. The rural referred to above are regions with similar patterns of densely populated urban centers and dispersed populations in rural areas, which may also experience compliance issues with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* (DHS, 2009; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). Although the transferability of this study's findings may be problematic to other regions due to geographical, political, or economic reasons, the adaptability of social capital principles to local emergency management practices in rural communities remains a subject worthy of further study. Figure 4 below illustrates the nation's regions as they

are configured by the U.S. Census Bureau.

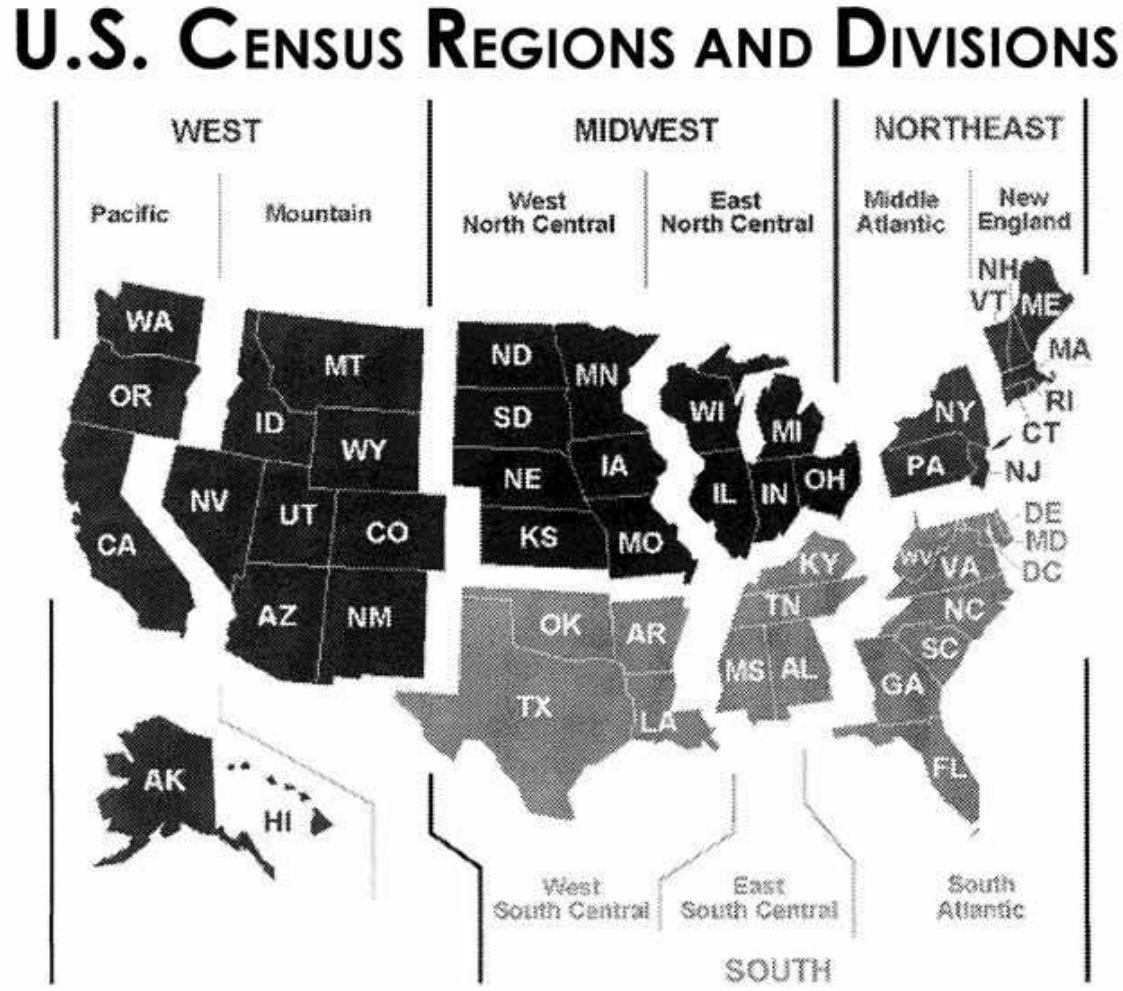

Figure 4. U.S. Census map showing separation of regions with inclusive states. Retrieved from the Census Bureau website; http://www.uscensus.gov.

Among the social capital principles commonly found in the studied rural communities were cooperation, collaboration, coordination, and communication which all of the participants stated were key components of effective emergency management. An important finding of this study is that all participants interviewed held the common belief that responses to emergency incidents are a local matter, to be supplemented only

when rural capabilities and resources are overwhelmed. To summarize then, the findings that revealed this study's strengths also served to discount the conclusions reported by the studies examined during the literature review. In light of these findings it would appear appropriate to expand on this study's findings with the objective of applying them in other states or regions with similar demographics (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010).

Implications for Social Change

This study's findings have provided the potential to impact social change at the societal-policy level in a contributing way. Policymakers who adopt new ideas based on this study's findings are likely to issue policies that direct organizational behavior, which in turn affects the general welfare of local families and individuals. For example, this study's findings, which related to operational effectiveness despite resource limitations, rural separation and remoteness, low population density, and inefficient communications systems, would have a beneficial effect in other regions with similar demographics. The findings that local civic leaders were able to conduct emergency management operations effectively, despite limited resources, reflects the process of creating ideas to promote the safety and security of rural residents.

If presented as reported, this study's findings could foster new policies in those previous study sites, as well as in the similar regions of the Southwest and Northwest. Awareness and training that takes the findings into consideration would make emergency management planning and operations more cost-effective by applying allotted homeland security funding more efficiently, thus making each adoptive state's rural communities

safer. In addition to providing operational guidance to an individual state's homeland security officials and emergency managers, this study's findings also offer instructional value to rural civic leaders who want to compare the study's findings with their current programs to determine if revision is needed. Yet another potential impact for positive social change at the societal-policy level would be an enhanced understanding of the underlying forces that resisted the concept of compliance in previous studies, particularly if any future studies show similar conclusions (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010).

To effectively address the study's purpose, the method chosen for this research was a case study that allowed a concentrated examination of multisites in four states which may have been in noncompliance with implementation of *National Preparedness Guidelines* issued in 2009 (DHS, 2009). The characteristics of this chosen method allowed me to investigate in-depth a current phenomenon in its real-world context. This method set my investigative boundaries, which included the research time period, the geographic locations where the phenomenon was occurring, and identified professional individuals who became subjects of the study. The implication of selecting this research method was that upon completion of the study it allowed me to present an in-depth story of my findings in a narrative form (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014).

The theoretical foundation that aligned with this multisite case study is social capital theory as advanced by Putnam (2000). This theory is based on the concept that communities, particularly those in rural areas, experience greater degrees of cohesion and stability when local residents establish networks that promote mutual trust through

cooperation, collaboration, communication, and reciprocity. Putnam argued that the more common these networks and exchanges are present, the healthier communities become, politically and socially. Social capital theory focuses on the various aspects of social relations, which include local norms, values, networks, and the roles they play in community cohesion. The rationale for selecting this theory was based on its alignment to the study's purpose and its relation to the study of investigating compliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* in rural communities. The alignment of this theory to the study becomes evident when the reviewer considers the challenges of implementing emergency measures in remote areas with limited resources and where rural community cohesion is sometimes an existential requirement. In many cases, rural communities must rely on cooperation, trust, and reciprocity as essential elements to their social welfare and development (Bryant, 2009; Putnam, 2000). Although some sources have speculated that these local networks and social ties may be the reason why some rural communities resist outside directives, this study's findings revealed that this speculation was not valid (Bryant, 2009; Caruson & MacManus, 2004; Stigler, 2010).

When presenting a general description of recommendations for best practices, as they relate to this study's findings, requires an understanding of the evolutionary process of the concepts that American public understands as homeland security and emergency management. Prior to the 9/11 attacks, the process of civil defense was reactive, not well organized and inefficient. After the 9/11 attacks, the concept of homeland security and emergency management became a proactive effort carried out by experts in many fields. During the post-9/11 era, however, it is accurate to point out that homeland security and

emergency management as administered by the DHS and FEMA have been a work in progress, too often prone to administrative and operational mistakes. A prime example was the mishandling of the response to the Katrina Hurricane disaster in August of 2005. After-action reports of that response led Congress to enact the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) in 2006 (Haddow et al., 2011).

That law was critical to the effort of regaining public trust in the government's ability to protect its citizens. One of the most notable changes this law made was to delegate more autonomy to FEMA. The law further ensured a separate budget for FEMA and required certification that all newly appointed administrators were college trained, with at least five years experience in emergency management. An important requirement directed that all regional FEMA offices develop close working relationships with their state counterparts. In addition, the Office of Grants and Training was moved to FEMA with a Citizen's Corps coordinating office placed under its supervision. To coordinate national operations, the law also established a State and Rural Advocate, a law enforcement advisor, and National Advisory Council to advise the Administrator on all aspects of emergency management (Haddow et al., 2011). When considering the extent and nature of extreme conditions that threaten the studied rural communities, it should be done with the knowledge that there is no way to prevent those conditions, but they can be mitigated through effective emergency management practices. Rural localities can protect themselves against militant groups through more effective partnerships with state and federal law enforcement agencies. They can also protect themselves and property by establishing clearly marked evacuation routes during impending storms and sealing their

homes against wind and water whether residents choose to shelter in place or evacuate. Emergency managers should identify secure shelters for the elderly, infirm, and the poor who must shelter in place. When an incident overwhelms local resources, local, state, and federal assistance should be requested to provide the necessary foodstuffs, equipment and the resources needed to make effective recovery possible. If available, state response teams should make efforts to establish statewide communications interoperability that allows responding agencies to communicate with one another during the response and recovery phases following an incident (see Appendix D).

These are noted recommendations for best practices that should be revisited as natural and manmade threats evolve, as the nation witnessed during the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 (Piddock, 2014). A 2012 survey showed that 57% of Americans in urban areas believed that occasional acts of terrorism are the new norm. Michael Hayden, the former director of the CIA and the National Security Agency (NSA), has stated this "new normal" means that all types of people, not just Muslims, could fit the profile of the Tsarnaev brothers (Harmon, 2013). In a recent article, the New York Times reported that since September 11, 2001, almost twice as many Americans have been killed by White supremacists, antigovernment fanatics, and other nonMuslims, than by radicalized Muslims. These lethal attacks have been carried out by people espousing racial hatred, hostility toward the government, and theories such as those of the Sovereign Citizen movement, which denies the legitimacy of most statutory law. The assaults have taken the lives of police officers, members of religious minorities, as well as random civilians (Shane, 2015). The U.S. Constitution states that a primary responsibility of the central

government is to protect the lives and property of its citizens (Kozak, 2011). From a more practical standpoint it is important for citizens to understand that the government cannot protect everyone and everything from all threats all of the time. For that reason, it has become essential that all Americans learn to function with heightened vigilance, and to make homeland security every citizen's responsibility. Nature will likely continue to challenge the nation's emergency managers with extreme weather patterns that will result in various types of incidents. In line with the need for Americans to practice vigilance, the 9/11 Commission stated in their report of the September 11, 2001 threats will be defined more within societies than by the territorial boundaries drawn between them. The commission's report added that from terrorism to global disease or environmental disaster, the challenges have become not only national and transnational, but also international in scope. This seems to be the defining nature of the threats that will challenge homeland security specialists and emergency managers in the 21st century (9/11 Commission, 2004). Over 14 years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the 9/11 Commission's conclusions remain as valid today as they were then. As stated in the previous chapter, it would be appropriate to expand on this study's findings with the objective of applying them in other states or regions with similar demographics.

Conclusion

This study's results answered the research questions that disconfirmed most of the findings reported in the previous studies that influenced this study's purpose and research method (Bryant, 2009; Chenoweth & Clarke, 2010; Marion & Cronin, 2009; Oliver, 2007, 2009; Stigler, 2010). This study's results provided evidence that refuted most of the

findings from the previous studies that were based on those rural leaders' rationales for noncompliance with nationally issued preparedness guidelines. This study's findings added understanding to the subject's knowledge base because they answered the broader question of whether homeland security is present in these Midwestern rural areas. That answer affirmed that homeland security measures and emergency management principles have been in place and in compliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* since their issuance (DHS, 2009; State of Iowa, 2015; State of Kansas, 2014; State of Missouri, 2015; State of Nebraska, 2014-2016). This study's findings confirmed that the national security safety net had not been weakened by leaders of rural communities studied in the four-state regions of Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska. The current findings also provided information, which served to establish that the value of public safety is as much a concern to civic leaders in rural communities as it is to civic leaders of urban centers. In spite of the findings and recommendations reported in previous studies conducted in Upper Midwestern states, this study found that the studied rural communities in Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska have been in compliance with the *National Preparedness Guidelines* since issued in 2009 (DHS, 2009). This study's findings concluded that the nation's ability to deal with natural and manmade threats is preparation and vigilance.

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Appendix A: Participant Consent Form Letter

Date

Addressee (Mayor, City Attorney, Chief of Police, Fire Chief, Emergency Manager)

Dear (Participant)

We have not met before; I am a former U.S. Marine and a retired federal agent. Currently I am a Doctoral Student with Walden University conducting research on the regional question of homeland security and emergency preparedness in some of the heartland's rural communities. The research question driving my study centers on the implementation level of the National Preparedness Guidelines that were designed and issued in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and revised following the Hurricane Katrina disaster in August of 2005, to protect all communities from manmade and natural disasters. The purpose of the study will be to explore the levels of preparedness in selected rural communities to better understand the reasons that affect their implementation. Data collection will result from the review of public documents and audio recorded interviews with civic leaders who are responsible for the implementation of emergency preparedness strategies in their state's rural communities. You are being contacted because you hold such a position. Interview questions would focus specifically on matters related to emergency preparedness measures implemented in your community since the 9/11 attacks. The interview would be held at a time and place of your choosing, and the duration of your participation would involve no more than a 30 to 45 minute meeting. Your participation in this study would be voluntary, and your refusal to participate would involve no penalty or criticism for you or your community. As a participant, you would have the right to decline or discontinue participation at any time. Your participation in the study would involve minimal personal risks, but none that would extend beyond those ordinarily encountered in daily life. There would be no benefit or compensation for your participation in the study, other than the greater benefit to your community that results from the study's findings.

All data collected during the course of this study will be held in strict confidence, and at no time would information concerning your participation be released to any individuals or other institutions. Although the analysis and interpretation of the collected information is likely to be published in the future, neither your name, location, nor any other identifying information will be used in that publication. If you have further questions about the study, I can be contacted by email at manuel.gonzalez@waldenu.edu. To verify my study's purpose and to clarify your rights as a participant, I invite you to contact the university's Research Participant's Advocate at 001-612-312-1210, or at the following email address: irb@waldenu.edu. If you choose to participate, please enter the words "I Consent" on the blank line below, then print a copy for your records, and send one to me at my email address. I thank you in advance for considering my request.

Manny Gonzalez, Doctoral Candidate, Walden University: _____

Appendix B: Interview Questions With Follow-Up Probes

1. What manmade or natural disasters have occurred in your community since the 9/11 attacks? How did you respond to those incidents?
2. What local facilities or infrastructure do you believe are vulnerable to either type of attack? When you say that your utilities are the most vulnerable, how often are they disabled?
3. What groups, if any, reside within your community which may pose a threat to public safety? Why do those particular groups stand out in your mind?
4. What agency conducts threat assessments in your community to ensure its safety and security? How applicable are the national preparedness guidelines to your community?
5. What federal, state, or county agencies has your community contacted to help with threat assessments? Can you say more about the results of those contacts?
6. What federal, state, or county agencies have offered assistance during threats or actual disasters? Were those offers of assistance helpful to your community?
7. What protocols does your community have in place for contacting federal, state, or county agencies? Have you always felt that your community does not need such protocols?
8. What federal, state, or county agencies has your community worked with in the past five years? Can you tell me if that was due to a specific need for outside help?
9. How has funding, training, personnel, equipment and remoteness affected your community's implementation of disaster or emergency preparedness measures? What emergency measures would you implement with direct federal funding?
10. What interagency disaster preparedness committees or task forces exist in your region? Why is it important that responses to emergency incidents remain local?
11. What mutual-aid agreements does your community have with other regional agencies? How do these agreements affect preparation, response, and recovery after an incident?
12. What limitations does your community experience as a result of geographical remoteness? How does this limitation relate to the earlier topic of downed utilities during storms?
13. What role do you personally play in case of a disaster? How is that important to you?
14. What is the size of the population your office serves? Would mutual-aid help with recovery?
15. What is your feeling toward the acceptance of federal aid and directives to implement emergency preparedness programs that would be tailored to your community? What aspects of this question do you find acceptable?

Appendix C: Emergency Management Disciplines

Preparation

Preparedness in the discipline of emergency management is the state of readiness that an entity can measure to respond to a hazard, disaster, major crisis, or other type of emergency. This state of readiness is measured by a philosophical theme that expresses the capacity to respond to all-hazards under any conditions. The preparation cycle involves hazard risk assessment, vulnerability, evaluation, and planning for a potential incident. Decisions affecting equipment and possible evacuation are part of the planning process (FEMA, 2009a).

Response

When disasters such as earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, or hurricanes occur, police, fire, and emergency medical personnel are usually the first responders to such events. Their mission is to control and secure the scene, attend to those in need of medical attention, suppress fires, and neutralize unsafe conditions. In the majority of instances, first responders are usually adequate to restore order, but in others they must stay on site until the emergency management teams can respond. Response is the discipline in which the NRF requires the use of Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), which are designed to provide operational organization to all involved support agencies.

Emergency Support Functions Applicable in the Response Discipline

Emergency support functions serve as coordinating mechanisms that provide assistance to other federal, state, and local responders involved in missions of primary

Federal interest and FEMA is the coordinator and primary agency. In the following pages, each ESF is described by its purpose statement, which includes its capabilities, operational concepts, and the designation of its member agencies.

(ESF#1--Transportation: Coordinator Department of Transportation (DOT). The DOT coordinates all transportation safety and movement of personnel.

ESF#2- Communications: Coordinator DHS-National Communications Center. Maintains oversight of all federal communications systems and is responsible for their protection.

ESF#3--Public Works and Engineering: Coordinator Department of Defense-Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps is responsible for infrastructure protection and emergency repair.

ESF#4--Firefighting: Coordinator Department of Agriculture-U.S. Forest Service. Coordinates and supports federal wild land, rural, and urban firefighting activities.

ESF#5--Emergency Management: Coordinator DHS-FEMA. FEMA assigns all mission duties and manages resources, planning, and finances. FEMA also coordinates all incident activities.

ESF#6--Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Service: Coordinator DHS-FEMA. FEMA is responsible for providing mass medical care, emergency assistance related to housing and related human services.

ESF#7-- Logistics Management and Resource Support: Coordinator DHS-FEMA and General Services Administration provide comprehensive national incident logistics planning, space, services, supplies, equipment, and contracting services.

ESF#8--Public Health and Medical Services: Coordinator Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Oversees public health issues related to major incident and ensures that public health system is capable of handling mass fatalities, as well as physical and mental health cases.

ESF#9--Search and Rescue: Coordinator DHS-FEMA. Initiates life-saving assistance and directs search and rescue operations.

ESF#10--Oil and Hazardous Materials Response: Coordinator Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA responds to oil and hazardous materials incidents, including chemical, biological, and radiological spills for short- and long-term environmental clean-up.

ESF#11--Agriculture and Natural Resources: Coordinator Department of Agriculture (DOA). The DOA is responsible for food safety and security, provides nutrition assistance, and responds to animal and plant disease threats.

ESF#12--Energy: Coordinator Department of Energy (DOE). Coordinates energy industry and provides energy forecasts. Also conducts energy infrastructure assessment and restoration.

ESF#13--Public Safety and Security: Coordinator Department of Justice (DOJ). Coordinates security planning and provides technical assistance. Conducts facility and resource security, and supports local agencies in safety and security, site access, traffic, and crowd control.

ESF#14--Long-Term Community Recovery: Coordinator: DHS-FEMA. FEMA conducts economic and social impact assessments to determine recovery from incident. FEMA

provides assistance to affected communities and works with local leaders to develop mitigation strategies.

ESF#15—External Affairs: Coordinator: DHS. The DHS coordinates distribution of emergency information to the executive and legislative branches of government, as well as to the media, the general public, and international partners; and strives to maintain good community relations.

Support Annex Summaries

The NRF also includes support annexes that describe how departments and agencies not listed as coordinators in the ESFs interface with those coordinators to facilitate and execute the common functions to ensure efficient and effective incident management. These eight annexes are listed as Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources, Financial Management, Public Affairs, International Coordination, Private Sector Coordination, Tribal Relations, Worker Safety and Health, and Volunteer and Donations Management. The NRF specifies and defines the roles that each participant plays in a given incident, from a local citizen to the president.

Recovery

The recovery process presents a more complex set of issues that must be decided by local community leaders. Those decisions depend on what comes first; rebuilding homes, restoring businesses, resuming employment, replacing city, personal property, or rebuilding damaged infrastructure permanently. Choices must strike a balance between an immediate need to return to normalcy and the long-term goal of mitigating future vulnerability. The goal of recovery is to bring all stakeholders together to plan, finance,

and implement strategies that will bring the community back to a safer and more secure state than it was before disaster struck, as quickly as possible.

Mitigation

Mitigation is the sustained effort taken by affected communities to reduce or eliminate risk to a population or particular property from all hazards and their effects. Costs of hazards to American taxpayers continue to exceed $45 billion annually with no likely relief in the years that follow due to climate change and rising sea levels. The function of mitigation differs from the other disciplines of preparedness, response, and recovery, in that mitigation looks at long-term plans and solutions to the effects of risk and vulnerability. The intent of mitigation is to ensure that fewer communities fall victim to disasters by creating economically secure, socially stable, better built, and more environmentally sound sites.res the involvement of local leaders, financial companies, building officials, land-use planners, business owners, insurance companies, concerned citizens, and politicians.

Appendix D: An Emergency Management Plan for the State of Florida

Florida is one of the fastest growing states in the nation with a population of 19,600,000, and is projected to surpass New York as the third most populous state in the union. In the past decade, Florida has become a haven for various retired professionals attracted to its pleasant year-round climate, its beautiful beaches, fine dining establishments, abundant medical facilities, museums, and world-class performance arts. For these amenities, residents tolerate a seasonal hurricane, a wild fire, or infrequent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Florida generates much of its revenue from tourism, which hurricanes, oil spills, and wild fires can impact in a negative way. Prevention and protection from oil spills usually fall within the purview of the industry and the federal government. The best measures against this type of threat are prevention first, followed by preparedness, along with the readiness to respond quickly and effectively. Costs for the response, recovery, and cleanup following these types of man-made disasters is usually borne by the industry responsible for monitoring them, as well as by affected states and the federal government.

The geophysical location of the Florida peninsula is subject to hurricanes from the first of June through the end of November when cold air from the Arctic region flows down to the Midwest and Southeast parts of the country where it meets warm trade-winds from the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. These same trade-winds often bring heavy rains along with severe thunder storms laden with lightning, which tend to spark grass and forest fires in the Everglades and forested areas of the state. These are natural disasters common to Southwest Florida, but oil spills, on the other hand, are usually technical or manmade disasters caused by negligence, accident, or lack of oversight by companies in their quest for oil. Even small spills tend to affect the state's source of revenue until they are cleaned up because their effect has a negative impact on the state's fishing industry, as well as on other water activities which have an adverse affect on tourism. Fires initiated by lightning strikes in the Everglades or forest areas damage the sea of grass, burn trees, kill wild life, and Easterly winds carry the smoke westward toward the more populated areas of the state, which affects people with respiratory conditions. Response to such fires is usually led by the county's various fire districts and depending on the depth and breadth of the fire, other districts may be called to assist. The state's Environmental Protection Agency, Homeland Security Department, State Fire Marshal, as well as the Florida Department of Agriculture and Forest Service would also be involved. All funding for these fires is borne by the individual fire districts involved and state supplements, as well as fire fighting grants from FEMA.

Although there is no known way to prevent these natural disasters, localities can plan to protect themselves from their most serious effects. In the case of serious

hurricanes, preparation for, and protection from, these storms often involves the evasion process by residents taking clearly marked routes away from the hurricane's path. Sealing homes and stocking them with water, battery operated devices and foodstuffs, are normal procedures for residents who choose to ride out the storm and shelter in place. In those instances when the storms are projected to become especially destructive, the federal government will become involved and supplement the state's response with FEMA-provided personnel and funding assistance to provide temporary housing, equipment, as well as necessary food stuffs. In each of these scenarios, the state of Florida would deploy an appropriately trained regional State Emergency Response Team (SERT) to assist, or to lead first responders at the site of a particular disaster. Florida is also one of the first states to develop and implement a statewide communications interoperability capability to coordinate all state agencies involved in a particular response to a major disaster.

The findings of an immediate response by a regional SERT team would determine the nature and extent of the damage and recommend the required expertise to deal with the threat or hazard. Each responder would have overlapping jurisdiction, with one agency relying on the expertise and response capability of another as defined by, and in accordance with provisions of the NRF and NIMS. The Incident Command Center (ICS) would also be organized in the same fashion, but in those instances involving natural disasters, the emergency management team would assume leadership roles in the recovery and mitigation processes, with law enforcement providing a support role to maintain order. In either scenario, the Governor would retain the option of mobilizing the state's National Guard to provide site security or to help maintain order and release law enforcement to continue their regular duties.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) operates as an independent office within the executive branch of state government. The division's mission is to ensure that the state is prepared to respond to all emergencies, recover from them, and to militate against their impact. With that assigned responsibility, the division plans for and responds to all natural and manmade disasters, which often range from floods and hurricanes to hazardous material spills, nuclear power alerts, and seasonal wildfires. In that capacity, the FDEM administers a statewide emergency management all-hazards preparedness program that focuses on the four disciplines of preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. In addition, the FDEM is responsible for the constant state of readiness of its seven State Emergency Response Teams (SERTs) which are comprised of members from various intergovernmental groups, volunteers, and from the private sector, who have differing levels of expertise in a number of areas. To ensure a ready response to a disaster site, the FDEM has divided the state's 67 counties into seven

regional offices, each led by a Regional Coordinator. Each region coordinates activity with a 24/7 Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the state capital in Tallahassee.

Florida's domestic security program has been implemented following collaboration with state and local government agencies, as well as private sector partners to ensure that statewide response plans integrate multi-agency needs yet remain focused on one state mission. The state's plan is based on a structure that provides multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary participation at all levels of government; consistency in response protocols, response equipment and training, including interoperable communications, and a process that promotes consensus to ensure local, state, and federal initiatives work toward a common goal. The effective response capability at all levels of state government requires preparedness for all-hazards and contingencies at personnel and organizational levels. This level of preparedness was prompted by the nation's exhibited vulnerability as surfaced by the September 11, 2001 attacks, and the general lack of federal and state preparation to respond, mitigate, and recover from the effects of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. With those incidents in mind, the state's emergency management planners and specialists produced the nation's first state-level comprehensive counterterrorism strategy and all-hazards preparedness program that fulfills and implements the National Incident Management System requirements outlined in the National Response Framework. The plan's key elements of strategy, structure, and partnerships are designed to focus on acts of terrorism and natural disaster response missions. These include the prevention, preemption, and deterrence of terrorist acts, along with the protection of Florida's citizens, visitors, and critical infrastructure during the application of the four primary disciplines of emergency management.

Operationally, the Florida Division of Emergency Management is designated the lead agency for responses. On-site FDEM manages all emergency events in accordance with Incident Command (ICS) structures, doctrine, and procedures as they are defined by NIMS. Florida's plan includes the unique feature that calls for the regional placement of State Emergency Response Teams or (SERTs) which are comprised of highly trained specialists equipped to respond to all threats or disasters, whether natural or manmade. During a disaster within the state, a regional SERT will respond and be assisted by the Florida Division of Emergency Management. The team will also be supported by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Florida Highway Patrol, county and local law enforcement agencies, as well as all pertinent state agencies trained to respond to disasters of a particular type.

Since 2001, the state of Florida has distributed over a billion dollars of federal funds to state and local agencies for the building of all hazards scalable readiness systems which through mutual aid will ensure that all state levels of government have the necessary resources to protect their citizens, regardless of the type or nature of disaster.

These actions have resulted in Florida's ability to develop and establish an effective disaster response system based on the National Response Framework (NRF), and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The state's proven disaster response capabilities have instilled a high degree of operational confidence within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and the Division of Emergency Management (FDEM). That confidence is especially noted in the state's preparedness report, which was submitted by the FDEM in 2008. Florida State's emergency preparedness and response plan underscores and stresses the operational philosophy of keeping the state's urban and rural areas safe and secure through the practical and practiced efficacy of collaboration, cooperation, communication, and coordination by all first response participants. This philosophy is emphasized and articulated throughout the plan's operating directives; most particularly in relation to the approach, structure, and execution of the plan's preparation, response, mitigation, and recovery phases. In cases involving terrorist acts, federal and state law enforcement agencies would respond, but it is likely the FBI would be the lead investigative agency. The Florida plan's remarkable feature is that it provides a scalable level of protection for urban and rural areas alike.

Appendix E: Acronyms Used in Homeland Security and Emergency Management

After-Action Report*:* A report that summarizes identified problems and deficiencies that arose during a response to a disaster, recommending solutions to those issues.

Agro-Terrorism: This is the description of terrorism against farming industries and products.

Al-Qaeda*:* The militant fundamentalist terrorist organization that attacked the U.S. on September 11, 2001, whose name means the "base" in Arabic and which has since morphed into various autonomous groups of jihadists throughout the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula, and Africa.

Asymmetrical Warfare: Terrorist attacks by a militarily weak group against a militarily strong group or nation.

Border Protection: These terms refer to the security of America's borders and other ports of entry.

Business Continuity Plan: A plan to assist critical business enterprises recover following a disaster. Businesses provide food, medicine, building supplies, and salaries to communities.

Capacity Building: This is a strategy that attempts to enhance the ability of nations, states, or communities to effectively deal with potential or actual terrorist attacks.

CBRNE Weapons: The broad family of weapons that include chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive agents capable of causing mass death, injury and destruction.

CERT: A Cert is a community or citizens emergency response team that has received formal training in response, recovery, and mitigation operations.

Civil Defense: The reactive term used to describe domestic security prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Consequence Management: This is an emergency management function that stresses planning, emergency medical response and public health, disaster relief, and restoration of a community.

CSI: Container security initiative was one of the first measures taken by the government to protect maritime trade and ports against terrorism.

COOP: This is the plan that ensures a continuity of operations following a national disaster which includes the list of leadership succession and agency responsibilities.

Crisis Management: This is a law enforcement function that concentrates on identifying, anticipating, preventing, and prosecuting those involved in terrorism.

Critical Infrastructure: Identified infrastructure determined to be critical for the normal functioning of society, comprised of industrial, utility, transportation, and other distribution systems.

Cyber-Terrorism: The use of computers to attack agricultural, commercial, defense, electric, financial, government, law enforcement, military, security, utility, and all other grids the nations uses to function.

Cyber-Security: Involves the protection and defense of computer networks and related computer infrastructure.

Dirty Bombs: These are explosive devices laden with dangerous amounts of chemicals or radioactive materials designed to contaminate large population areas when detonated.

Disaster: An event that exceeds the resources of local first responders to deal effectively with the response and recovery of that event.

EMAC: The Emergency Management Assistance Compact of 1996 is an agreement among all states, territories, and possessions to render assistance to one another in time of need.

Emergency Management & Response Personnel: Includes federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local government representatives as well as NGOs, private sector organizations, and owners of critical infrastructure.

Emergency Management: The professional discipline that deals with risk and risk avoidance.

Failed State: A failed state is one that is weak or ungoverned and susceptible to a terrorist takeover such as Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria.

Fatwa: A fatwa is a religious edict issued by a Muslim cleric.

FEMA: The federal emergency management agency responsible for federal policies, programs, and actions to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from all hazards.

First Responders: These are the police, fire, and emergency medical technicians who are first to arrive at the scene of a disaster to preserve life, protect property, and secure the site.

Force Multiplier: This is the strategy of increasing striking power without increasing manpower. Terrorists use the media, transnational support, computer and cell phone technology, as well as religion as force multipliers.

Hawala: This is an ancient financial system used by Muslims to move large amounts of money without actually exchanging funds over banking systems and international borders, partly in efforts to avoid seizure by the Foreign Assets Control function of the U.S. Treasury Department.

Hazard: A potential source of danger to a community that may or may not become a disaster.

Hazmat: Hazardous materials that can pose a threat to the environment or a community's health if accidentally or intentionally released.

Homeland Security: This is the proactive term that displaced civil defense as the concept practiced to protect the homeland. As opposed to civil defense, homeland security is a concerted effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the U.S., reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, recover from, and minimize the damage of attacks that may occur.

HSPD: A homeland security presidential directive bearing the legal authority of an executive order issued by the President of the United States. They vary in name, and President George W. Bush preferred this moniker.

Ideology: A core set of beliefs related to values, attitudes, ways of thinking, and goals, whether based on political, religious, or other influences.

Intelligence: This is the function of collecting, assessing, and disseminating information about an enemy, a criminal, or a terrorist.

Islamic Fundamentalists: This term describes militant individuals or groups of Muslims that violently oppose the existence of the United States and Israel.

JTTF: Joint Terrorism Task Forces are FBI-led groups comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement officers focused on the investigation of terrorist activities.

Land-Use Planning: A process that is applied to determine how a community will recover and grow following a disaster to mitigate a recurring disaster, and includes, flood plain management, ordinances, easements, environmental reviews, building codes and controls.

Madrasah: A Madrasah is a school in Pakistan and other Middle East countries that indoctrinate young students in extreme Islamic thought, and groom the most tractable to become suicide bombers.

Mitigation: A sustained action to reduce or eliminate risk to people and property from the effects of hazards and disasters.

Mujahedeen: In mainstream and radical Islam, the term is used to describe Holy warriors and radicals use the term to describe jihadists.

Mutual Aid: A formal collaborative agreement between jurisdictions to provide assistance when aid is needed.

NIMS: The national incident management system is a set of principles that guides the systematic, proactive, approach by all government and nongovernment organizations in their joint efforts to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of life or property damage, and harm to the environment.

NRF: The national response framework is the established federal guide on how the nation is to conduct all-hazards responses.

NRF: The national response framework is the established federal guide on how the nation is to conduct all-hazards responses.

NGO: This is the short term that describes organizations comprised of private citizens, with no government affiliations, such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army.

9/11: A shortened reference to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

9/11 Commission: This is a shortened reference to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States appointed by President George W. Bush to investigate the attacks of 9/11. In 2004, the commission made over 40 recommendations for changing government, in particular the intelligence services, to prevent future attacks.

Ordinance: This is an authoritative order or law issued by a local, county, or state government, intended to establish or modify certain public procedures.

PKEMR: The post-Katrina emergency management reform act is a law which specifies ways to avert the slow and disjointed federal response to the Katrina Hurricane disaster in New Orleans, and establishes educational and experience standards for emergency managers.

Preparedness: This term describes the state of readiness to respond to a crisis, disaster, or any other type of emergency incident.

Prevention: Encompasses counterterrorism operations such as intelligence gathering and preventive strike activities.

Protection: Encompasses antiterrorism operations to deny attacks and defend against acts of terrorism, which include improved building design, enhanced security, and infrastructure protection.

Recovery: This is the phase in emergency management that describes the development, coordination and execution of disaster-site restoration plans. These plans are all-inclusive in that they involve government, nongovernment, private citizens, as well as all other social, political, and economic restoration stakeholders with the goal of rebuilding a better community.

Risk: This is the measure of likelihood that a hazard will manifest into an actual disaster or emergency incident and the consequences that event will bring.

SAR: Search and rescue operations during the response function to find and save lives.

Secondary Devices: Follow-up bombs or destructive devices intended to create fear, harm and disrupt responses to the initial attack.

Sheltering: During a disaster, survivors indicate to emergency managers, local officials, and off-site relatives or friends whether they will evacuate or shelter in place.

Situation Report: A report submitted during an incident that assesses the nature and scope of the disaster that estimates loss of life and property damage, and describes the recovery measures underway as required by NIMS.

Soft Targets: These are potential sites of terrorist attacks due to their openness and accessibility to the general public.

Suitcase Bomb: This is a portable nuclear or radiological device that can fit in a suitcase, back pack, or large briefcase.

Taliban: The name of the Afghan Islamic Fundamentalist group in Afghanistan that provided a safe haven for Al-Qaeda after the 9/11 attacks, which means "student" in Arabic and "students" in Pashto.

Theocracy: A government that is run by clerics in the name of God, such as that in Iran.

Threat and Threat Assessment: A careful study of targets that may appeal to terrorists and the appropriate recommendations on how to harden them.

USA Patriot Act: An effective counterterrorism law which stands for Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism. The intent of this law is to prevent terrorist attacks and enhance law enforcement's capabilities.

Vulnerability: Reflects a high degree of proneness to disaster and/or limited emergency management capabilities.

WMDs: These are weapons of mass destruction that will create major carnage, injuries, destruction, and disruption of government operations when used.

Appendix F-Request and Permission to Use Photos from KC Star

February 16, 2016

Sabrina Porter, PARS International, Agent for the Kansas City Star Newspaper

212-221-9595 X 126; email sabrina.porter@parsintl.com

Kansas City, Missouri 64119

Dear Ms. Porter:

Please accept this message as a formal request to use three photographs I borrowed from the KC Star newspaper and its website dated November 5, 2015. As I explained to you in yesterday's text message, the sole purpose for their use in my dissertation is to illustrate the type and nature of storms that are common to the Kansas City vicinity during the rainy season. The photographs bore neither titles, nor names of the staff members who took them. I have attached them for your review and identification. My dissertation has since been completed and approved with the condition that permission from your office be acquired prior to their use. Please let me know if there is a fee for reproducing the photographs in this manner. Your assistance is appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Manny Gonzalez, Doctoral Candidate, Walden University

PERMISSION TO USE FORM

_X_Granted: If used only for grading, not for general publication, or resold for profit.

__Not Granted

Signature: *Sabrina Porter* Title: Agent for the

Date: February 17, 2016 Kansas City Star