

2017

# Measuring Defense Support to Civil Authorities Proficiency within the National Capital Region

Kelvin Brown  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Kelvin Brown

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2017

Abstract

Measuring Defense Support to Civil Authorities Proficiency within the National Capital

Region

by

Kelvin Brown

MA, American Military University, 2009

BA, Savannah State University, 1995

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Homeland Security Policy and Coordination

Walden University

May 2017

## Abstract

Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) is the process by which military assets can be requested by civilian authorities, often by state or regional offices of emergency management. This request is in response to critical incidents, including natural and human caused disasters. However, little is understood about collaboration and cooperation between civil authorities and their military counterparts in terms of planning and training, especially in the unique circumstance of National Capital Region (NCR) where there are local, state, and federal civil authorities and military organizations. This is problematic, as a lack of training and preparation may result in delayed response to emergency incidents in the region, which may cause a disruption of government nationwide. Using Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's advocacy coalition framework, the purpose of this case study of DSCA in the NCR was to gain insight on whether collaborative planning and training between civil and military partners has resulted in effective public policy that will guide decision making in the event of a natural or human caused disaster. Data were collected from a total of 15 participants who represented military and civil emergency managers. These data were deductively coded consistent with the elements of the policy advocacy framework, and then subjected to thematic analysis. Findings indicated that military members have a more thorough understanding of DSCA procedures, where civilian emergency managers had knowledge deficits regarding procedures and policies guiding DSCA support. The positive social change implications stemming from this study include recommendations to civil authorities to collaborate with the Department of Defense related to mobilization procedures and DSCA policies to promote seamless cooperation in the event of a major disaster.

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## Dedication

This has been an unbelievable journey that started over three and a half years ago. Though it has been hard at times, it has also been very rewarding. First and foremost, I would like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for bringing me through this journey....all things are possible with him....**BELIEVE IT!**

To my dear wife Vernessa and my son Quentin who are truly the lights of my life. Thank you for your support and tremendous sacrifices you have made in order for me to accomplish this goal. Words cannot express the joy I have in seeing both of you smile.

To my 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Science teacher Mrs. Hendley. You were the first person to instill in me a sense of pride in my work and a belief that I could do anything as long as I applied myself. The many lessons I learned from you have been truly instrumental in my life. Thank you for taking the time to teach, guide and mentor me through the years. You are truly a God send.

Finally, To my good friend Dr. Osi Muoko. Thanks for your friendship and encouragement during the rough times. We often talked about this moment and now we are both doctors; grinding is what we do!!

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Finally, to the Walden University faculty and staff. I can unequivocally state the support and encouragement you routinely provide to your students is beyond reproach. Though I have obtained my degree, it's a bitter sweet moment for me because I start my next journey without you. However, the lessons I've learned and the genuine care for your student body has made me a Walden Ambassador for life.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

### **Introduction**

There was an inherent problem with measuring Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) within the Washington D.C National Capital Region (NCR). The problem originated from the absence of a comprehensive mechanism to measure DSCA proficiency among emergency managers and their military mission partners. As the center of governance in the United States the events on 9/11 and the 2011 earthquake in Washington D.C. validated the need for proficient emergency managers and military organizations in DSCA response. Integral to understanding DSCA proficiency in the NCR were two fundamental questions. The first was how proficient are organizations in planning, coordinating, and executing DSCA operations in the NCR? Secondly, what factors contributed to optimal or below acceptable levels of DSCA proficiency among the populations in the NCR? I used the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) as the theoretical framework for this study. Using this theoretical framework, I focused on how competing coalitions collectively formulate policies while safeguarding their internal equities and organizational beliefs in collective problem solving. The social implication for this study was rooted in the belief that this research could assist policy makers in understanding how entities could work together to provide viable solutions for complex problem sets while ensuring their internal equities remain inviolable.

### **Background of Problem**

The Advisory Panel on Department of Defense Capabilities for Support of Civil Authorities After Certain Incidents (2010) report noted DSCA training was severely

lacking along with a nascent knowledge of strategies, plans, and training to improve DSCA proficiency.

Carwile, (2005) provided insight on the intricacies tethered to combining emergency managers and military organization command structures during a catastrophic event. Fowler K, Kling, N, and Larson M.'s (2007) article highlighted a potential divide in collective DSCA operations if one organization is delinquent in their capability to conduct continuous recovery and response operations which significantly stresses partnered organizations capacity. Hooker (2012) elaborated on the importance of building relationships between military organizations and their civilian counterparts. According to [give names and citation], these relationships are based on three general principles: communication, interaction, and how interaction between the two entities are ordered and regulated.

### **Problem Statement**

There was no mechanism in place to measure the DSCA proficiency of emergency managers and their military mission partners in the NCR during this research. Two previous studies focusing on DSCA determined that emergency managers did not have optimal knowledge of DSCA operations (Haynes, 2014 & Porter, 2010). Additionally, the studies recommended additional research to determine root causes for the lack of understanding. It was therefore imperative to understand why there was no mechanism in place and what apparatus was being used to measure performance levels which led to building or maintaining DSCA proficiency.

The larger problem that the research addressed was how military organizations and their emergency management partners were measuring DSCA proficiency. From

wildfires in California to flooding in West Virginia, there have been numerous disasters in the United States that required military units and emergency managers to integrate resources for optimal response and recovery results.

With two studies completed that outlined DSCA proficiency by using a non-bias approach, data existed for senior military and emergency management officials to determine if additional studies should be commissioned to expand the perceived problem of DSCA proficiency (Haynes. 2014). These two studies showed that there was cause to carry out further research in a localized region. This rationale would have seemingly helped to determine if the problem was only relegated to the previous studies or systemic. Furthermore, findings showing similar trends may have caused leaders to re-evaluate the importance of measuring proficiency and implementing plans and policies that enable emergency managers and their military partners to obtain and maintain higher levels of proficiency than previously reported (Porter, 2010).

This study is relevant because there is no robust literature on the subject of DSCA proficiency, and until there is an optimal body of research leaders will not have the appropriate level of data to determine the scope and scale of the problem of measuring DSCA proficiency.

I conducted this research to build on research that had been lacking over the past 10 years. After an extensive search, which involved the use of several data bases and the Walden University library assistance service, little research was discovered on DSCA proficiency or research that was designed to measure DSCA proficiency. The military published doctrine on DSCA four years ago, but there has been no effort to determine

how organizations incorporated the doctrine into their planning, coordination, and executing this complex operation.

I was driven to address this problem area because in my previous duty position I had extensive knowledge of DSCA operations after receiving my certification in DSCA phase II certification course. Additionally, in my role as a planner I had frequent engagements with other planners from other organizations who did not have an optimal level of DSCA operations. Therefore, if these key planners did not have an optimal level of DSCA operations, their plans presumably could not have been validated as succinct without a basic knowledge of understanding DSCA. From my initial engagements, I perceived measuring DSCA proficiency in the NCR as a problem. Haynes's dissertation in 2014 determined that emergency managers in the state of North Carolina did not have an optimal level of DSCA proficiency. I understood that after conducting my research it may have been determined that measuring DSCA proficiency in the NCR was not problematic and the desired populations may have had an optimal proficiency. If that was the case I believed that the knowledge gained from the inquiry could complement Haynes research and make a significant contribution to the continuum of inquiry.

The final aspect of the problem statement was the gap in literature. The gap that existed in DSCA proficiency was that there was almost no literature on the subject at the operational level where DSCA operation were planned, coordinated, and executed by emergency managers and their military mission partners. Additionally, the data that was collected focused primarily on the proficiency level of emergency managers and not their military mission partners. This oversight in the literature lends credence to a view point that senior officials cannot make informed decisions on how to improve proficiency when

there is no body of work to guide their decisions? Subsequently, as the number of natural disasters across the United States from the early 2000's to the present, those responsible for executing response and recovery operations in support of disasters were obligated to ensure their organizations were practiced in executing DSCA operations. This included doctrine, policy, and standard operating procedures built on literature that provided a comprehensive analysis of findings and recommendations to improve DSCA proficiency. Finally, coupled with the research that was conducted, it was my intent to provide meaningful literature that could foster dialogue on this subject.

### **Purpose of the Study**

With the potential for man-made and natural disasters to severely impact NCR, there was a need to explore the known proficiency levels of our forces who would execute a comprehensive response and recovery operation during a complex catastrophe. This study complimented two previous studies conducted to determine DSCA proficiency: Haynes's (2014) study centered on determining DSCA proficiency in the state of North Carolina, and Porter's study based on measuring the proficiency levels of parish emergency managers in the state of Louisiana. In their studies, both researchers were able to determine that the state as well as parish emergency managers who participated in the study had a very nascent understanding of DSCA operations.

Unfortunately, these studies did not address the proficiency levels of the military organizations in the immediate vicinity of their emergency management partners in North Carolina or the Louisiana parishes. To truly inform the research, there had to be an all-encompassing study to define where the gaps were in understanding the NCR's DSCA proficiency. This in turn had the potential to facilitate discussion on how a collective

group could provide feasible and suitable courses of action to address the identified deficiencies if they existed. Finally, there was no current research dedicated to understanding DSCA proficiency in the NCR. It was my intent for this research to serve as the impetus for future research and compliment Haynes's and Porter's research to determine potential trends that can improve or sustain proficiency levels for DSCA operations.

By conducting this research, I hoped to determine the DSCA proficiency levels of the Joint Forces Headquarters – National Capital Region, the Washington D.C. National Guard, and emergency managers that comprised the seven counties and two jurisdictions of the NCR. However, the end aim was not only to determine what the proficiency levels of these entities were, but to determine contributing factors that led to an optimal or less than proficiency level. For instance, did leaders in each organization mandate and monitor training in DSCA operations? Were there budget considerations that negated proficiency? Did members of each population have access to institutions that were designated as institutions for high learning on DSCA operations? Subsequently, if these institutions were available, were they being used by these populations to build DSCA proficiency for entry-level members, or to sustain DSCA proficiency for mid-level members of their organizations? This purpose guided the formation of both the research questions as well as the interview questions that I used to further examine DSCA proficiency.

The primary purpose of the research questions was to determine how proficient military organizations and their emergency management partners were in DSCA operations. By determining the proficiency level in each of these domains, I could

analyze the overarching research question that dealt with measuring DSCA proficiency on a more holistic level. I used the second research question to determine which contributing factors influenced the optimal level of DSCA proficiency or a less than desirable proficiency. By directly linking these two questions together, I formed a chain of custody, which answered the how and why of the overarching research questions which are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency? Next, do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR impact collective DSCA proficiency?

These research questions provided the very foundation for this research, and the logic for selecting these questions came from the previous research on DSCA proficiency. In these previously conducted studies, similar research questions were proposed to the test populations in order to inform the researcher's body of work and provide a baseline of knowledge for the research. The exam used by previous researchers was the obvious choice to guide my study by applying their template for understanding DSCA proficiency in the NCR.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions for this study were selected after reading the findings from previous research. My intent was to fill the gaps that were not addressed by Haynes's and Porter's research. These questions may serve as antecedents for future research on DSCA proficiency. The research questions from this study were:

RQ1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?

RQ2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR impact collective DSCA proficiency?

My intent was to use open-ended questions in individual interviews with the research population in order to answer the research questions. For the integrity of the research, I believed it was imperative to form a personal relationship with the respondents to establish optimal conditions for an open and free dialogue on DSCA proficiency. By forming a relationship and using open-ended questions, I believed the respondents would be more open with me and fully divulge substantive answers that could help me as the researcher understand the phenomenon of DSCA proficiency. Additionally, by asking open-ended interview questions in the presence of the respondents, I felt there was an opportunity to monitor their body language, which could serve as an indicator as to how they were answering the questions. For instance, observations such as whether they were comfortable or hesitant while answering questions could be interpreted as trepidation. Additionally, hesitation while responding may have indicated possible issues underlining their responses.

Most importantly, my questions for the interview were directly linked to the research questions, to ensure that both the how and why questions were explored in order to understand DSCA proficiency at the micro level. These interview questions were straight forward and recorded to ensure that I had indeed captured the correct responses that correlated with the questions. This was important because I did not want to interpret the participants responses. Interpretations can lead to diluted findings which I wanted to avoid.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that was used for the research was the advocacy coalition framework (ACF), developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). The ACF has been used to examine the policy-making process among multiple populations with different beliefs and internal organization equities that may be contradictory to each other. This framework was applicable to the research because of the number of different populations in the NCR. Additionally, for a myriad of reasons, each population had their internal policies, which governed how they would employ their forces and dedicate resources in case of a disaster event. However, these populations had to understand that there must be a level of cooperation to ensure there were no gaps in how a collective response and recovery operation would be executed.

The idea that prompted my research was nested within the research that Haynes conducted when he performed a study to determine the DSCA proficiency in the state of North Carolina among emergency managers. Additionally, as a planner in the NCR, I was also intrigued as to how DSCA proficiency in the NCR could be measured in a study closely aligned with Haynes's work. After participating in exercises in which DSCA was integral in providing a comprehensive response and recovery operation for simulations, it became apparent that there was a significant knowledge gap among those who were participating in the exercise. Additionally, from the after-action reports and the research Haynes conducted, he determined that emergency managers in the state of North Carolina had a nascent knowledge of DSCA operations. Therefore, after my first-hand account of DSCA training and exercises in the NCR and Haynes research findings, I decided to conduct my own independent study.

### **Nature of the Study**

The nature of this study was qualitative. A comprehensive inquiry of both populations for this research was conducted to determine which contributing factors led to optimal or below optimal DSCA proficiency levels. Additionally, to understand the overarching problem of why there was no mechanism in place to measure DSCA proficiency in the NCR, qualitative research using the case study design was used to provide an in-depth analysis of data (Creswell, 2013).

As previously mentioned, there have been two other studies that have measured DSCA proficiency. However, there was some additional research conducted by groups of researchers to determine DSCA proficiency. Milliman, Grosskopf, and Paezs (2006) conducted a quantitative study across five states in the northeast of the United States that revealed that 72 emergency responders did not have the optimal level of proficiency in DSCA operations. The trends from that study and other research on DSCA proficiency suggested that there was an issue with DSCA proficiency on an even greater scale.

The research design was driven by the characteristics that are closely associated with the case study design. In an effort to understand DSCA proficiency inside the NCR, I wanted to conduct an in-depth study rather than simply compiling statistical data. By conducting an in-depth analysis, I assumed that I would have a clear understanding of DSCA proficiency and extenuating circumstances that led to an optimal or less than optimal proficiency. Statistical data gathered from an instrument designed to test populations could have rendered results which may have proved beneficial to how proficient emergency managers and their military mission partners were. However, I considered understanding the why behind the statistical data equally important, which is

why I used questionnaires for data collection. The other aspect that guided the research design was the presentation of the results to the intended audience.

Statistical data could have informed policy and decision makers. However, the statistical data would not inform them of the salient themes and trends identified by emergency managers and military members and what led to an optimal or undesirable level of DSCA proficiency. I believed that this was a consideration I had to take into account when conducting my research. Additionally, researchers must consider whether the presentation of statistical data will serve their purpose for the research, or will a more robust narrative on the subject matter will be required.

The research design was also influenced by a previous study. Haynes also used the case study design in his research for understanding DSCA proficiency in the state of North Carolina. After reading his research, I wanted to mirror the case study design by using questionnaires to determine the proficiency of my populations as well. With two case studies already conducted on DSCA proficiency, I believed there was a baseline level of data, which could lead to potential policy changes that would aid in maintaining or improving DSCA proficiency.

The value in these ideas is rooted in the basic belief that researchers must do due diligence to ensure that the validity and reliability of the research can withstand the scrutiny of fellow researchers. Even with the use of the qualitative methodology, which has received criticism for the use of interpretation in data analysis (Baxter, P & Jack, S 2008) the researcher has an obligation to ensure that their research has been fully vetted. This vetting process helps the researcher to guard against questions of validity and reliability put forward by those who may use the research in future studies.

The value of the ACF theory was two-fold. First, the theory provided the framework that bonded the research and the population by understanding the advocacy coalition. The research highlighted the proficiency of DSCA among the intended populations, whereas the framework nested the populations, their proficiency, and policy formations to fully understand the phenomenon in its entirety.

Secondly, the construct of the ACF provided the blueprint to further understand populations by their belief systems, which drives their decision making and ultimately the policies to mitigate perceived threats or deficiencies that negate the effectiveness of an apparatus (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). It was for this reason that the ACF was used instead of the civil military coalition framework or the disaster management framework, which was used in a previous body of work.

The aforementioned values and ideas certainly added validity to the proposed research. However, embarking on this journey reinforced the fact that the values and ideas must be matched with the integrity of the researcher to ensure the results are meaningful for those for whom the research is intended.

There are multiple qualitative methods, including: narrative research, grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology. The case study design incorporated observations, interviews, and surveys with open-ended questions to gain insight and an in-depth analysis on particular cases (O'Sullivan, Rassel, & Berner, 2008). To add greater context for the case study design used for this study, Baxter and Jack (2008), in their article titled *Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers* gave an interesting perspective on the case study that resonated with my rationale. They stated:

[Q]ualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. (p. 544)

I collected the data for this research through the use of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. Though the process was time consuming, I believed this data-collection method was beneficial because it provided an opportunity to build trust with respondents and observe informal communication with them.

The analysis used for this qualitative research plan was descriptive coding coupled with the compare and contrast technique, and NVivo which is a coding program used to help identify, sort and organize codes, themes and trends. I chose this mode of analysis because it allowed me the opportunity to identify themes that may have resonated throughout the research question responses. These themes in turn helped to explain DSCA proficiency and the contributing factors that led to certain proficiency levels among the populations in the NCR. NVivo is a qualitative research program used to help researchers organize and analyze non-structured data. However, though Nvivo was certainly a great tool for analysis, I was responsible for ensuring the quality of the data and the analysis derived from it to form themes for recommendations and findings.

I collected the data for this study through the use of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. This process of data collection proved to be time consuming because of the number of participants at each location. However, I believed this data-

collection method was beneficial because it provided an opportunity to gain the respondents' trust and engage them in informal communication.

### **Operational Definitions**

[All definitions must be written the way I have modelled the first. The definition must be unbolded, italicized, and followed by a colon. All definitions must be given in alphabetical order.]

*Catastrophic Incident:* Any natural or man-made incident, including terrorism that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the population, infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, and/or government functions. Catastrophic incident is the same as catastrophic event as defined by DOD (Joint Publication 3-28, 2013).

*Civil Authorities:* Those elected and appointed officers and employees who constitute the government of the United States, the governments of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, United States territories, and political subdivisions thereof (Joint Publication 3-28, 2013, p. GL 5). e

*Defense Support to Civil Authorities:* Defense support of civil authorities (DSCA) is support provided by federal military forces, Department of Defense (DOD) civilians, DOD contract personnel, DOD component assets, and National Guard (NG) forces (when the Secretary of Defense [SecDef], in coordination with the governors of the affected states, elects and requests to use those forces in Title 32, United States Code, status or when federalized) in response to requests for assistance from civil authorities for domestic emergencies, law enforcement support, and other domestic activities, or from qualifying entities for special events (Joint Publication 3-28, 2013, p. vii).

*Disaster:* An occurrence causing widespread destruction and distress, a grave misfortune, a total failure. A disaster is often further defined as being either a man-made or natural event that results in death, injury, and property damage which cannot be managed through normal, routine channels. A disaster requires immediate and effective intervention of multiple government and private sector organizations to help meet the needs of the community and area just after the disaster occurs and the area and people begin to recover (Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps, 2014).

*Emergency Managers:* The local emergency manager has the day-to-day authority and responsibility for overseeing emergency management programs and activities. The emergency manager establishes and/or directs functions of an emergency operations center (EOC). The EOC is the physical location where multi-agency coordination occurs (Joint Publication 3-28, 2013, p. II-2).

*Immediate Response Authority:* A Federal military commanders, DoD Component Head's, and/or responsible DoD civilian official's authority temporarily to employ resources under their control, subject to any supplemental direction provided by higher headquarters, and provide those resources to save lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate great property damage in response to a request for assistance from a civil authority, under imminently serious conditions when time does not permit approval from a higher authority within the United States. Immediate response authority does not permit actions that would subject civilians to the use of military power that is regulatory, prescriptive, proscriptive, or compulsory. State immediate response is addressed in § 185.4(h) of this part (Department of Defense Instruction 3025.18, 2010).

*Mission Assignment:* The vehicle used by the Department of Homeland Security/Emergency Preparedness and Response/Federal Emergency Management Agency to support federal operations in a Stafford Act major disaster or emergency declaration that orders immediate, short-term emergency response assistance when an applicable state or local government is overwhelmed by the event and lacks the capability to perform, or contract for, the necessary work (Joint Publication 3-28, 2013).

*National Response Framework:* The NRF is a guide to how the Nation responds to all types of disasters and emergencies. It is built on scalable, flexible, and adaptable concepts identified in the National Incident Management System (NIMS)<sup>2</sup> to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation. The NRF describes specific authorities and best practices for managing incidents that range from the serious but purely local to large-scale terrorist attacks or catastrophic <sup>3</sup> natural disasters (FEMA, 2013).

*Posse Comitatus Act:* The primary statute restricting military support to civilian law enforcement is the Posse Comitatus Act (PCA) 18 U.S. Code, section 1385. The phrase “posse comitatus” is literally translated from Latin as the “power of the county” and is defined in common law to refer to all those over the age of 15 upon whom a sheriff could call for assistance in preventing any type of civil disorder (Disaster Response Officer handbook, 2010, p.45).

*Title 10:* U.S. Code, governs all federal military forces. For the Army, these forces include the regular Army, the Army Reserve, and all National Guard units ordered to federal Active Duty in Title 10 status. For the other services, Title 10 forces include all components except the Air National Guard unless it mobilizes for federal service. Title 10 forces are federal assets under the command of the president. Forces in Title 10 status

are restricted from conducting law enforcement missions by the Posse Comitatus Act (Disaster Response Officer handbook, 2010, p. 45).

*Title 32*: “State military forces (those assigned to state active duty under Title 32 of the U.S. Code) operate under the command and control of the governor through a state joint-force headquarters led by the adjutant general of the state” (Disaster Response Officer handbook, 2010, p. 43).

### **Assumptions**

I made three assumptions in this study. The first assumption was that emergency managers had a nascent knowledge of DSCA proficiency. This assumption was based on the aforementioned research of Porter (2010) and Haynes (2014), which determined that the emergency managers who participated in those bodies of work had nascent proficiency in DSCA operations. The second assumption was that there would be limited integration, planning, and initiative among emergency managers and their military mission partners in the NCR. This assumption was based on my personal knowledge as a planner, when I observed few training and integration exercises in the NCR that measured DSCA proficiency through the domains of integration and planning. As a caveat, this was classified as an assumption because I did not have knowledge of other partnerships that may have existed inside the region. The third assumption was that military organizations in the NCR would have higher DSCA proficiency than their emergency management counterparts. Once again, this assumption was based on my personal knowledge of participation of the courses in which I and my contemporaries attended. This course was designed to certify military service members and their dedicated emergency management partners in DSCA operations. I have attended the

course and the preponderance of students that were in attendance were military service members.

The importance of the assumptions came from the study conducted by Haynes. When determining the assumptions for this research, there were no other studies except Haynes's work that provided a foundation for me to gather data and make assumptions that had a linkage to other research. Therefore, in forming my assumptions, I used his findings as assumptions in my research. For instance, from the population Haynes interviewed, he was able to determine that emergency managers from the respondent pool for the state of North Carolina did not have a working knowledge of DSCA operations. Therefore, as a baseline assumption for my research, I used his finding as one of my assumptions.

Additionally, as found in Haynes's research, if this trend was consistent within the NCR, a correlation could be drawn to show why this same trend existed in two separate regions inside the continental United States. Conversely, if this trend was not visible in the NCR, then analysis was conducted to determine why emergency managers and military organizations have an optimal level of proficiency for one region, while having a less than optimal level in another. Finally, as additional research was produced on this subject, the findings from my research could be used as a baseline for future assumptions.

### **Scope**

The scope of this study was to measure the DSCA proficiency level of emergency managers in the NCR, the Joint Forces Headquarters – National Capital Region, and the Washington D.C. National Guard. The study furthered examined how each entity plans, coordinates, and executes training for potential catastrophic events that impact the NCR.

Understanding that a complex catastrophe was not beyond the realm of possibility as demonstrated by the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon, these entities when integrated would be examined to determine how their collective efforts could mitigate the tertiary effects from such an event.

The specific aspects of the research problem addressed was measuring DSCA proficiency across the domains of planning, coordinating, and execution. These domains were chosen because they helped to frame the research in a manner that not only addressed the central question, but dissected the central question among the domains for greater analysis of proficiency.

For a truly comprehensive research, it is not enough to answer the central research question without understanding the extenuating circumstances of the phenomenon that was being studied. By analyzing these circumstances, the researcher provided a more robust finding that was instrumental in influencing outputs such as policy changes which was a focal point of this research in context of populations in the NCR. This aspect was also chosen because even though the populations were exclusively different to a certain degree, they both conducted planning, coordination, and execution of their essential tasks to maintain an optimal level of proficiency. By analyzing the data, a comparative analysis was conducted to understand trends and determine what operational policies, guidelines, or standard operating procedures could be used to benefit the DSCA proficiency across both populations wherever applicable.

The populations that were considered for this research were emergency managers from the seven counties and two jurisdictions that comprised the NCR, the Washington D.C. National Guard, and the Joint Forces Headquarters – National Capital Region. With

three diverse population pools, the optimal sample size was 10 emergency managers, and 10 military leaders each from the Washington D.C., National Guard, and The Joint Forces Headquarters – National Capital Region (n=30). Understanding that there was no set rule for the sampling size, the rationale for the size of the samples was to provide interview questions to the upper echelon of each organization due to their experience levels.

It was my intent that other researchers and organizations, who wished to advance the continuum of inquiry on DSCA proficiency or are charged with the responsibility of executing DSCA operations, use this research along with other bodies of work. These findings, and findings from previous studies could help them measure and assess the proficiency of their internal organizations. This intent had the potential to help these organizations determine how they could build their proficiency, or maintain an optimal level of proficiency if their internal studies determined that they had a desired level of DSCA proficiency. Finally, it was my intent to publish this work in an effort to encourage dialogue on where my research could facilitate future research.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations for this research arose from the use of participants in the research to the choice of theories. With regards to participants, the use of emergency managers with at least five years of experience and military officials with 10 years of experience in their current duty positions was reinforced during the selection of participants. The measure was reinforced to ensure that the participants had an advanced level of emergency management military operational knowledge as opposed to entry-level knowledge to inform the research. The next delimitation was the use of the ACF and the omission of

other theories such as the disaster management theory and civil military theory. The latter theories may certainly have held merit when framing the discussion for the actual execution of DSCA operations, but the primary focus was on how proficiency led to the formulation of policy and not the actual operation of DSCA.

For the purpose of limiting the scope and scale of the proposed research, surrounding jurisdictions and military organizations were also omitted for numerous reasons. First, resources for the study were limited, and therefore the research and the populations were narrowed to the NCR only. For a broader study, research could have been conducted in the northern Virginia region, rather than the NCR. However, the decision was made to initiate the study within the NCR first, and then use the results as the basis for future research on a broader scale.

Additionally, though Washington D.C. was home to numerous federal agencies that played a key role in emergency and response operations at the federal level, the decision was made to omit these organizations as well. The purpose of the research was to determine the proficiency of those who executed DSCA operations at the organizational level. Federal organizations normally serve as the policy decision makers who allocate resources and provide guidance as to how operations will be conducted. Therefore, their involvement in the research did not provide any value for understanding the proficiency of DSCA operations. However, once the research was completed, it was my intent to submit the findings to a small population of federal authorities in an effort to encourage dialogue on sustaining or improving DSCA proficiency. The research does not have a purpose unless it is shared with those who can use the findings and decide to use them to fix a problem, request more data, or disregard the research all together.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this research consisted of three salient points. First, though there were six installations that comprised the Joint Forces headquarters – National Capital Region, only the headquarters was solicited. Next, the participants in the test population consisted of military members with 10 years of experience and emergency managers with at least 5 years of experience. To truly inform the research, it was imperative that participants with more experience as opposed to the ones with entry level experience informed the research. Finally, though federal organizations such the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) resided within the NCR, they were not solicited for this research. This was because the timeframe allotted for the research was not applicable for this population to be used. Furthermore, most federal organizations within the region do not have inherent responsibilities to conduct DSCA operations during catastrophic events.

To further expound on the limitations of this research, it was essential for preliminary weaknesses and gaps to be expounded upon. The weaknesses and gaps in this research arose from a lack of literature to guide the research. Though there was a fair amount of military doctrine in circulation to guide how military organizations should conduct DSCA operations with regards to policy and protocol, literature that explicitly discussed collaborative DSCA operations was nascent. To further exacerbate the research, the two studies on DSCA proficiency only focused on proficiency levels at the state and local governance level. These studies did not replicate the environment in the NCR, where there was no one central governing authority or existing model to guide the research.

Another weakness related to this research was the time designated for the study. Data for the research was collected through a series of open-ended questions that were asked during scheduled interviews. Considering the dynamics of the populations, there was limited time to conduct the interviews, decipher the data, and possibly re-engage the population with follow up questions for clarification. Due to the populations competing demands coupled with their responsibilities, my access was limited and had to be very direct in order to maximize the opportunities given by participants.

A perceived bias that I had to guard against was military bias from emergency managers. I understood that by being in the military, emergency managers who agreed to participate in the research may have felt that I had ulterior motives for the research. To this particular population, my research could have been viewed as an indictment on them since I was in the military conducting research on their proficiency. To guard the research against this potential bias, I ensured all populations that there were no identifying features that would correlate organizations with responses from the approved survey. Next, though it may have been a small gesture to derail potential claims of bias, at no time did I wear my military uniform when engaging any population. My intent was to remain strictly impartial in an effort to truly inform the research and present myself as impartial. Finally, once I was given authority to solicit organizations to participate in the research, I forwarded a letter explaining the research and protocol to be followed which ensured there was no perceived favoritism that would violate the integrity of the research. Simply stated, the research questions generated from previous studies and the exhaustive literature guided my study, rather than any bias that may have infringed on the integrity of the study.

Understanding the potential impact of limitations, every effort was taken to mitigate impacts. First, the number of installations under the control of Joint Forces Headquarters – National Capital Region, with multiple planners at each installation, were too numerous to engage for comprehensive interview sessions. Therefore, by limiting the respondents, the data received was easily managed. Furthermore, additional resources were used to engage numerous respondents across numerous locations, which prolonged the research but proved to be very beneficial. Though the Federal Emergency Management Agency was within the confines of the NCR, the scope of the research was below the federal level, and therefore, it was not conducive to solicit FEMA or any federal agency to participate in the research. Finally, understanding time was premium when it came to interviewing participants, extensive measures were taken for the preparation of the interviews. Measures ranging from checking equipment and vetting the interview questions to confirming locations and discussing the terms of confidentiality served as preliminary milestones that were accomplished before the actual interviews were conducted. These actions ensured maximum time was dedicated to the actual participants' interview.

Questions on what my study will not do among that which is legitimately possible had connotations of a researchers' algorithm that has conflicted research since the dawn of researching. Unfortunately, the peril with any research is that those who are conducting the research are not the decision makers. We are the instruments the decision makers use to justify their decisions, or, we are the roadblocks that contradict their claims and opinions. Legitimately, the only course of action that research can take is to present

the research without bias and let the decision maker determine the plan his or her organization will take.

At the completion of this study, the intent was to present it to the leaders of the population involved to show them the rationale for conducting the research, how the research was conducted, and what the end result of the research was. By doing this, the research can provide the leaders with an unbiased view of DSCA proficiency inside the NCR. With the appropriate level of decision makers receiving the findings of the research, they can engage in a meaningful dialogue on policy change and how they can integrate their efforts into a seamless response and recovery operation. However, before these steps can take place, there had to be a study to guide the dialogue and give a framework on how to improve or sustain DSCA proficiency across all populations.

When examining the inherent problems with the research methodology that I chose, the first concern was the sample being indicative of the entire population. Due to the resources available to conduct this research and the access that I had to the populations, the number of participants were limited. Understandably, the responses that were received may not have been reflective of the entire population, which could have been problematic when presenting the data to an audience who may have reservations against the size of the population interviewed versus the actual number of emergency responders and military service members inside the NCR.

Another inherent problem with qualitative research and my research as well, was subjectivity within the body of research. However, this problem was directed more towards me, as opposed to the research. In order to truly inform the research, subjectivity did not influence this study in any way. It was not introduced in the interviews or the

analysis of collected data that is often left to the interpretation of the researcher. Subjectivity was unequivocally omitted to ensure that the integrity of the research was not compromised in order to enhance the continuum of inquiry. Unlike quantitative data, which can be easily generalized, this characteristic is not reflective of the qualitative methodology.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research will fill a gap in understanding how proficient military units and their emergency management counterparts are in DSCA operations within the NCR. Responsive disaster response and recovery is essential for organizations charged with the responsibility of limiting pain and suffering, property damage, and loss of life (Look & Spennemann, 2001). Furthermore, Porter (2010) expounded on the importance of conducting research to understand how emergency managers request and integrate the Department of Defense capabilities into a robust response and recovery effort. As countries such as Canada are embarking on a social change to integrate the military and emergency management operations in DSCA operations, it is worthwhile for our country to explore the benefits of this course of action as well (Farrel, 2005). Additionally, the findings from this research can give rise to a greater requirement for transparency among the two the entities if the results show that there is a less than optimal proficiency in DSCA operations among the two populations.

Additionally, my intent was to present the results to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). This organization serves as the governing body for the seven counties and two jurisdictions that comprise the NCR, and to a certain degree they are also responsible for writing policy for emergency managers throughout the

region. To my knowledge, no study either commissioned or presented in an unofficial capacity was used to determine how the collective body of emergency managers and military organizations conduct DSCA operations in the NCR.

By conducting this research as an unbiased researcher, the governing body can now be informed on the proficiency levels of those required to conduct response and recovery operations during a catastrophic event. Subsequently, the results can also foster policy discussions on potential topics such as integrated training, funding for exercises, and agreements that solidify how each organization will ensure their efforts do not conflict with that of others; duplication of efforts. In turn this can be done while simultaneously building a homogenous coalition with complimentary goals and objectives. However, as with any research, I can only present the results. The decision to use the research will strictly rest on the decisions of those who are charged with decision making authority as one of their responsibilities in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

On a broader scale, I believe the significance of this research centers on providing conclusive data that may compliment or contradict the research that was conducted by Haynes and Porter with regards to DSCA proficiency in the state of North Carolina and Louisiana Parishes.

By dissecting the phenomenon and analyzing the contributing factors that led to an optimal or less than optimal DSCA proficiency, there will be sufficient data to facilitate future research. Additionally, there will be no basis to provide a methodical process as to how emergency managers and their military mission partners can re-tool their organizational frameworks for planning, coordinating, and executing DSCA

operations. Therefore, the driving force behind these discussed changes can be the literature that was derived from this research.

Additionally, this research can have a tertiary impact on those who write policy and doctrine for DSCA operations. By coupling this research with Haynes and Porter studies, potential trends and threads can be expounded upon, which can lead to systematic streamlining of processes and procedures for greater efficiency across a broader spectrum of DSCA operations.

My profession will benefit from this research on multiple levels. First, considering my organization works closely with emergency managers in the NCR, this research can collectively benefit each organization by determining where the gaps are in DSCA proficiency. Next, the research can inform our internal leaders how proficient we are and what collective or organizational training we need to conduct in order to build or maintain our proficiency. The research will also provide the leaders in my profession with a comprehensive analysis on why we are deficient in certain areas, if that is indeed the findings from this research.

The why is important because it can help leaders triage the areas that require significant resources while those areas that require little assistance can maintain a glide path for continued proficiency. This point is also important because as resources become constrained, it is optimal for leaders to divert resources from areas where limited resources are required to make the most significant impact in a known deficient area. Finally, if this research has the desired impact on my profession, leaders at numerous echelons can also direct additional research to determine how proficient other organizations are in terms of DSCA proficiency.

With regards to social change, I believe my work can create a major impact by expounding on a potential problem that can have immeasurable impacts on how decision makers and those who execute emergency management operations execute their duties. This research can provide a lens for leaders to understand why they should routinely test their organizational proficiency in DSCA operations to ensure there is no degradation in how this task will be executed. As the number and magnitude of natural disasters increase, there is certainly a need for more research to support a conversation across multiple domains of emergency management.

Additionally, this research can also inform the general public on how proficient their civil authorities and military members are in executing DSCA operations. With this knowledge, the general public will have unbiased information to either applaud their service providers or demand they maintain a certain proficiency level to ensure that they can execute their assigned duties and responsibilities. As witnessed in the previous research, once the information is presented, there has to be a concerted effort by the decision makers or by those directly impacted by the results from the research to act. However, if one party decides to remain at a stalemate, there can be no progress to energize positive social change.

It is my hope that this work transcends above the NCR and serves as a catalyst for dialogue among senior leaders to determine how DSCA operations can be comprehensively evaluated, resourced, and executed should the need arise. Social change can only start when there is a body of knowledge that serves as the catalyst for change. The responsibility that I have as a researcher is to allow the research to inform the

intended audience, rather than establishing convenient boundaries and limitations that provide an outcome complimentary to the researcher's desired outcome.

### **Summary**

The key points in chapter 1 centered on setting the stage for why the research was relevant through the purpose and problem statements, which served as the impetus for the research. There was no mechanism in place to measure DSCA proficiency which addressed the problem, and the purpose of this research which was to determine the current proficiency level among those who execute DSCA operations. Furthermore, this research complimented two previous studies which focused on DSCA proficiency and what emergency managers needed to understand when integrating their assets and resources with their military counterparts at the state and regional levels of governance. However, what these two studies failed to accomplish is to determine DSCA proficiency levels of the military organizations that had the potential to combine their efforts with emergency managers for a comprehensive response and recovery plan in the event of a catastrophic event. This point was expounded upon in my rationale for conducting the research and the section dedicated to the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 will provide an analysis of the theoretical framework, the methodology for the literature review, themes and trends deciphered from the literature relevant to the problem, and a summation on the methodology that will be used to guide the research.

Chapter 3 will outline the research design and approach, the role of the researcher while conducting the research, sample and population, data collection and analysis, and the protection and rights of the participants involved in the study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

There is a problem with measuring Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) proficiency in the National Capital Region (NCR). DSCA is military support provided to civil authorities in response to domestic emergencies and catastrophic events (Joint Publication 3-28, 2013). To ensure DSCA operations are carried out seamlessly during domestic emergencies and large-scale catastrophic events, military organizations providing the support and the emergency management agency receiving the support must be proficient in DSCA operations. The proficiency of these organizations and agencies is the deciding factor in a delayed or expeditious response and recovery effort to save lives and restore essential services.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the DSCA proficiency level of military organizations and their emergency management counterparts inside the NCR. Without a comprehensive mechanism in place to evaluate and monitor the full scope of DSCA proficiency across the domains of planning, coordinating, and execution, civil authorities and military officials cannot accurately establish metrics to ensure operational readiness. Furthermore, with the rise of emerging global terrorist activity it is incumbent upon those who are responsible for executing DSCA operations maintain a proficiency level commensurate with timely response and recovery operations that minimizes late to need requests for assistance.

### **Organization of the Chapter**

The literature review begins with the search methodology that I used to retrieve peer reviewed articles for the research. Next, I analyze current dissertations that have

been written on DSCA. I explain the theoretical framework to show how the ACF correlates to the proposed research with regard to the integral relationships among the numerous DSCA actors in the NCR and how they leverage proficiency to formulate policies that are succinct DSCA operations. I will identify themes and trends from the current literature published on DSCA.

In an effort to describe the dynamics of the NCR, I examined each emergency management actor transcending federal to local levels of government to delineate their duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, my analysis offers insight on how actors within coalitions have competing demands for a finite number of resources. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a summary of the literature review and an introduction to methodology in Chapter 3.

I chose the qualitative methodology for this research in an effort to conduct a comprehensive analysis on DSCA operations and the contributing factors which lead to an optimal or less than optimal proficiency. Unlike the quantitative methodology, which uses a system of measurements and hypothesis to establish relationships among independent and dependent variables, the qualitative methodology was chosen because it focuses on the how and why of the phenomenon (Isaacs, 2014) which is more compatible with this study.

### **Methodology for the Literature Review**

In an effort to inform the research through a comprehensive literature review, I developed a methodical search strategy for three prevailing categories. Those categories were: theory that was used for the literature review, the gap in literature pertaining to DSCA proficiency, and the methodology used to guide the collective research.

The ACF served as the theoretical framework for the research. The ACF emphasizes the role of individual actors and their beliefs in a collective coalition to develop comprehensive public policies (Jenkins-Smith, Silva, Gupta, K, & Ripberger, 2014). Kübler (2001) further stated:

The ACF argues that actors perceive the world and process information according to a variety of cognitive biases which provide heuristic guidance in complex situations. In the case of public policies, such guidance is provided by belief systems about how a given public problem is structured, and how it should be dealt with (p.624).

The ACF was suitable to this study because understanding the collective DSCA proficiency among the key actors and their beliefs on what DSCA proficiency should equate to in the National Capital Region help policy makers structure cogent policies. These policies in turn direct changes to build optimal proficiency among the coalition. This change further enhances the theory by using it as a general framework for coalition building that spans the full spectrum of local, district and federal governments.

Peer reviewed literature was the optimal choice for reference materials, but non-peer reviewed articles from credible sources added merit to the research. For the literature review, I used search engines such as ProQuest, Google Scholar, Sage, EBSCOhost, Academic Search Complete, Department of Defense Digital Library, and Thoreau Multi Database Search. For the theoretical framework, I used terms such as *advocacy coalition*, *theoretical framework*, *policy*, *theories*, *coalition building*, *social construct*, *relationship in coalitions*, and *actors in coalitions* to refine the search. As a caveat, it was important to refine the search to ensure an appropriate amount of data was accumulated.

The encompassing literature for DSCA proficiency and DSCA operations started with an exhaustive search using the same search engines for the theoretical framework. However, for this search I also used the Government Accounting Office (GAO) database to inform the research. It was integral to use this database due to the GAO's informative after action reviews on a myriad of subject areas which included, but was not limited to disaster response and military/civilian conduct during catastrophic events. The GAO is a non-partisan organization, and the work they have conducted over the years has been instrumental in several doctoral studies.

### **Search Terms**

I used terms such as *defense support to civil authority, civil authorities, emergency management, emergency, disaster, response and recovery, title 10, title 32, and immediate response authority* in the appropriate search engines. Haynes alluded to limited research on the subject of defense support to civil authorities. Therefore, to mitigate this omission, I conducted a review on areas that were closely related to explain the phenomenon of DSCA that included but were not limited to: *emergency manager education curriculums, deficiency in training emergency managers, combined response and recovery operations during disasters, and the military in emergency management roles.*

I used the qualitative intrinsic case study for this research used. McCusker and Gunaydin (2015) stated "Qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life and its methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis" (p.537). Furthermore, I selected the

intrinsic case study because of my genuine interest to better understand DSCA proficiency, which Stake (1995) alluded to. Though a statistical analysis certainly has merit in producing the statistical data for the aggregate population in the NCR, it does not provide a comprehensive understanding on the contributing factors which lead to optimal levels of DSCA proficiency or below acceptable levels of DSCA proficiency, as McCusker and Gunaydin noted.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The strategy for the literature review focused on finding peer-reviewed articles relating to defense support to civil authorities, emergency management, emergency preparedness, and military support to civil authorities. The plan for finding literature was carried out in several ways. First, I used databases such as ProQuest, Google scholar, Sage, EBSCOhost, Academic Search Complete, Department of Defense Digital Library, Thoreau Multi Database Search, and Military and Government Collection for data collection. Studies on emergency management provided great resources for informing the overall body of research were very informative.

There was a significant lack of research material on DSCA proficiency and even less on DSCA proficiency among emergency managers and their military mission partners in the NCR. Only two dissertations were found that were closely related to my research. Porter (2010) conducted research on determining what emergency managers needed to know when integrating the military into their response and recovery efforts. Haynes's (2014) research on DSCA proficiency of emergency managers in the state of North Carolina provided context as well. This study provided insight on trends and themes emergency managers in the state of North Carolina identified as positives or

negatives which ultimately contributed to or negated DSCA proficiency. Though the dissertations were helpful in establishing initial plans for the research collection effort, I used other measures to inform the research. These measures consisted of conducting exhaustive reviews on after action reports for disasters from Hurricane Katrina in (2005) to Super Storm Sandy which made landfall off the coast of New Jersey in 2012. The after actions reports were essential because they provided information about actual DSCA operations and the strengths and weaknesses that permeated over a 7-year span.

To gather additional information, I solicited the DoD Defense Support to Civil Authorities directorate to provide literature that could help in framing the complexities of DSCA operations.

### **Theoretical Framework**

I used the ACF for this research. This theory was first introduced by Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins Smith (Sabatier & Jenkins Smith, 1999). The premise for the theory is that in a coalition there are multiple actors and inside these coalitions there are competing demands from each actor to ensure their equities are equally proportioned with other members inside the coalition. Additionally, the theory was used as a guide to analyze how these coalitions approached policy making through their beliefs, subsystems, guidance mechanism, and most importantly, the time that is required for the collective coalition to implement change for policies that address the collective coalition issue(s) (Sabatier & Jenkins Smith, 1999).

The ACF formulated due to a perception by the originators that there was a nascent understanding of how the individual actors formed coalitions to develop policies. Considered controversial at the time, Sabatier and Jenkins Smith (1999) felt other

theories that addressed policy formation focused primarily on single actors rather than multiple actors. Therefore, in their opinion, accepted theories at that time did not clearly explain the policy process, failed to show how the environment influenced the policy formation process and the importance of instruments when forming and evaluating the policy (Sabatier & Jenkins Smith, 1999).

Menno and Pieter-Jan (2001) article titled “Interdependency, Beliefs, and Coalition Behavior: A Contribution to the Advocacy Coalition Framework” provides an analysis on the interdependency of beliefs and coalition on the process of policy formation. To frame the discussion on inner working of the ACF Sabatier (1993) as quoted by Menno and Pieter-Jan (2001) stated:

(1) that understanding the process of policy change - and the role of policy oriented learning therein - requires a time perspective of a decade or more; (2) that the most useful way to think about policy change over such a time span is through a focus on "policy subsystems," that is, the interaction of actors from 158 different institutions who follow and seek to influence governmental decisions in a policy area; (3) that those subsystems must include an intergovernmental dimension, that is, they must involve all levels of government (...); and (4) that public policies (or programs) can be conceptualized in the same manner as belief systems, that is, as sets of value priorities and causal assumptions about how to realize them. (pp.157-158)

This article reinforced why the ACF is a suitable theoretical framework for the proposed research inside the NCR. With numerous coalitions, and each coalition leveraging their beliefs to influence others, the foundation is clearly established for

understanding the true essence of policy formulation with multiple actors with diverging equities.

The choice of the theoretical framework was based on the analysis of coalitions and the actors that form the coalitions. Inside the NCR there were several coalitions with multiple actors ranging from the federal to the district levels of government. These actors certainly had competing demands as they tried to advance their policies, but understandably, they must develop symbiotic relationships with coalition members that can facilitate the advancement of their policies while reciprocating this action with coalition members when applicable.

Additionally, Nonrated (2013) stated “Disruptive crises are generally conducive to policy conflict between multiple stakeholders. Following the potentially adversarial nature of crisis resolution” (p.954). Consequently, a catastrophic event which requires military organizations and emergency managers to pool resources in a collective response and recovery operation certainly qualifies as a disruptive event. By using the tenants of the ACF, an optimal blueprint was provided to assess the regions coalitions and how their relationships either advanced or negated the process of policy formation.

Though the Civil Military Theory was considered, it was not introduced as a theoretical framework based on the fact that unless a Presidential Declaration has been declared, the military will always be subservient to civil authorities. The premise for the Civil Military Theory advocated for the military to be a separate entity with equal standing in decision making in contrast to the military receiving directives and orders from civil authorities which we currently abide with. I felt this rationale was not suitable for my research.

The selected theory related to the present study because of the similarities between the coalitions. ACF focused on how populations contributed to the encompassing policy making process while clinging to their beliefs and policy sub-systems to ensure their equities are reflected in the overall policy that the coalition is presenting. Inherently these dynamics cause conflict because loyalties are not tethered to the collective group, but to the internal organization. Inside the NCR the coalitions were vast and like the advocacy coalition framework there were numerous factors that influenced how policy decisions were formed and implemented. Furthermore, this dynamic was further influenced by the multiple coalitions at the federal, state, and local levels of government which have a vested interest in the policy formation process as well.

With regards to DSCA, this dynamic was especially difficult because there is no overall adjudicating authority between the military and emergency managers in the NCR. Therefore, the populations were not beholden to adhere to any comprehensive policy which certainly adds to the degree of difficulty when trying to form a cohesive coalition. Many researchers have also alluded to this difficulty which caused some to question the validity of the theory knowing that these factors make the policy process translucent.

In Brecher, Brazill, Weitzman, & Silver, (2010) article titled “Understanding the Political Context of “New” Policy Issues: The Use of the Advocacy Coalition Framework in the Case of Expanded After-School Programs”, the researchers provided an analysis on the applicability of the ACF in after school programs. This article was especially intriguing because it had a close resemblance to the multiple coalitions represented inside the NCR. Furthermore, like the NCR, each actor in the coalition certainly had their internal equities in which they wanted to leverage for a position of

strength. However, the policy formation, especially in this case, had certain connotations that required the populations to produce options and frame common goals to avoid coalition friction. In contrast to Belchee et al, Matti & Sandström (2013) article titled “The Defining Elements of Advocacy Coalitions: Continuing the Search for Explanations for Coordination and Coalition Structure”, advocated change to the structure of the advocacy coalition framework policy sub-system. Additionally, Brecher et al believed the advocacy coalition framework should continue to explore the dynamics of relationships inside the coalition and how they stimulate change.

Ellison & Newmark (2010) article titled “Building the Reservoir to Nowhere: The Role of Agencies in Advocacy Coalitions”, continued the discussion on how agencies at the federal level set the conditions for debating the merits of the policy. Additionally, they also establish baseline rules for arbitration and maneuvering of coalition members to gain an advantage for policy formation. This article was unique because of the focus it placed on the greater good of a policy forming from the primary actor versus the needs of the collective coalition. As with numerous policies that are negotiated and ultimately approved, the policy itself may not be beneficiary for the majority. This dynamic calls into the question the ability of the minority actor(s) to leverage their equities inside the coalition and counter balance majority.

Heinmiller (2013) article titled “Advocacy Coalitions and the Alberta Water Act”, provided a unique perspective on the dichotomy of actors inside the ACF coalition. Either through a position of authority or their ability to successfully advocate for their equities within the coalition, there was a dominant actor and a protagonist who together controlled the equilibrium inside the coalition.

Furthermore, in an effort to leverage their position and codify their internal equities into policies, each actor used hard or soft power to maneuver their organization to an advantageous position. Hard power was derived from policies or directives which clearly delineated the proportionality of authorities among the coalition. Whereas soft power was derived as “actors using soft power relied heavily on their credibility, legitimacy and persuasive abilities. Soft power resources tended to be more diverse and ephemeral than hard power resources” (Heinmiller, 2013 p.530). However, over time, beliefs among members change which caused new alignments and positions of dominance. Therefore, in order to maintain the equilibrium inside the coalition it was recommended that hard and soft power should be reserved for the most contentious issues and not reverted to on a routine basis.

Of all literature presented in the review, Heinmiller perspective best describes the dynamic inside the NCR. There are coalition members who possess hard and soft power, but must maximize relationships, rather than leveraging these tools to ensure the equilibrium does not permeate into adversarial relationships that negate positive efforts to build DSCA proficiency among the collective coalition.

Ripberger, Gupta, Silva, & Jenkins-Smith (2014) article titled “Cultural Theory and the Measurement of Deep Core Beliefs Within the Advocacy Coalition Framework” explored the influence of beliefs in the coalition policy making. As it has been widely noted, the collective coalition inside the advocacy coalition is nested together by a set of beliefs. These beliefs may be diametrically opposed to other members, but at the core of the belief system there are similarities which forms the fabric for collective decision making. As a recommendation, the authors recommended that a system should be

instituted to measure the different levels of core beliefs among coalition members. The correlation between the study to determine the different metric among the core belief and the coalition helps the researcher understand the true influence core beliefs have on decision making.

For instance, for those with a higher core belief on a particular issue, is it possible for their decisions to be swayed by the collective group? Conversely, will those with deeper core beliefs present a significant challenge to the decision-making process by using their unrelenting belief system to thwart policies that are not in line with their beliefs?

In contrast to the previous studies on the ACF, Leifeld (2013) conducted an analysis from the far side of the pendulum by analyzing the dichotomy of beliefs and relationships inside the subsystems. More importantly, as the beliefs that forged the relationships among coalition members changed, Lefeld stated “How does the structure of a subsystem change when belief change occurs? Is there a transition phase, and what does it look like” (p.170)?

Understandably, the element of time is a major consideration when answering the question that Lefeld proposes. The changing of beliefs occurs over time. Therefore, it is imperative to understand what event or series of events occurred over time to impact the changing of beliefs and the tertiary impact on the relationship with other members. In the NCR where the coalition consisted of numerous actors at the federal, state, and district levels of government, the dynamics certainly exist for one or more than one actor to change their beliefs over an extended period of time. From constrained resources levied on certain organizations, to methods and procedures that are juxtaposed to previous

beliefs on DSCA, the environment in the NCR is certainly ripe for this occurrence which can upset the equilibrium among coalition members.

As a compliment to Ripberger et al perspective, Nohrstedt (2013) article titled “Advocacy Coalition in Crisis Resolution: Understanding Policy Dispute in the European Volcanic Ash Cloud Crisis”, expounded on decision making in a crisis situation which Europe experienced during the volcanic eruptions in 2010. Though beliefs may play a significant role in decision making, those beliefs are tested when they are conjoined with a crisis which may cause the beliefs system to be questioned or changed in its’ entirety. Nohrstedt believed rather than viewing the crisis which caused dissent among the collective coalition as a new phenomenon that required a different coalition approach by the coalition, members of the coalition should remain true to the principles of ACF.

Remaining true to the coalition framework insinuated finding common ground with the collective coalition to effectively and efficiently implement an informed decision to mitigate the impacts of the crisis. Subsequently, due to the nature of the crisis such as the Northern European volcano eruptions, Nohrstedt argued that the coalition should rely on the ACF as a proven framework. This course of action would optimally allow the coalition to adequately frame the crisis and apply the applicable principles to resolve the crisis while maintaining the integrity of the coalition. This article was especially important because like the volcano eruptions in Europe which caused a crisis, DSCA operations are normally carried out under conditions of duress. Duress under extreme conditions has the potential to cause the coalition to fracture unless they are committed to the collective coalition and mitigating the impacts of the crisis at hand. From the above literature, the landscape for the ACF seemed to be rooted in the context of abandoning

the framework in a time of crisis where a change may be warranted based on the gravity of the situation. Conversely, the coalition can also remain true to the principles which coalitions members have solidified through practiced events or practical application. Unfortunately, there is no algorithm to determine the appropriate course of action and the correct equilibrium will be situational dependent based on the assessment of the coalition.

To add further legitimacy to the ACF, Matti & Sandström (2013) proposed future research as to why policy networks form, grow and evolve over time. The researchers' summation served as an example of expanding the continuum of inquiry by challenging the historical blueprint of the ACF. Matti and Sandstorm believed that relationships and dynamics in the policy subsystems were not linear as Sabatier suggests. Matti and Sandstrom stated that the policy subsystem as we know it:

has proved increasingly inadequate for capturing the complete shifting, and complex, shifting, and uncertain patterns of contemporary policy making. The past decades of policy research have therefore seen are conceptualizing of policy making as a dynamic process incorporating a range of competing ideas, actors, and actions, where policy outcomes primarily are determined by spatially and temporally interconnected processes of negotiation, coordination, and resource mobilization among actors from a variety of organizations (pp. 240-241).

Though there may be merit to their proposal, in order to change the very foundation of a theory that has permeated over several decades requires substantial support and continued dialogue to retool the theory in an effort to replicate policy subsystems as they view them. This process can be very time consuming and face several obstacles as authors try to validate the theory.

The premise for this research was to gain a greater understanding of DSCA proficiency among emergency managers and their military mission partners in the NCR. At the conclusion of this research, findings and results were presented to the collective coalition informing policy makers on proficiency levels and recommendations that should be considered to build or maintain proficiency levels for optimal success in DSCA operations. Nedergaard (2008) stated “In the ACF, it is assumed that advocacy coalitions will resist information that challenges the policy core beliefs of decision actors. This characteristic is even stronger in semi-federalist systems (p.179). Though the NCR is not comparable on any scale to the semi-federalist system that is indicative of the EU, the comparable between Nedergaard study and the proposed research is how results from DSCA proficiency can influence policy makers. This point is especially true if the research contradicts the beliefs of certain actors or the coalition in its entirety on DSCA proficiency and DSCA operations. The fundamental question is how to gain consensus from the coalition while simultaneously challenging beliefs rooted in anecdotal presupposition versus erudition?

The literature that established the relevance to the potential problem was literature that has promulgated from similar studies that categorically identified DSCA proficiency as an issue with emergency managers. These studies spanned the spectrum from numerous geographical locations across the continental United States, to dialogue with emergency managers that have years of experience in response and recovery operations. Porter (2010) study which measured DSCA proficiency among emergency managers in Louisiana concluded that in order to improve the proficiency levels among emergency managers there must be a concerted effort from the DoD to provide education assistance to

achieve an optimal level of proficiency. Haynes research revealed “None of 10 managers reported they had formal DSCA education. Seven of the 10 managers (70%) reported they were not well educated on DSCA policies and guidelines” (p.129).

When establishing the linkage between the related research and literature with regards to DSCA proficiency inside the NCR, the first glimpse into the problem is alluded to by Homeland District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director Christopher Geldart. In his testimony to the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management Agency Mr. Geldart stated (2006) “From an emergency management perspective, the NCR is one of the most challenging regions in the country. The region will continue to have challenges going forward” (p.8). Though his testimony did not explicitly define the problem within the NCR with regards to measuring DSCA proficiency, it provided insight on challenges that encumbered a member of the DSCA coalition within the NCR.

With regards to literature that has a direct correlation to the problem, Milliman et al. (2006) discovered that across five states in the northeastern continental United States the preponderance of emergency managers surveyed did not have a clear understanding of DSCA operations which included how to request assistance.

In conclusion, though the literature is continuing to mature, if historical findings are reflected within the NCR, the implications for a lack of DSCA proficiency will be disconcerting being that the seat of our national power resides within the region. Additionally, as natural and man-made threats continue to evolve, research will be required to help mitigate their affects.

### **DSCA Literature Themes**

After a comprehensive review on the literature pertinent to DSCA proficiency, the dominant themes centered on the lack of DSCA knowledge emergency managers consistently alluded to and collaboration with their military counterparts. Though Porter (2010) and Haynes (2014) dissertations were two of the most recent bodies of work on DSCA proficiency, the findings are reflective of Milliman et al (2006) research in which emergency managers stated:

“Educate all Emergency Managers on what is available from MACA and how to access it.”

“We have only had one briefing in the five years that I have been Public Safety Director for my County that explained MACA and the resources, capabilities, etc. that the military overall can provide. I would urge a more visible and detailed informational briefings to emergency managers.”

“Today, very few county officials know about or can access the MACA process. Emergency managers should be provided with specific information regarding the program and how to access the system.”

“Need to continue to develop working relationships throughout the year between localities and MACA representatives so when a large event occurs localities will already be familiar with the MACA system and its representatives before the crisis occurs.”

“If I have received information on MACA, it was overlooked so I am not sure of what benefits MACA would have for my community...”

(Caps by the survey respondent) (p.5)

Additional themes from the literature revealed efforts to improve DSCA proficiency and the possible expansion of the military's role in DSCA operations. Though improving DSCA proficiency may be welcomed by all entities involved in this complex operation, expanding the role of the military received opposition from those who understand how standing directives, regulations, and policies will make this recommendation extremely difficult to implement. Additionally, as the military continued force reductions and realignment of remaining organizations against new missions, this effort seemed unattainable. With regards to trends, there was a consistent pattern of emergency manager's inability to gain access to the appropriate curriculums to bolster their knowledge of DSCA operations. Though the DSCA course was offered to emergency managers and DoD service members, emergency managers systematically stated there was an inability for their populations to gain access to these forums.

### **Education**

Education in any profession is a paramount building block for organizations to produce competent, proficient, and effective subordinates and institutions able to carry out their mission requirements due to their knowledge. Be it through the development of cognitive skills for emergency managers or setting the conditions for learning and growing institutions with empowered subordinates, education serves as the antecedent for proficiency. Muttarak and Pothisiri stated (2013) "education has a positive direct effect on disaster preparedness because education enhances cognitive and risk evaluation skills" (Muttarak & Pothisiri, 2013). From implementing standard operational procedures that clearly delineated duties and responsibilities during a full-scale emergency, to developing assessment tools to gauge proficiency levels of emergency managers and their military

counterparts, there must be a comprehensive educational curriculum. This curriculum should encapsulate training requirements, standards for achieving proficiency, and training models that guide individuals and organizations with a road map to achieve an optimal level of proficiency. As the literature under this theme showed, there's a need to improve education in DSCA operations based on previous research and after action reports. Additionally, as concepts, techniques and procedures continue to evolve for executing DSCA operations, education curriculums must be constantly evaluated to ensure they are maintaining their relevance in providing solutions sets complimentary for individuals to achieve operational mission success.

To dissect the importance of education in DSCA operations education Milliman et al wanted to gain a greater understanding of the role of education in the proficiency level of their population. Like Porter's and Haynes research which followed this work, emergency managers were found to have a nascent level of DSCA proficiency. Additionally, though there was a substantial finding in DSCA proficiency, the researchers automatically assumed this deficiency was contributed to education. To their credit, the researchers did state if they investigated the impact of training or other factors which contributed to a below average finding on DSCA proficiency.

Johnson (2013) used her research to determine how participants from the Defense Support to Civil Authorities course used their newfound knowledge to foster learning and growing environments responsible for DSCA operations. To inform her research on the impact of the course, she conducted interviews with recent graduates. They expounded on their experience in the course, and how the course helped them to better understand their duties and responsibilities in their organizations with regards to DSCA. Understandably,

many participants in the course entered with a nascent education of DSCA operations. However, once they completed the course with a new-found knowledge they were able to articulate certain aspects of DSCA and guide their organizations based of their knowledge gained from the DSCA educational curriculum.

Theisen (2013) examined the proficiency of military organizations and their emergency management partners in no notice complex catastrophes that permeated from chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. As Theisen noted, most training for catastrophes normally centered on events such as high category tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and wildfires. However, understanding that those who participate in nefarious activity have the capability to deliver an attack in a CBRN form, Thiesen proposed that National Guard units should conduct more training centered on this particular problem set to identify deficiencies that may exist in protocols and standard operating procedures. This argument was based on the simple fact that the complexity of CBRN operations can considerably stress the DSCA apparatus. This is due in part to the simple fact that before the response and recovery operation can begin, emergency managers and their military counterparts must devise a cogent plan to address the CBRN environment and the follow on DSCA operation.

Understandably, if the tasks associated with CBRN response were not trained on or integrated into a large-scale response exercise with the appropriate education curriculums, the potential for an uncoordinated response could severely hinder the combined operation. This in turn could cause a greater loss of life and further complicate the response effort to a degree that leads to a missions within itself. This is why combined training is important.

### **Improving DSCA Proficiency**

In the wake of numerous disasters over the past ten years, there were after actions reports addressing the improvement of DSCA proficiency and DSCA operations as a whole. Subsequently, the argument can be made that the improvements required in DSCA proficiency had the potential to form a symbiotic relationship with regards to DSCA education. Optimally, if there are tangible advancements in DSCA education, the by product should include incremental improvements for DSCA proficiency. In a RAND research funded after action report titled “Before Disaster Strikes Imperatives for Enhancing Defense Support of Civil Authorities” (2010) The Advisory Panel on Department of Defense Capabilities for Support of Civil Authorities After Certain Incidents stated:

All leaders should be proficient with the National Response Framework and the National Incident Management System, but few military leaders have been trained specifically for DSCA, and the amount and level of formal training for response planning and operations varies among Federal, State, and local civilian officials, including Governors. (p.22)

The importance of this finding cannot be underestimated. As the collected literature shows under this theme, from Hurricane Katrina to Super Storm Sandy this salient point has consistently emerged in numerous reports and reviews. However, in defense of this improvement, providing an agreed upon solution set spanning the federal, state, and local levels of government to improve DSCA proficiency has many pitfalls that plague improvements in improving DSCA proficiency. Pitfalls such as the proverbial government bureaucracy, adequate resources, and numerous agencies working in fiscally

constrained environments versus those with those who have minimal constraints. If there is to be any efforts made in removing these pitfalls, this unbalanced dynamic must be addressed before a feasible and suitable solution set can be implemented to improve collective DSCA proficiency. Once again, this example unequivocally showed why the advocacy coalition framework is uniquely suited for this study. There are multiple coalitions with different positions of strengths among the collective group, but they must find common ground to address a key issue that has the potential to impact all coalition members.

Glecker (2015) captured the true essence why DSCA and the proficiency levels of those who execute this operation are essential. As an antecedent, Glecker primarily focused on the importance of contingency war plans for major campaigns. These plans were paramount because they helped military leaders manage personnel, resources and provide a systematic approach to conducting assigned missions. Glecker believed this same approach should have been instituted by those who execute large scale DSCA operations with multiple organizations.

As with military contingency operations, there are only a finite number of resources that can be allocated for different missions. Therefore, it is important for military leaders and their civil authority counterparts identify these capabilities, the methods to employ them, and how they will execute command and control of these forces during DSCA operations.

However, the connective tissue that combines this complex undertaking is the proficiency of those who will make decisions and develop policies for these operations. If overall proficiency is lacking to execute this complex mission the results will be less than

optimal for aiding and assisting local populace. Just as military officers who under take campaign planning must be proficient, the same adage is true for DSCA planners as well. Glecker concludes his article by insinuating if we truly commit to the process “we can foster a rich civil-military dialogue that captures risks and opportunities when the stakes are manageable and time is available” (p.76).

Larkin (2014) provided a unique perspective on junior officers assigned to National Guard units who may execute DSCA operations. Larkin established the conditions for the article by alluding to the skill sets that junior officers in Iraq used during complex operations that may have merit in DSCA operations. Like combat operations, there are moments of uncertainty where junior officers will have to make decisions to save lives, ensure mission success, and protect those under their care. However, like combat operations these officers charged with the responsibility of executing DSCA operations must be proficient so they can make sound decisions that are nested with the overall goals and objectives established by the state or local civil authorities.

Larkin proposed that in preparation for these complex operations junior officers in the National Guard should dedicate themselves to understanding the regulations that guide DSCA operations. Furthermore, they should prepare their formations for impending deployments by improving proficiency through repetitions in exercises, and constantly reevaluating areas where improvements can be made.

Apte and Heath (2011) stressed the importance of emergency managers and military organizations understanding the actual request process for essential assets that could be used to bolster disaster response operations. As a point of reference, they

alluded to other studies where emergency managers did not understand how to request assets which seriously negates a full-scale response and recovery operation. In an effort to mitigate this deficiency with civil authorities, Apte and Heath (2011) recommend organizations in close proximity combine their efforts to build prescribed mission assignments or PSMA's as they are normally referred to. PSMA's outline force packages that civilian authorities predict they will need depending on the scale of the disaster. By establishing these force packages the response time for a disaster is cut tremendously because the forces required have been identified and the only protocol required is the official request from civil authorities to their military counterparts. In order for this process to produce optimal results emergency managers and military organizations must have a working knowledge of DSCA operations and establish protocols which allow PSMA's to be executed without delay. However, just because PMA's are established among the two entities, it should not be assumed they are impervious to potential failure. Like overall DSCA operations, even this process must be exercised to ensure an optimal knowledge level exist.

Burke and Mcneil (2015) work titled "Maturing Defense Support to Civil Authorities and the Dual Status Commander arrangement" took a different approach in comparison to other articles positions on improving DSCA operations. They recommend a significant investment into the appointed dual status commander. This military officer operates under the guidance of the governor and directs military forces to conduct mission assignments as required during catastrophic events in a designated state. The authors point to the success of Super Storm Sandy where dual status commanders were quickly established to facilitate DSCA operations before the super storm made landfall.

Additionally, they were given the necessary authorities which was extremely important for DSCA operations because authorities outline what can and can't be done in the region or by the dual status commander. This example certainly sheds light on the possibilities of what emergency managers and their military mission partners can accomplish if they make a concerted effort to implement steps to streamline their process for greater efficiency. However, in order to build on the success that Burke and Mcneil elaborated on, a concerted effort to find deficiencies that impact response efforts must be undertaken with a comprehensive plan designed to find and fix deficiencies when identified.

In an effort to ensure the Department of Defense is continuing to evolve and meet the challenges that impact our country, the pentagon embraced their role in facilitating homeland defense through defense support to civil authorities. In their Homeland Defense Strategy (2013), the Pentagon reinforced their commitment to civil authorities by stating:

The second priority is support of civil authorities in the event of catastrophic domestic events, with two key objectives being to maintain chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear preparedness and to develop plans and procedures to ensure such support during complex catastrophes. The core capabilities to carry out the domestic support mission include being able to rapidly deploy CBRN response forces, having an immediate response authority for catastrophes, having forces in various areas of the country to react as needed, and having access to non-National Guard Reserve forces. (Homeland Defense Strategy, 2013).

Though this strategy was reassuring, there needed to be a concerted effort to ensure the pledge was complimented with military and emergency managers who were

proficient in DSCA operations and could truly provide the service outlined in the new strategy. Furthermore, as the second research question to this research alludes to, there has to be a concerted effort to determine what contributing factors lead to an optimal or less than optimal level of DSCA proficiency to ensure the above strategy is successful. If the root cause of a deficiency can't be determined there is no conceivable to devise a plan that has no central point from which to start.

### **Coordinating and Collaborating DSCA operations**

Tussing (2012) perspective on DSCA took a road less travelled in the DSCA phenomenon. He argued that preparation for DSCA operations is equally, if not more important than the actual operation itself. From his instructor's position at the United States Army War College, Tussing carefully crafted what he believed were imperatives that must occur between among emergency managers and their military counterparts.

According to Tussing the imperatives are:

- Command and Control of Active, Reserve and National Guard forces in response and recovery operations
- Aligning military response with civil regional requirements in responding to disasters that transcend states' borders
- Attending to the delicate line of demarcation between the military and law enforcement when responding to the requests, or directives, of civil authorities
- Challenging the impetus that leads to unnecessarily applying federal assets, to include the military, in a "nationalization of disasters"
- Suggesting another strategic mindset to preparations for response to domestic crises, applying a center of gravity model to risk assessment requirements (p.132)

Though critics may debate the merits of Tussing's list of imperatives, to his credit, many of the list imperatives appeared in after action reports in which both emergency managers and military leaders acknowledged as deficient areas.

Topp (2006) thesis titled "What Should be the Relationship Between the National Guard and United States Northern Command in Civil Support Operations following Catastrophic Events", served as one of the central debates in DSCA operations.

Understandably, disaster response is not an exact science with exact measurements that quantify response capacity evaluated against the disaster itself. With regards to command and control, Topp expounded on the general construct for senior officials who will oversee the operation which includes multiple forces, civilian and military, and organizations that are not affiliated to either population. As previously mentioned, the state governor and his or her emergency management operational command team are in charge of disasters within their boundaries. However, if they do have the capacity to assume this responsibility as witnessed in Hurricane Katrina, is it feasible, suitable, or acceptable for the state or local government to relinquish this responsibility to federal authorities until an optimal capacity is reached. It has become widely accepted that speed of action is a must in DSCA operations, and establishing command and control most expeditiously is imperative. However, if the response is not equaled to the unfolding event, should the chain of custody be relinquished until the appropriate authority can execute their duties without the assistance of a higher authority? Understandably, there are sensitivities, state sovereignty and policies that addressed this prickly course of action. However, in times of duress should leaders have the authority to counter policies,

regulations, and organizational sensitivities for the greater good of populace who will be directly impacted if there's a haphazard response to catastrophic incident.

Bharosa, Lee, and Janssen (2010) complimented Topp's perspective by expounding on the difficulties of multi-agency operations in support of disaster response operations encounter. First, as Topp recognized, there was a need for a mechanism for all entities involved in a large-scale disaster response operation to collect information, analyze the information, make well informed decisions. Subsequently, during the time of a disaster is not the most opportune time to place the general concept into practical application. This multi-faceted operation must be exercised on multiple levels to ensure all participants understand their roles and responsibilities and determine where there are duplication of efforts.

Once, a baseline proficiency is built, the authors recommended elevating the degree of difficulty in a collective exercise to build "muscle memory", but also train the force to failure. By training to failure, flaws and deficiencies are identified which helps organizations identify gaps in their plans and standard operation procedures that must be addressed to ensure optimal results during the actual disaster. Finally, a central aspect to their article was the sharing of information. Clear and concise information is central to making timely decisions that can mitigate the effects of a disaster if it is passed in a timely manner and properly vetted for accuracy.

Slattery, Syvertson, and Krill (2009) took an analytical view on the role of leadership in disaster management operations. Their article related to the proposed research because it also focused on the proficiency that leaders must possess in order to ensure there, orders, guidance, and employment tactics are rooted in proficiency gained

through experience, education, and training. Slattery, Syvertson, and Krill recommended an eight-step training model to help them build organizational proficiency. They stated:

The steps are as follows:

1. Study/Teach the Literature / Doctrine (Certify Leaders); 2. Survey the Training Site; 3. Develop the Training Plan; 4. Issue the Plan; 5. Rehearse the Plan (Tabletop Exercise); 6. Execute the Training; 7. Evaluate the Training; and 8. Retrain as Needed to Meet Goals. At a minimum, the model acquaints participants with divergent organizational roles and missions and at its best instills confidence in participating organizations' ability to work together in a simulated setting before they are forced to collaborate during emergency response. (p.3)

This training model crossed all organizational domains and can be easily incorporated to ensure proficiency levels are maintained if leaders commit to the model and not circumvent the system with inferior training models that produce less than optimal training objectives.

Keeping in the theme of coordinating and collaboration of multiple agencies during disaster response, Waugh and Streib (2006) provided insight on how the federal government would integrate into the emergency response operations as DSCA unfolds at the state and local levels.

Arguably, it may be easier for military organizations and emergency managers to coordinate their efforts through routine collective training and exercises. However, do to the vast size of organizations such as FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security in general, incorporating these organizations into the same cycle of training and exercises may not be feasible or suitable. With this factor in the mind, planners for DSCA

operations are faced with the task of how to coalesce all participants to maintain an optimal proficiency. This scenario certainly stands true for the NCR. Local, district, state and federal emergency management organizations each have the responsibility for executing DSCA in their individual roles, but no mandate exist to ensure they are equally proficient. Unfortunately, if federal organizations cannot commit to planning, collaboration, or participating in exercises they will never establish a foundation for employing their capability and integrating into the collective DSCA effort.

In the Government Accounting Office (2015) report titled “DOD Is Taking Action to Strengthen Support of Civil Authorities”, Dr. Joseph Kirschbaum provided insight on the DoD actions that are currently ongoing to improve how the military and civil authorities conduct DSCA operations. In contrast to a report released in 2012 which highlighted the shortcomings of the department of defense in improving DSCA operations, this report highlighted changes that will undoubtedly have a major impact on future DSCA operations. He stated:

DOD has and continues to take action to address our prior recommendations to strengthen its DSCA strategy, plans, and guidance. As we have previously reported, clear, current, and complete strategies, plans, and guidance documents are important for reflecting the direction of the departments’ civilian and military leadership, defining DOD and its components’ policies and responsibilities, and sharing practices that could facilitate effective support of civil authorities (p.3)

This report was a product of a comprehensive review of failings in DSCA proficiency. As trends and themes emerge that highlight proficiency issues in planning,

coordinating and the actual execution of DSCA operations, the findings can be submitted to decision makers to make informed decision based off of new data.

For a more recent perspective, The Air, Land, Sea, and Bulletin (2015) highlighted major efforts the military and emergency managers have made in improving how DSCA operations are conducted. To further these efforts, the Air, Land, Sea, Application Center recommended several improvements further advance DSCA proficiency. First, continue to ensure incident commanders are experienced in response and recovery operations which helps to facilitate timely, planning, and execution.

Next, the DoD should streamline its' mission assignment process for civil authorities. This point is extremely important because the mission assignment is how assets and essential capabilities are allocated to civil authorities. The center highlighted cases where planners provided prescribed mission assignments to alleviate the cumbersome wait period, but many of the mission assignments were still in the approval phase by the DoD which lengthen the process. Finally, the center also highlighted the importance of continuing to streamline command and control operations between the military and emergency managers. To ensure timely decisions are made to truly impact DSCA operations, both entities must have a common operational picture of conditions on the ground, assets required, and the process to link the capability to the affected area.

Finally, FEMA Deputy Associate Administrator for Response and Recovery Robert Fenton testimony to the House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications hearing (2015) provided exceptional insight on FEMA's initiatives to improve DSCA relationships. First and foremost, at the federal level of government, FEMA and USNORTHCOM are currently

embarking on a plan to embed planners at each headquarters. This effort will ensure all plans for response and recovery operations are succinct and request for assistance is expedited through the use of liaison officers at each headquarters.

Next, to ensure new plans, policies, and protocols for executing DSCA operations are applicable to the current environment, both organizations have agreed to increase the number of exercises. This initiative was instituted to validate organization's processes, procedures, and organizational mission planning which is essential during actual DSCA operations. Finally, to ensure senior leaders in both organizations are nested with their organizational goals, objectives, and future initiatives, significant strides have been made to host Senior Leader Engagements for even greater cooperation. These engagements allow the collective group to discuss executive level issues and table discussion on potential training, issues with current force reductions, or after action reports from previous training exercises that placed their protocols and standard operating procedures into application. On the periphery, these organizations should be commended for their due diligence in ensuring DSCA operations and future initiatives are executed collaboratively vices individually. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives will only be proven effective if they achieve an optimal performance during practical application.

### **Expanding the Military's Role in DSCA**

The final theme from the literature centers on expanding the military's role in DSCA operations. Juxtapose to this position are those who feel this recommendation has the potential to cause an unintentional intermingling of state sovereignty and federalism. Though states have their internal National Guard forces, the active duty military has vast

capabilities that can deploy on relative short notice to mitigate the impact of large scale emergency response efforts. For a perspective on this position, during Hurricane Katrina, former Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco was adamant that state sovereignty be maintained as federal forces began a massive build up to support response and recovery efforts. Subsequently, during Super Storm Sandy, state and local officials voiced their disdain for federal forces deploying to Staten Island to support recovery operations without the consent of the official New York response chain of command.

As a point of clarification, the Department of Defense directives clearly reinforces the position that state forces should reach a point of resource and manpower exhaustion before federal forces are requested and deployed. Coupled to this position is the cost of deploying federal forces Title 10 forces. Burke and McNeil (2015) stated “largely due to costs associated with using Title 10 assets, as well as the infringement on state sovereignty, federal forces, at least doctrinally, operate on a “last in, first out” philosophy in these situations” (p.37)

Clarke’s (2014) article titled “Europe's Armed Forces in Civil Security” spans the far end of the DSCA pendulum by recommending an expanded role for the DoD in DSCA operations. For context, this article analyzed a European model where military forces are assuming greater responsibility in DSCA operations vice the responsibilities of civil authorities. This position was also championed by President George W. Bush following the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina where the military response was categorically superior to their emergency management counterparts.

As many championed this point, several comments were made that the military may be better suited for response to disasters. For clarity purposes, when there’s a lack of

proficiency based on a wide knowledge gap between the two populations, conventional wisdom of outside observers gravitates towards using the population that has shown superior proficiency.

However, Clarke's perspective on DSCA operations in Europe is simply not feasible in the continental United States. Unlike most armies in Europe, the United States military is continuously deploying forces abroad for a wide array of missions. Though these forces can certainly maintain an optimal level of proficiency when they are not in a deployment cycle, they cannot fully embrace a mission that will cause an imbalance of national power projection versus incorporating duties of civil authorities.

Chitwood (2014) article titled "Merge and Align the Army Reserve Component" lends a voice to an argument that helps the military expand their capacity in the face of major disasters. The author recommended aligning the United States Army Reserve and the National Guard to provide greater capability that will enhance title 32 forces for emergency response operations directed by the governor. As the DoD continues their realignment of mission across a very broad spectrum of defense and civil support operations, the resources and capabilities required to conduct these missions are becoming finite. Therefore, by aligning reserve forces with the forces from the National Guard, leaders will have tremendous capacity to respond to catastrophic events. While the United States Army Reserve falls under the umbrella of the active Army, these forces can be used before federal active forces are called to respond to a catastrophic event. However, before this course of action can truly materialize into a viable course of action, several measures would have to be implemented. There would be a need to reorganize forces, change policies and directives that guide DSCA operations, and propose

numerous agreements across the military, state and local authorities to solidify this relationship.

Sylves (2009) makes the case for the military to take a greater role in DSCA operations to ensure a succinct operation which may be plagued by a slow response by local emergency managers. To validate his argument Sylves pointed to several factors which makes the military an attractive option. He points to the command and control apparatus that is inherent with all military organizations, optimal response time, and their ability to self-sustain forces deployed in support of DSCA operations. Langowski (2008) conducted a unique analysis on how the military could balance operational mission requirements while simultaneously providing capability for emergency managers to execute DSCA operations. The author suggests DoD develop a rotational schedule where military forces are solely dedicated to DSCA operations for a period of time and returned back to their traditional military mission once their commitment is complete. Without question the military's primary responsibility is centered on their operational missions. However, as the number of disaster continues to grow beyond the current capability of emergency managers, there has to be a viable course of action that will achieve an optimal DSCA response while balancing the appropriate equilibrium for forces available. This measure ensures there is no degradation in military organizations that will impact their operational readiness. This recommendation certainly has validity in view of the recent northwestern United States wildfires which have caused a massive response by the military and emergency responders in the Pacific Northwest region. The obvious question is do we have the right balance of forces for DSCA operations or do we need to reevaluate what capabilities will be required?

Smiley (2015) recommended U.S. forces rotating out of their combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan should assume non-traditional roles in DSCA operations. The premise for this recommendation is to ensure a collective response and recovery effort has soldiers who are equipped and trained to carry a wide array of missions to enable emergency managers. Smiley construct for this potential course of action would identify units rotating out of a combat operation, provide them time to transition and assimilate into their new mission. Once the designated timeframe has been reached, the unit would rotate out of their DSCA mission back to their habitual mission.

Feaver (2015) revisited the conversation of cooperation between civil authorities and the military. Since the inception of our nation there has always been a divide between civilians controlling the military while the military assuming the role as the subservient arm of American diplomacy. However, Like Samuel Huntington who first proposed an academic discussion on the symbiotic relationship, Feaver questions the balance on policy making and the influence that the military has in the process. Feaver, makes the case that maybe the military should have an even greater role in civil military operations. This idea is based on the simple fact that those who are going to execute policy should have a greater say in how the policy will be devised and executed.

Jacobs (2009) article titled “CCMRF (Consequence Management Response Force) and use of federal armed forces in civil support operations”, gave insight on the military’s commitment to civil authorities in a consequence management role by designating an Army brigade for major DSCA operations. The mandate for using this Army formation that consists of 3,500-5,000 soldiers was rooted in the after actions report from Hurricane Katrina.

Rather than requesting a large formation to compliment emergency managers during major disasters, military planners determined that it was feasible and suitable for the military to have a brigade on standby with certain capabilities to facilitate response and recovery operations. As with the National Response Framework, this force would not be employed unless state National Guard Forces becomes overwhelmed. Additionally, once the determination was made that local or state authorities could assume full responsibility for a disaster, the CCMRF would return back to their home of record and assume their habitual military mission and reconstitution operations.

The preponderance of literature presented in this section focused primarily on cooperation and collaboration of the military and their emergency management mission partners. However, Feaver (2015) resets the balance of this discussion by reiterating a salient point that must be reinforced during major disasters; civil authorities are in charge. The U.S. military has shown on numerous occasions that their resources, expertise, and ability to quickly deploy to a disaster or a contingency operation makes them an attractive option for DSCA response. However, the military has habitual mission and the optics of the federal army assuming control of a local disaster does not instill confidence to local populace that their civil authorities can execute disaster response. This point was also expressed by Burke and McNeil. Subsequently, federal regulations such as the Posse Comitatus Act and the Insurrection Act ensure the level of military involvement is limited in scope and scale.

The conundrum for civil authorities is to determine how they maintain a trained and ready force that can rival the military and produce the same results that the military has become synonymous for? Optimally, as with the fundamentals of DSCA operations,

civil authorities should train their forces for mission essential proficiency and look for opportunities to train with the military to ensure both agencies can seamlessly integrate for superlative mission results if called upon.

Finally, for a realistic perspective of increasing the military's role in DSCA operation, Soebbing (2012) forced readers to reflect on the current downsizing of the Army and the implications downsizing will have on DSCA. As the author alluded to, the decision to down size the Army which executes a small portion of DSCA operation is based on a number of decisions. These decisions range from the introduction of new equipment which can execute the mission of soldiers, to reducing defense spending which is forcing the military to do more with less in a fiscally constrained environment.

Additionally, though the possibility of deploying a large army on foreign soil for combat operation may seem unrealistic, there are missions in which the Army must prepare and train for. Therefore, Soebbing believed if these cuts and reductions continue, an environment may exist where resources for contingency military operations and DSCA may be significantly impacted. It is for this reason that leaders inside these populations must continue to engage in meaningful dialogue to ensure there is no degradation in personnel, equipment, or the training that will impact mission readiness.

### **Synthesis of the Current Literature Themes**

After a comprehensive synthesis of the collected literature on DSCA proficiency and DSCA operations, the rationale for using the themes and trends were clearly authenticated. With regards to Education, Haynes (2014) stated "The study revealed extensive emergency manager experience, but a huge gap of any formal education" (p.156). This point is especially important because it is nested to the research questions

which seek to determine what factors lead to optimal or less than optimal proficiency levels.

Next, Porter (2010) stated “local emergency managers—and state emergency managers—would very much like the DOD to proactively prepare an educational package that informs emergency managers about what and how the DOD can provide domestic disaster assistance” (p.144).

Lastly, though this theme was advocated in the literature, the theme of expanding the role of the military remains highly controversial. Haynes clearly articulated in his research recommendations on DSCA proficiency in the state of North Carolina that the military’s role should not be expanded. Conversely, he advocated for a greater premium to be placed on educating emergency managers in planning and coordinating for DSCA operations with their military counterparts.

As a summation, the literature collected and analyzed followed three aforementioned themes and trends which will promulgate into variables to facilitate the research. Porter stated:

This research shows that EMs need to know what is possible for types and capabilities of response assets that the DOD owns. EMs need something that they can learn from education, training, briefings, etc—that they can file away in their personal memory. They also need reference material that they can pull of the shelf to refamiliarize themselves with the possibilities, and information that assist them in quantifying their requests for assistance that would be well served with a military response. Ems also recommended exercising with these potential military assets, to promote the conversion of theory to practice (pp.136-137)

Haynes noted in his recommendations for future research “this research could examine the various layers of emergency management, and address the gaps in the both the civil and military emergency planning programs, which could provide valuable information to local, state, and military emergency managers” (Haynes, p.170, 2014).

These findings and recommendations clearly highlighted the importance of the research questions that guided this this study. First, they filled literature gaps that were omitted from previous research. Next, they helped to service the recommendations for future research that was recommended by Porter and Haynes. By following this approach, the research aligned with the iterative research process in which “the role of iteration in qualitative data analysis, not as a repetitive mechanical task but as a reflexive process, is key to sparking insight and developing meaning” (p.76)

With regards to what was known about the themes and trends of the phenomenon, there seemed to be evidence of a less than optimal knowledge of DSCA operations by emergency mangers across the span ten years during three studies. The respondents from Porter’s study stated “PEMD’s (Parish Emergency Managers Directors) agreed that they would be better prepared for DOD support if a training or briefing package, or handbook could be designed for them that would educate them about just what the DOD could bring to the disaster response” (p.137). Haynes research (2015) revealed “None of 10 managers reported they had formal DSCA education. Seven of the 10 managers (70%) reported they were not well educated on DSCA policies and guidelines” (p.129).

What wasn’t known from the responses is the level of DSCA proficiency of military organizations associated with these parishes, states, and regions. Additionally,

the obvious unknown is what were the driving factors that precluded these organizations from gaining an optimal level of DSCA proficiency? This salient point segued into one of the unknowns that continue to intrigue my interest on DSCA proficiency which is the impact of policies on DSCA proficiency. However, before policies could be examined to determine how they impact DSCA proficiency, research has to be done to accurately determine the proficiency levels of the recommended populations. Until there is an increased level of knowledge gained through research such as Haynes, Porter and my own, it will remain as a proverbial unknown until.

As a frame of reference, the research questions that drove my research were, are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency? Next, do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the National Capital Region impact collective DSCA proficiency?

These questions were established after carefully reviewing the findings and recommendations from previous research. I unequivocally believed the rationale for using this approach is nested in the time-honored tradition of expanding research for greater breadth and depth on a subject which continues to evolve and requires greater inquiry. Subsequently, this approach also authenticates the use of the qualitative case study. As Baxter and Jack (2008) stated:

qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which

allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood.

(p.544)

With the appropriate approach, coupled with the research findings and recommendations from previous studies on DSCA, the research certainly has the potential to fill current literature gaps and set the conditions for positive social change in collective DSCA operations.

### **Justification for the Study**

After a detailed synthesis of the literature which encompassed articles and dissertations, there were several significant findings that confirmed the justification for not only this study, but future studies on DSCA proficiency. In his recommendation for future research, Haynes alluded to further inquiries into civil authorities and military organizations decision making, support structures that will facilitate DSCA operations, and the formation of policies that will establish the parameters for executing DSCA operations (Haynes, 2014). These recommendations from this study clearly showed there are areas in the DSCA discipline that remain unexplored and severely lacking.

Furthermore, Porter stated “nearly all of the PEMDs (Parish Emergency Management Directors) indicated that there was little, if any, formal instruction about the military in the content of any of their courses. Even federally-sponsored training rarely mentioned military support” (p.88).

Finally, the findings from Milliman et al (2006) study which served as the first exploratory study on DSCA proficiency unequivocally validated the justification for my study. As a scene setter, the findings used the backdrop of Hurricane Katrina in which communication and coordination issues were rampant as the response and recovery

operation transcended from the local response, to state and federal control of the operations. Additionally, the research was actually conducted in 2004, which was before Hurricane Katrina, but released after the disaster. In their concluding remarks Milliman et al stated:

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina this study provides further indication that similar studies on interagency coordination should be considered for other organizations, such as state EMs, FEMA, military authorities, the National Guard, and the Department of Homeland Security. More systematic research on these areas is essential for improved disaster planning and response for both natural and terrorist incidents. (p.13)

Though all of the findings certainly played a role in justifying my research, this passage was by far the most important.

### **The Known and Unknown Known in the Discipline**

Unfortunately, the known's disproportionately point to a need for greater education in DSCA operations. However, as a caveat to this statement, more definitive research must be conducted to bolster trends and themes on a broader scale. The more studies conducted with cogent findings, decision makers are better informed to introduce mitigation measures to sustain or improve the discipline. Haynes (2014) certainly advocates this point by stating:

In this study, local county emergency managers discussed their perspectives of DSCA integration to prepare and respond to a disaster. This yields opportunities for future research to examine DSCA and emergency preparedness at the local and state level, which includes the military (p.170).

Haynes recommendation certainly provided future researchers with a navigational compass that is sure to build on his work and further expand knowledge on the discipline. This formula ultimately minimizes the unknowns and provides clarity where ambiguity on the discipline is predominant. What is not known from the responses is the level of DSCA proficiency of military organizations associated with these parishes, states, and regions. Additionally, the obvious unknown is what are the driving factors that preclude these organizations from gaining an optimal level of DSCA proficiency? It was this unknown that ultimately provided the foundation for my research questions.

### **Filling the Literature Gap**

In an effort to expand the continuum of inquiry in DSCA proficiency, the research advanced the knowledge of this discipline by taking a holistic approach to explaining the DSCA conundrum. The term conundrum was used because despite the efforts of multiple organizations, the literature synthesis clearly showed a need for greater emphasis on the discipline. Unlike the previous research which provided a navigational compass for the proposed research in the NCR, there was a concerted effort to include military organizations to determine their proficiency in DSCA operations.

This inclusion certainly provided insight on the collective coalition proficiency rather than dissecting one portion of a population. Subsequently, by reviewing research questions from the aforementioned bodies of research, my research delved into the “why” of DSDCA proficiency. For instance, why were some organizations more proficient in DSCA than others? Did the lack of financial resources in a fiscally restrained environment contribute to a less than optimal Proficiency? Did military organizations or emergency managers’ inability to access courses such as the DSCA phase 1 and 2 courses

further exacerbate proficiency levels? By answering these questions from the recommended populations multiple gaps in literature were filled and certainly expanded the knowledge on the discipline.

### **Literature for the Methodology**

In Johnson's (2013) dissertation titled A Case Study of the Defense Support to Civil Authority Program, the rationale for using the qualitative research methodology bared striking similarities to the rationale used for the proposed research on DSCA proficiency inside the NCR. By using the qualitative case study Johnson (2013) stated "I had a desire to pursue this study to fill existing knowledge gaps related to the DSCA program. Quantitative methodologies had been used previously to study military training; however, the studies conducted often focused on determining specific program outcomes" (p.59). This explanation resonated with my proposed research because of the need to understand the phenomenon of DSCA proficiency through personal experiences in a natural environment. As with her study, Johnson noted "the specific questions created for the study facilitated a description of participants' thoughts and experiences concerning the DSCA training. It involved analyzing participants' own descriptions of their experiences" (p.61).

Though the qualitative case study is not renowned for being as rigid as the quantitative methodology, the multiple lenses in which the researcher can exploit certainly provided greater context for the subject matter to be studied.

Sousa (2014) freely admitted that the merits of qualitative research has been, and will continue to be debated by academic scholars and novice researchers. This is due in part to the subjectivity of the research method which in contrast to quantitative research

does not have formulas or a rigid methodology that produces concrete findings. Like similar articles that have been expounded upon to understand qualitative research coupled with the descriptive methodology, Sousa tried to connect the two by stating “qualitative research seeks to provide rich thorough descriptions and interpretations about the phenomena under study as they occur in their natural environment” (p.211).

Additionally, Sousa elaborated on the importance of ensuring data collected using the descriptive methodology or any methodology for that matter must be thoroughly vetted for validity. If this step is omitted, it will only add additional fervor to those who point to the “lose” application of qualitative research that has become synonymous with researcher bias. Though this unfair designation may not be justified, it is paramount that the descriptive methodology or any methodology maintains a strict protocol to ensure research integrity. If these protocols are followed, the research will certainly withstand the scrutiny from those who wish to challenge the findings.

In their article titled “Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers”, Baxter and Jack (2008) reintroduced their audience to the guidance Yin promulgated for researchers to contemplate before committing to the qualitative case study design. Yin (2003) as quoted by Baxter and Jack stated:

A case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the

phenomenon and context (p.545).

To add further context for the avocation of the qualitative case study, I believed it was important to couple my qualitative case study with other case studies to form a comprehensive body of research to inform leaders and other researchers on DSCA from a holistic view. This view includes comprehensive recommendations and findings based off of research conducted over a 10-year period on the subject. By coupling qualitative case studies together, the scope and scale of themes and trends identified can provide detailed analysis on areas of concern or areas that should be sustained to provide an optimal DSCA proficiency.

Nassaji (2015) recent article titled “Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis” sought to differentiate the terms qualitative research and descriptive research which are used interchangeably. For clarification purposes, Nassaji stated “The goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. This research is more concerned with the “what” rather than how or why something has happened” (p.129). With regards to qualitative research, Nassaji stated:

Qualitative research, however, is more holistic and often involves a rich collection of data from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes. Qualitative research collects data qualitatively, and the method of analysis is also primarily qualitative. This often involves an inductive exploration of the data to identify recurring themes, patterns, or concepts and then describing and interpreting those categories (pp.129–130).

This explanation without question captured my rationale for using qualitative research.

As a researcher embarking on my journey I believed it was imperative to clearly delineate these differences to ensure the research was succinct with the principles associated with the chosen methodology. I have personally used these terms out of context and found that understanding the meaning behind the terms I can better articulate my research and bolster validity to subject that is being researched.

Though Isaacs (2014) work titled “An overview of Qualitative Research Methodology for Public Health Researchers” did not directly correlate to DSCA proficiency among emergency managers or military organizations, the work had tremendous value in championing the use of the qualitative methodology. As the author reinforced the methodology with obligatory comments to which researchers gravitate towards to justify the use of qualitative research, Isaacs further expounded on the benefits of the qualitative methodology in public health. He stated “qualitative research methodology enables researchers to explore social and behavioral issues related to public health that are not achievable with quantitative methods” (p.318).

The most intriguing aspect to this article was rooted in the framework to which the qualitative methodology encompassed and the ease to which the methodology allows the researcher to fully dissect the phenomenon being studied by using a literature review, incorporating a theoretical framework, and collecting and analyzing data (Isaacs, 2014). The aforementioned merits of the qualitative methodology were certainly enticing. As a novice researcher I unequivocally believed the methodology I chose should facilitate a robust conversation on DSCA proficiency by using a systematic approach to elucidate the stated problem while simultaneously articulating findings and recommendations. This dual purpose certainly brings greater context to the stated problem.

Like Isaacs, Cronin (2014) also expounded on the use of the qualitative methodology in health science. Though case study research has been labeled as anecdotal, the use of this design continues to evolve as researchers delve into the benefits of exploratory research. Admittedly, this was a concern as I wavered on the qualitative or quantitative methodology. However, as Cronin stated “it is clear that CSR (case study research) focuses on specific situations, providing a description of individual or multiple cases. In using this design, the researcher can investigate ‘everything’ in that situation, be it individuals, groups, activities or a specific phenomenon” (p.20). Furthermore, to explore the multiple facets of the phenomenon as Cronin suggested, Yin (2009) provided a unique perspective on establishing protocols for the case study design such as meticulously collecting and analyzing data to bolster validity and reliability. Though, these simple steps may not remove the label of anecdotal research from the qualitative case study, the parameters that Yin suggested and Cronin substantiated in his research were integral in my decision to choose the qualitative methodology.

### **Summary**

Chapter two provided a comprehensive literature review on DSCA operations and the Advocacy Coalition Framework which was the chosen theoretical framework for the proposed research. From the comprehensive literature review, previous research was analyzed to identify gaps and solidify the two overarching research questions which are, are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency? Next, do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR impact collective DSCA proficiency?

When analyzing what was known and what wasn't known about DSCA proficiency in the NCR, the obvious unknown was what the actual proficiency of DSCA among emergency managers and their military mission partners? The lack of any mechanism to measure DSCA proficiency left a knowledge gap that this research attempted to answer. Furthermore, from the previous two studies on DSCA proficiency, what was known centered on the lack of knowledge that emergency managers had on DSCA operations. Two studies showed that most emergency managers severely lacked a comprehensive understanding of DSCA operations despite the fact that recent major disasters had called for large scale response efforts between the military and their emergency management partners. Subsequently, what wasn't known was what are the factors that led to a less than optimal proficiency of these organizations. Was there degradation in their proficiency because of training or was the decline in proficiency caused by resources that were required to ensure emergency responders remain proficient? It is because of these unknowns that I believed the research I conducted was necessary to answer the unknowns surrounding DSCA proficiency.

By conducting this study the major gap that I wanted to fill was the understanding of the emergency response apparatus inside the NCR. As previously noted, there had been no sanctioned or independent studies to measure DSCA proficiency inside the NCR and my research had the potential to add substance to the conversation centering on DSCA proficiency. Also, from the knowledge gained there were several key aspects that could be addressed by both populations inside the region. First, how can the two entities work together to ensure an optimal proficiency level among the coalition? Second, what was the common issue that contributed to the less than optimal proficiency level or

optimal level of proficiency? Lastly, how could the two populations work together in training exercises or developing academic curriculums to ensure a concerted effort was being made to improve and maintain an optimal level of DSCA proficiency?

Conversely, I believed rather than filling a gap, the research served an even greater purpose by drawing comparisons from previous studies findings and recommendations as well. If the research confirmed there was a below average proficiency in DSCA operations, the findings could be used in a collective trend analysis to develop plans and policies that address areas requiring assistance to either bolster or maintain proficiency.

As a transition point from the literature review to the chapter 3 methodology, the American Psychological Association (2005) believed reviewing applicable literature on the subject matter to determine a potential methodology and reviewing previous research that aligns with the proposed research are essential for cogent research. This sequential methodology was followed to provide a road map for the intended audience. Additionally, it served a precursor for chapter three which focus on the chosen methodology, the research design, the researcher's philosophy, the population, sampling, data collection, and data analysis.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this intrinsic qualitative case study was to determine DSCA proficiency among emergency managers and their military mission partners in the NCR. I used two questions to guide the research and contribute to the existing body of research on DSCA proficiency:

1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?
2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the National Capital Region impact collective DSCA proficiency?

Chapter 3 includes the methodology and research design, which served as the impetus to guide the research. Additionally, the chapter discusses the role of the researcher, the population and sample used for the research, data collection methods, and analysis procedures which accentuated the purpose of examining the framework of the methodology. Furthermore, there will be a discussion on managing ethical concerns for those who will participate in the research. This area will be coupled to a description on how ethical concern for participants will be taken into account and properly safeguarded throughout the duration of research. Finally, this chapter includes the ethical considerations of complementing the research, as well as credibility, validity, and

reliability of the data used to advance the continuum of inquiry. The chapter concludes with a summary of the methodology and a brief transition to Chapter 4.

### **Research Design and Approach**

I used the qualitative methodology to measure the DSCA's proficiency within the NCR. Compared to the quantitative methodology, which quantifies a particular problem through the use of statistical data, qualitative research is generally exploratory in nature (Creswell, 2013). With no mechanism in place to measure DSCA proficiency among emergency managers and their military counterparts, the prerequisite certainly existed to use this methodology. To further solidify the use of the methodology, qualitative methodology is more suitable for conducting research on a nascent topic such as DSCA proficiency (Creswell, 2013). When a subject is new/emerging and there's no substantial data to compare and contrast it to, qualitative research is more desirable because it helps the researcher to dissect the subject and provide robust feedback to build a knowledge base. Once robust findings have been derived from the qualitative research, optimally, they should serve as the foundation for forming ideas and hypotheses for quantitative research (Creswell, 2013).

I chose the qualitative case study design because of this definition of qualitative studies. My rationale for choosing the design was rooted in the belief that the case study provides researchers with the ability to examine a phenomenon using multiple lenses promulgated from multiple data points (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Connelly (2014) stated, "In a case study, the researcher is striving for substantial depth in the analysis of the case" (p. 422). Additionally, the case study approach provides the researcher with a holistic discipline that comprehensively dissects the complexities of a given

phenomenon. Cronin (2014) stated, “It is clear that case study research focuses on specific situations, providing a description of individual or multiple cases. In using this design, the researcher can investigate ‘everything’ in that situation, be it individuals, groups, activities or a specific phenomenon” (p. 20).

The two foremost authorities on the case study design are Robert Yin and Robert Stake. Yin (2009) defined the four categories of case study design. The single case study holistic can be used when “It represents the critical case in testing a well formulated theory” (Yin, 2009, p. 47). When the single case study design has the potential to have more than one unit of analysis in a single case, it is considered as a single case study with embedded units. Yin (2009) stated, “Though a case study might be about a single organization, such as a hospital, the analysis might include outcomes about the clinical services and staffs employed by the hospital” (p. 50). With regard to the final two designs, which are multiple case studies holistic and multiple case studies embedded, Baxter and Jack (2008) stated:

You might find yourself asking, but what is the difference between a holistic case study with embedded units and a multiple case study? Good question! The simple answer is that the context is different for each of the cases. A multiple or collective case study will allow the researcher to analyze within each setting and across settings. While a holistic case study with embedded units only allows the researcher to understand one unique/extreme/critical case. (p. 550)

Stake took a different approach to the case study design by categorizing the design into three different units: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. The intrinsic case study is “undertaken because one wants better understanding of this particular case”

(Stake, 1988, p. 237). It from Stake rationale that I chose to use this design measure for studying DSCA proficiency within the NCR. In comparison to the intrinsic case study, Spake (1988) stated that in an instrumental case study, “a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role facilitating our understanding of something else” (p. 237). Finally, the collective case study design, which has a resemblance to Yin’s multiple case study design, comprises several cases that may or may not have common characteristics. Furthermore, the cases that make up the collective case study have been selected because they may lead to a greater understanding or theorizing with regard to a larger number of cases (Yates, 1988).

The appropriate paradigm to facilitate the research is as important as the research design. My research was guided by the interpretivist paradigm as opposed to the positivist paradigm. The selection of the interpretivist over the positivist paradigm was rooted in the definitions of these two paradigms. Lee (1991) stated, “Positivist approach to organizational research puts into practice a view of science that has its origins in a school of thought within the philosophy of science known as ‘logical positivism’ or ‘logical empiricism’” (Lee, 1991, p. 343). As opposed to the positivist paradigm, the interpretivist paradigm, like qualitative research, with which it is closely aligned, relies on a relationship between the researcher and the phenomena that the research is centred on. Prakash (2012) stated, in his article titled “Interpretivist Tradition in Qualitative Anthropological Research Writings”, “stranded in a philosophical position, qualitative research is fundamentally ‘Interpretivist’ in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is realized, interpreted, understood and experienced, or produced” (p. 123).

This definition certainly aligns with qualitative research, and moreover, it serves as the connective tissue between the interpretivist paradigm and my inquiry into DSCA proficiency in the NCR.

The research questions for the proposed research were:

1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?
2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the National Capital Region impact collective DSCA proficiency?

I chose these research questions in support of the overarching purpose of the research, which was to measure DSCA proficiency and to determine what factors contribute to an optimal or less-than-optimal proficiency. DSCA is the process by which the DoD provides assistance to civil authorities in preparing for, during, and after a catastrophic event that may exceed the capability of civil authorities to conduct a comprehensive response and recovery operation. However, before this support is provided, civil authorities must request assistance from the appropriate DoD organization, and the senior ranking official inside the organization must conduct an analysis to ensure that the request is in alignment with the DOD directives for providing assistance. However, the merging of military assistance with civil authorities has proven to be very complex with multiple challenges. Joint Defense Support to Civil Authorities **(2013), which covers DSCA operations, stated:**

DSCA in the US presents a unique challenge based on the history of the country and the interaction of the federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal governments and private and non-profit organizations. These relationships establish the multiple layers and mutually reinforcing structures throughout the state and territorial governments for interaction based on the US Constitution, as well as on common law and traditional relationships. (p. vii)

Given the complexity of this operation, it was clear that those who submit requests and provide assistance must have an optimal level of proficiency to ensure the appropriate unity of effort exists for a seamless execution of DSCA operations.

### **Methodology**

Just as salient points existed to deter researchers from using the qualitative methodology, there were also salient points that made the methodology complementary for conducting research. In his article titled “An Overview of Qualitative Research Methodology for Public Health Researchers,” Isaacs (2014) was adamant about using qualitative research to understand complex issues and phenomena through the lived experiences of those selected to participate in the research. Isaac’s rationale for using qualitative research correlated to my research, which centered on understanding the DSCA proficiency and the relationships between emergency managers and their military partners who will both execute DSCA operations in a large-scale catastrophe.

From my initial observation, this was a very complex issue that involved multiple actors with an established belief system synonymous with the ACF. Furthermore, like the ACF, each actor in the NCR had their own goals, vision, and objectives to accomplish their assigned role in DSCA operations impacting the NCR. Therefore, the desired

outcome was to dissect the nexus of the actors and determine the common themes and threads that lead to an optimal or lacking DSCA proficiency among the collective population. This point was cogent with Creswell's (2007) reason for conducting qualitative research in which he has stated, "We conduct qualitative research because we want to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue" (p. 40).

In qualitative methodology, there are five qualitative strategies that researchers can use: narrative research, ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenological inquiry, and case studies. Narrative research primarily focuses on collecting stories, field notes, journals, and conversations. McMullen and Braithwaite (2013) stated in their article titled "Narrative Inquiry and the Study of Collaborative Branding Activity," that "Narrative inquiry has at its core a focus on the study of experience as it is lived. This directs attention to narratives as a means of studying aspects of society" (p. 92). Unfortunately, a drawback to narrative research, which disqualified it from this research, was confirming the authenticity of the narratives. With the number of participants required to measure DSCA proficiency within the NCR, the time it would have taken to triangulate the narratives to verify authenticity would have simply surpassed the time and the resources allotted for this study.

Ethnography differs from narrative research in that researchers are afforded the opportunity to observe their test population in its natural setting over an extended period of time. When making the case for using ethnography in business research, Anderson (2009) stated in his article titled "Our Goal is to See People's Behavior on Their Terms, Not Ours," that "While this observational method may appear inefficient, it enlightens us

about the context in which customers would use a new product (p.1).” To accurately capture the real story of behaviour in its natural environment, tremendous time has to be allotted to the design. Therias (2013) identified this factor as a major disadvantage to the design when she provided insight on when and how to use ethnography. She stated:

One of the main criticisms levelled at ethnographic studies is the amount of time they take to conduct. As discussed above, ethnographic studies do not always require a long period of time, but this consideration is nonetheless valid. Because of its richer output, an ethnographic study will tend to take longer to generate and analyse its data than many other methods (p.1).

Though this design certainly has its merits in understanding the research environment due to a deep immersion into the population, it was incompatible for my research. Nurani (2008) noted that in order for this design to be truly effective, it requires the researchers to make a commitment to record data continuously. However, due to the setting and the dynamics of the population within the NCR, this design was incompatible with the proposed research.

Grounded theory is used when a researcher’s goal is to form a theory based on a comprehensive collection of data used to assist the researcher in theory formulization. Through interviews from multiple participants, observations in a natural setting, or collection of pertinent data from sources such as journals from archived documentations, grounded theory is a compilation of both inductive and deductive reasoning that ultimately forms the theory. Though grounded theory was considered for this research, as a novice researcher I felt that this theory required an advanced level of researcher knowledge to accurately inform theory generation for my proposed research topic. This

point has been expounded by Backman (1999) in her article titled “Challenges of the Grounded Theory Approach to a Novice Researcher.” With respect to the most important phase of developing a theory derived from the data analysis, Backman stated:

A novice researcher may find it difficult to look for a core variable when coding his/her data, because switching one’s focus from studying a unit to studying a process is painful. It takes time and much coding and analysis to verify a core category through saturation, relevance and workability. (p. 151)

After taking Backman’s views into account, I was not comfortable with using this design without the assistance of a co-researcher with a proven background in the design.

Todres and Holloway (2004), as quoted by Roberts (2013), stated, “The goal of phenomenological inquiry is to fully describe a lived experience. It stressed that only those who have experienced the phenomena can communicate them to the outside world” (p. 215). Though phenomenological inquiry provides a unique perspective for the researcher to accumulate a vast amount of data to inform the research, the quintessential drawback to compiling a vast amount of data is the interpretation of the data, which can introduce an element of bias. Additionally, to further make the case for not using the phenomenological inquiry, researchers have identified the discrepancy between policy formation and this design. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Love (1991) proposed that this design is not compatible with policy formation because it focuses on the present and does not provide inference for the future. Because one of the major objectives of this research was focusing on DSCA proficiency and facilitating potential policy recommendations within the NCR, this design was deemed insufficient.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As a novice researcher, it was obligatory for me to keep my research commensurate with a protocol to ensure that bias and predetermined results were omitted from the study. It was paramount that I safeguarded those who participated in the research by ensuring they remained anonymous, and the data they provided to inform the study remained properly protected. This philosophy was an amalgamation of several philosophies, but was primarily rooted in the spirit of philosophical assumptions in which Creswell (2009) deemed it essential for researchers to adopt an unbiased approach to data. Though ethical considerations will be addressed later, ensuring that all ethical considerations are identified and mitigated was paramount to the proposed research.

My role as an observer, participant, or observer-participant, was rooted in the essence of Unleur's (2012) article titled "Being an Insider Researcher While Conducting Case Study Research". This article explained the role of the insider researcher, which if adopted can have adverse effects on the research. Unleur stated, "as stated above there are both advantages and disadvantages to being an insider researcher. It is important to address and overcome the disadvantages in order to ensure credible insider research" (p. 2). For my proposed research, I served in the role of a complete observer. Though I had in-depth knowledge on DSCA operations in the NCR, it is for this same reason that I strictly worked in an observer role in order to remain objective. Having extensive knowledge of the subject matter had the potential to introduce connotations of partiality and foregone assumptions towards the research, which further promulgates into researcher bias. Therefore, in order to protect the integrity of the research and to solidify my role with respect to the population and the potential audience among whom the

research would be presented to, I decided to abstain from the participant and observer-participant roles.

In the case of data collection, my role as the researcher harkened to Creswell's (1994) adage that in qualitative research, the researcher is the actual instrument for the collection of data. Understanding this principle, during the data collection phase of the research, my role as the primary instrument was to ensure a seamless collection process, with protocols in place to ensuring data was accurately obtained through unstructured interviews and observations. This ultimately meant asking probing questions to understand the phenomenon being studied and keeping a detailed journal with responses and reactions that would be later used for coding phase of the research. However, before the actual collection of data occurred, I had the responsibility of ensuring the participants understood the scope and scale of the research, and their rights during the study during its entirety.

I believed that this pre-data collection protocol was imperative because it clearly defined the role of the researcher and the participant while simultaneously removing any uncertainty that may hinder the participant from providing the data to inform the research. Finally, during the collection phase of the research, my role was to ensure accuracy in the information being transcribed. This included out-briefing each participant to ensure that the data collected was the actual data they divulged during the research.

I worked in the organization solicited for title 10 (Active Army) participation for two years. However, the relationships established did not impact the proposed research. As prerequisite, participants from this organization and others whose participation was solicited could only volunteer, which precluded questions of integrity and ethics.

Additionally, my previous supervisor was not included in the research and had no influence over the participants who agreed to participate in the study. With regard to the organization that was solicited for title 32 (National Guard) participation, I had limited engagement with this organization, and there were no personal relationships with any potential participants. As mentioned earlier, the NCR is comprised of seven counties and two jurisdictions with multiple emergency managers. Though I had attended symposiums, briefings and exercises with potential participants, I had not established any professional relationships that would infringe on the integrity of the proposed research on DSCA proficiency.

Power relationships can unequivocally have an adverse impact on any research being conducted. With regards to the NCR, the problem that I faced was that as a member of the military, I would essentially be reporting on the very organization I worked with for over a two-year period. However, as a researcher, I understood that while conducting an inquiry to explain a phenomenon, the researcher's first allegiance was to the research and not to the organization that provided the population for the research. Subsequently, I conveyed this thought to the organizations solicited for participation, and well received. Furthermore, in an effort to remove the stigma of power relationships, I conveyed to senior leaders that conducting transparent research, without influence, ensured the integrity of the research and provided decision-makers with the data to make informed policy decisions. This was juxtaposed to tainted research with predetermined outcomes for predetermined decisions.

The greatest ethical issue that concerned my research was rooted in the fact that I actually worked in one of the organizations that have been solicited for participation in

my research on DSCA proficiency. Understandably, this relationship caused some concern on my behalf, but as a researcher trying to understand the phenomenon of DSCA proficiency, I conveyed to my organization that no conciliatory overtures would be made for their participation in the research. However, their participation in advancing the research was certainly appreciated. Additionally, working inside the organization also alluded to the knowledge I had about the organization and how that knowledge could be used subjectively or objectively in the proposed research. Moreover, I was concerned about how this perceived conflict of interests would be viewed by the remaining organization and emergency managers who would be asked to participate in the research.

In an effort to repudiate this perception, which could have certainly impacted participation, the conflict of interests was mitigated by my researcher integrity, which the National Institute of Health (NIH) elaborated on in a posting titled “Why Research Integrity Matters”, where the following is stated:

- Researchers rely on public support, whether through public investments or their voluntary participation in experiments, to further science.
- The public relies on scientific progress to better the lives of everyone.
- The public could actually be harmed by researchers who are dishonest and act without regards to integrity.

It is for these reasons that my commitment to research was impervious to conflict of interests or power differentials while conducting research within my daily work environment. Additionally, by succumbing to others, the researcher is not serving in the true spirit of conducting research that will lead to substantive findings dissects the identified problem.

### **Setting and Sample**

The setting for the proposed research occurred inside the NCR, which is comprised of seven counties and two jurisdictions with multiple federal, state, and local organizations with a wide array of capabilities to execute disaster responses. Additionally, the NCR consisted of several military organizations with various operational missions, which include facilitating the efforts of emergency managers in civil support operations such as the DSCA. Understanding the dynamics of the region, duties, and responsibilities that these leaders balance, and the time and resources required to conduct the research, a cogent sampling strategy was used to reach the desired outcome.

Furthermore, with the understanding that I may have limited access to this population, my sampling strategy was a convenience sampling, which is a form of non-probability sampling. Kandola, Banner, O'Keefe-McCarthy, and Jassal (2014) stated "Non-probability sampling methods are those in which elements are chosen through non-random methods for inclusion into a research study" (p. 16). Furthermore, Teddlie and Yu (2007) stated "Convenience sampling involves drawing samples that are both easily accessible and willing to participate in a study" (p. 78). In my previous position as a deputy plans chief in the NCR, my access to the population was virtually uninhibited. As a novice researcher, this accessibility provided me with an excellent opportunity to gather extensive data to inform the research. However, there had to be a dividing line between past relationships and the professional obligation I had in conducting unbiased research on DSCA proficiency.

The overarching research question identified the populations that were required to inform the research, which are emergency managers and military service members within the NCR. More specifically, the qualitative case study focused on emergency managers in seven counties and two jurisdictions that comprised the NCR, the Washington D.C. National Guard, and the Joint Forces Headquarters National Capital Region. The sample taken from these populations were purposive in nature, which Robinson (2014) explained as being non-random and compatible with single case studies, and which is indicative of DSCA proficiency within the NCR.

The first population consisted of emergency management supervisors in the NCR, who facilitated the request process for federal assistance during a catastrophic event. For clarification purposes, emergency management supervisors consisted of those personnel who wrote and executed plans for local emergency operations for their counties or jurisdictions.

The second population consisted of the Washington D.C. National Guard which had limited capability to provide assistance during a catastrophic event, but retained title 32 authority (responsibility for National Guard Forces) within the National Capital Region. The third population was the Joint Forces Headquarters National Capital Region (JFHQ-NCR). Like the Washington D.C. National Guard, they were also authorized to provide assistance to civil authorities once an analysis was conducted on the legality, potential lethality, risk, cost, and appropriateness of the request submitted by the civil authorities. Unlike title 32 National Guard forces, which required a call-up of personnel to build the capacity to support civil authorities, the Joint Forces Headquarters had more

responsive operational forces with limited capability at their disposal to assist in response and recovery operations if required.

It has been widely accepted in qualitative research that there is no approved algorithm for determining a sample for research. Researchers have a wide range of sample figures that may be considered too large, appropriate, inadequate, or inappropriate (James & Kotrl, 2014). However, with no established criteria for the sample size, researchers must take into account certain factors such as the size of a population and the access that the researcher will have to that population. Sedlak, C., Zeller, R., and Doheny, M. (2002) stated, “The sample size should be large enough to detect an important, worthwhile, reliable effect, but small enough not to waste resources” (p. 63).

In their article titled “Does Sample Size Matter in Qualitative Research? A Review of Qualitative Interviews in Research”, Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) provided three steps to determine a sample size:

The first and second are external justifications - they depend on other scholars.

The first method is to cite recommendations by qualitative methodologists. The second method is to act on precedent by citing sample sizes used in studies with similar research problems and designs [38], The final and third method is internal justification. It involves statistical demonstration of saturation within a dataset.

(pp. 12-13)

For my research, the sample size deemed appropriate was 10 emergency managers and 20 participants from the two major military organizations within the region. As a key characteristic of the convenience sampling method that was used, large

populations are not required. Additionally, (n = 30) is a homogenous population. Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2015) stated, “Homogenous Sampling would be similar in terms of ages, cultures, jobs or life experiences. The idea is to focus on this precise similarity and how it relates to the topic being researched” (p. 3). Though the populations differ in their primary duty positions, the shared similarity was their experience in planning, coordinating or executing DSCA operations over a specified timeframe that will be specified in the eligibility criteria.

There was no formula that would help me determine if I had reached the point of diminishing returns on the questioning being conducted. From their perspective, Crouch and McKenzie (2006) suggested that a participant pool of 20 or less is an appropriate number. Their rationale was based on the belief that by keeping the sample at 20 or less, the researcher would have ample time to address the participants and establish relationships which could possibly lead to more information being divulged to inform the research. However, for my proposed research, I believed it was imperative to incorporate the lessons of Fusch and Ness (2015) when determining saturation. From their perspective, saturation should be viewed in terms of rich or thick data, which would eventually lead to saturation. They stated:

The easiest way to differentiate between rich and thick data is to think of *rich* as quality and *thick* as quantity. Thick data is a lot of data; rich data is many-layered, intricate, detailed, nuanced, and more. One can have a lot of thick data that is not rich; conversely, one can have rich data but not a lot of it. The trick, if you will, is to have both. (p. 1409)

In my role as a researcher, using a convenience sampling strategy, divested of any researcher bias, I decided to let the richness of the data determine the point of diminishing returns.

A comprehensive process for attracting and screening quality participants for the research could have had a positive or negative impact on the holistic research, depending on how carefully it was planned. Cosgrove (n.d.) stated in her article titled “Fitting Round Subjects into Round Holes: The Importance of Eligibility Criteria”:

Frequently called the “inclusion/exclusion criteria”, eligibility criteria specify the details which precisely define what makes an individual, sample or dataset appropriate or not appropriate for participation in a study. These criteria are the ingredients which, when combined, determine the needed participant, sample, or dataset for a given protocol (p. 1).

Understanding the gravity of the eligibility criteria, careful consideration was made in ensuring that the appropriate participants were selected for this body of work. The eligibility criteria for selecting emergency managers was those who occupied executive management positions in the NCR, with at least five years of emergency management experience, and who assisted city leaders in requesting DSCA assistance from their military counterparts.

The five-year criterion was implemented due to the simple fact that there was no universal criterion for certifying emergency managers. Unfortunately, each state had its internal criteria for certifying emergency managers. Therefore, the five-year criteria was used to ensure that the potential participants had a level of experience above those with an entry-level knowledge, since the latter was not be conducive to the research. The

eligibility criteria for military organization service members who participated in the research was officers at the rank of Captain or above. Additionally, senior non-commissioned officers in the rank of Sergeant First Class or above were desired because of the experience they had in planning or assisting in the planning of DSCA operations.

Participants were authenticated in meeting the selection criteria through a screening process by their parent organizations and through preliminary interviews that were conducted before the actual interview session.

Emergency managers consisted of men and women with an age range from 30 to 45 years, with at least five years of experience in emergency management operations. Additionally, though certification was not a standing prerequisite for obtaining an emergency management position, emergency managers in the sample had certifications. These certifications ranged from the actual emergency management certification to those by federal and state emergency management organizations such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Finally, they had experience in planning emergency management operations for their jurisdictions and counties. Additionally, this sample also consisted of both commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers from the DoD. Officers who participated in the research were college graduates with the rank of Captain or above. Non-commissioned officers who participated in the study had obtained the rank of Sergeant First Class or above. Finally, all representatives from the DoD had completed professional development courses required for all participants to obtain the ranks previously mentioned and at least 10 years of military duty. Soliciting, identifying, contacting, and recruiting potential participants for research can be an arduous task that

requires tremendous patience and resilience. For my research, recruiting was aligned more with soliciting, which I first initiated with representatives of the organizations that had direct links to military organizations and emergency managers in the NCR. Emergency managers were simultaneously identified and recruited from the collective contact list of emergency managers within the NCR. Once identified, the recruiting process began with email contact, followed by a scheduled phone conversation which elaborated on the research. The final phase in the process included office visits with the potential participant(s) to gain their participation in the research.

Conversely, unlike emergency managers, whom I could contact directly without any prerequisite screening to determine their feasibility for supporting the research, the potential military organizations that were solicited for their participation in the research couldn't be contacted directly. Prerequisites such as legal reviews, information briefings, and confidentiality protocols served as precarious barriers for gaining access to a coveted population that had the potential to inform the research.

### **Data Collection**

Arguably, data collection in either quantitative or qualitative research is one of the most important – if not the most important – aspects of the research. It is through the systematic collection of data that the researcher will have the means to answer his or her research question, inform future research, and potentially influence policies and social change. Keeping this potential impact in mind, certain protocols and operating procedures were followed to ensure that cogent and succinct data was used to inform

intended audience. The data that informs the research can be collected through four methods: interviews, observations, surveys, and focus groups.

With the accessibility of the populations within the NCR, I used the interview as the primary means for collecting data to inform the proposed research. Understandably, with the number of participants from diverse backgrounds, it was not feasible to leverage observations or focus groups due to the conflict of schedules and the dispersion of the potential participants. Though surveys were considered, they were viewed as a rigid instrument that did not provide a medium for a rich dialogue between the researcher and the participant(s) in order to fully understand the phenomenon of DSCA proficiency.

The task of managing, organizing, interpreting, and protecting the data obtained through this study was commensurate with protocols and standard operating procedures that ensured an accurate interpretation of the data obtained from participants. Data collection was facilitated by the use of several data collection instruments, including video tape, audio tape, archived data, an open-ended unstructured survey, and an observation sheet. From several readings, I concluded that using multiple data collection instruments increased the reliability of the research. This conclusion was rooted in a fundamental understanding of triangulation. Murphy (2011) stated, “Triangulated methods of data collection increase the concurrent, convergent, and construct validity of research. This in turn enhances the researcher's ability to imply trustworthiness of the analysis” (Murphy, 2011). To further elaborate on this point, Zohrabi (2013) stated:

In order to strengthen the validity of evaluation data and findings, the investigator should try to collect data through several sources: questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. Gathering data through one technique can be

questionable, biased and weak. However, collecting information from a variety of sources and with a variety of techniques can confirm findings. (p. 258)

### **Instrumentation**

Though this process was time consuming with the associated responsibilities of organizing and orchestrating the instruments for data collection, the benefits were undeniable. Being a novice researcher, the credibility of my research was positioned in a manner to withstand the scrutiny of those who wished to challenge the content. Next, an internal system of checks and balances were incorporated to substantiate responses from the participants, which addressed the dependability of the responses. Furthermore, to ensure that all instruments were tethered to this specific research, no published instruments were used. As a disclaimer, it must be noted that it was the researcher's responsibility to ensure these instruments were sufficient for the proposed research. If these instruments were not proofed, their intended purpose would be thwarted and had the potential to serve as a detriment to the entire research.

There are numerous opinions on how to determine sufficiency in data and in the instruments used to collect it. Suri (2011) stated, "The logic of data sufficiency is guided by the synthesis's perception of what constitutes sufficient evidence for achieving the synthesis purpose" (p. 73). However, before the determination on data sufficiency is made, it is imperative for researchers to conduct a pre-test to evaluate the instrument being used. The purpose of the pre-test is to serve as a trial run for the instrument to ensure that it can sufficiently capture the necessary data to answer the proposed research questions coupled with the overarching research question. This step was accomplished by

soliciting the official Department of Defense DSCA training team to test the instrument and the research questions that will be answered. Through soliciting their feedback, the instrument's sufficiency was improved by reducing ambiguity in the questioning, validating the content within the instrument, and furthermore, by validating the instructions that guided the participants on the purpose and directions for using the instrument (Kielhofner, 2006). As the final action for the instrument, once it was returned with the recommended changes, the changes were socialized to ensure they were understood and met the criteria for altering the instrument for greater sufficiency.

As a point of reference for the proposed research, there was no published data collection instrument used. After reviewing previous research instruments used for studies on DSCA operations, I concluded that the compatibility of instruments in relation to the research questions and the follow-on interview questions were not acceptable for this particular study. Additionally, the DSCA training course instruments used to determine entry-level proficiency for DoD service members and emergency management members were considered for use as a published data collection instrument. However, after attending this course and using the instrument to measure my own proficiency level, I determined that this instrument was not conducive for data collection. This rationale was based on the simple fact that this instrument was based on a general proficiency of DSCA knowledge and not on a narrowed focus on the how and why of proficiency levels, which was to be investigated by my qualitative research.

Some consider content validity in qualitative research to be ambiguous. This is "due to the constructivist viewpoint that reality is unique to the individual, and cannot be generalized" (Biddix, n.d., p. 3). The validity of an instrument measures the effectiveness

of the instrument to measure what it is intended to measure (Biddix, n.d.). In an effort to ensure content validity for my research, the nine research questions chosen were sent to the DoD's Support to Civil Authority training team. As previously mentioned, this team is the only sanctioned DoD agency that certifies DoD service members and emergency management officials in DSCA operations. Their insight and years of knowledge was essential in ensuring that the instrument was proportionately balanced for DoD service members and emergency managers to record their DSCA proficiency and the factors that contribute to an optimal or less-than-optimal proficiency level.

An understanding of the culture and populations in the NCR was carefully considered during the formation of the data collection instrument. The populations solicited for the research span numerous jurisdictions with no one entity in charge of the other. This precarious relationship certainly had connotations that had the potential to negatively impact the research. Unlike any region in the continental United States, the NCR has a heterogeneous complexity that involves multiple actors with diverging interest. Understanding this complexity, and being a member inside the Military District of Washington, I believed it was important to approach the research with an extended measure of objectivity. Subsequently, this objectivity was reflected in the instrument designed for data collection. For the sake of transparency, an additional effort was placed on ensuring that the instrument did not reflect a biased perception of a particular population, but was proportionately balanced to measure DSCA proficiency from the perspective of all populations.

To determine DSCA proficiency in the NCR, a data collection instrument was developed to facilitate answering the two overarching research questions: (1) Are factors

such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses, contributing to a less-than-optimal DSCA proficiency? (2) Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the National Capital Region affect collective DSCA proficiency? During the analysis, it was determined that the instruments used to collect data for those studies would not be conducive for this particular study. Therefore, after determining the current gaps in the literature that my research attempted to fill, the collection instrument was developed for the purpose of compatibility.

Content validity in qualitative research is considered to be ambiguous by some. This is “due to the constructivist viewpoint that reality is unique to the individual, and cannot be generalized” (Biddix, n.d., p. 3). To determine the content validity in my proposed research, the instrument was developed from a comprehensive analysis of Porter’s instrument (used to determine the DSCA proficiency of parishes in Louisiana), Hayes (2014) instrument (used to determine DSCA proficiency for emergency managers in the state of North Carolina), and Milliman et al. (2006) research (on determining DSCA proficiency of emergency managers in the northeastern United States). Though these instruments were developed to determine emergency manager proficiency, they provided a blue print for developing an inclusive instrument for both emergency managers and their military mission partners.

As a disclaimer, it must be understood that there is no one criterion or approved process to establish the sufficiency of data collection instruments. The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ publication titled “Danida Evaluation Guidelines” (2012) stated the following:

Sufficiency has to do with the amount of information required to provide persuasive support for the contents of the evaluation report, i.e. will the collective weight of the evidence be sufficient to persuade a reasonable person that the observations and conclusions are valid, and the recommendations appropriate.

Some of the factors to consider when judging sufficiency are:

The quality of the data, i.e. its relevance, reliability and validity;

The significance of the finding and conclusion the data are intended to support, e.g. how important is it?

How much assurance is intended, e.g. is the evaluation important for accountability purposes?

What is the risk of making an incorrect observation or reaching an invalid conclusion?

What is the cost of obtaining additional information in relation to its additional benefits, i.e. in terms of support for observations and conclusions? (p. 45)

The initial plan was for all data to be collected at the offices and headquarters of the research participants. The purpose of using the participants' locations for data collection was two-fold. First, it was my intent to conduct the interviews in a location that the participant was familiar with, but still sequestered away from non-participants so that the participants would feel free to answer interview questions without fear of reprisal. This protocol would be followed for both emergency managers and their military counterpart. By building and nurturing this protocol during the research, the bonds of trust formed truly benefited the study. With regard to collecting the data, the primary

instrument was the open ended interview with the questions aligned with the two research questions mentioned previously. The interview questions that guided the interview session were as follows:

1. Approximately how long have you been in your present job position?  
(Adopted from Haynes, 2014)
2. Do personnel in your organization have a general understanding of the DSCA?
3. Is DSCA training incorporated into your organization's training plan on a recurring basis?
4. Does your organization conduct combined DSCA training with your emergency management or military mission partners in the National Capital Region? If so, what is the frequency?
5. Does your organization certify personnel in DSCA operations through the DSCA training course?
6. What factors do you attribute to your organizational DSCA proficiency or the lack of it?
7. What recommendations would you make to sustain or improve your organizational DSCA proficiency?
8. Do organizational financial constraints impact overall DSCA proficiency within your organization?
9. Does your organization conduct reviews of your internal DSCA policies or the policies of your counterparts to ensure cogent operations in the event of a major catastrophic event?

Next, to ensure a full collection of the data from participants, each session was initially planned to be recorded via video and audio. The importance of the tape recorder was essential in clarifying comments from the participants and transcribing notes into usable data. The addition of video was to reinforce data collection by aiding observations as the participants answered each interview question. The combination of audio and visual recording proved to be essential in Bowman's (1994) research on "Children use of Computer-based Interactive Stories", where he stated:

While audio tape might have been used to capture pupils' talk, this, on its own, would not have been enough to answer a research question focused on children's talk, since it is important, again as discussed by Edward and Westgate, to recognize the potential ambiguities introduced by an analysis based upon words alone. The video served to provide context, together with the opportunity to search for meaning in the dialogue and the actions before and after any specific utterance. (p. 45)

Determining the appropriate data collection frequency had a tremendous impact on the overall data collection plan. Due to the population size and the volume of data that was projected to be collected, the correct frequency allowed the researcher the opportunity to synthesize the data on an incremental basis. This in turn established the order to decipher themes and trends through an initial open coding analysis. Furthermore, the appropriate frequency allowed data to be properly transferred into the NVivo system that was used for coding. Therefore, the frequency initially chosen was to designate the first two weeks for data collection and the following two weeks for analysis and uploading data into NVivo. This frequency not only allowed optimal time for collecting

and analysing data, but it also provided the time needed by the researcher to conduct an after-action review on the previous interview session, and to figure out how the next session could be improved for greater proficiency of interaction between the researcher and the participants.

Coupled with the frequency of data collection is the duration of the actual data collection event itself. Factors such as the participant's primary duty position must be taken into account for duration, time constraints for the use of the venue, and the proverbial researcher or participant burnout from the event were taken into account. When placing these considerations into context, I chose to use one hour as the duration for the data collection event. However, adhering to this protocol made it incumbent on myself to ensure that proper preparation has been conducted before the event occurs. Dilley (2000) stated, "The interview is a communication act; interviewers are one of the actors. The questions forms a script for us to use, but like every good actor we should know our lines well before the curtain rises" (p. 133).

Follow-up recruitment is not a palatable course of action for researchers, though it may be required. This is due in part to the time it takes to establish a new strategy and employ it to gain an optimal level of participants. To prevent this from occurring in my research, I attempted to mitigate this factor by establishing a research participant pool with the organization from which I had solicited the initial groups of participants. This new group was designated as the on-deck group if a primary participant had to be excused or there was a determination that there were indeed too few participants to fulfil the data collection requirements for the research (Office of the Human Research Protection Program, 2012). Furthermore, I was prepared to re-engage the organizations

that provided the initial participants and articulate why there was a need for more participants. Additionally, if this course of action did not provide an optimal number of participants, I was prepared to re-engage the Walden Institutional Review Board for a potential change to my screening criteria in order to gain the appropriate number of participants to continue the research (Mansour, 2012).

The protocol for exiting the study was briefed to all participants who were selected for the study at the beginning of the interview session. Once the interviews were completed, the following actions were taken. Each participant was briefed on the process that just occurred so that they understood what happened, how the data they provided for the research was collected, and how it was transcribed. Additionally, at the completion of this briefing the participants were afforded the opportunity to review both the interview questions and the answers that the participant provided during the interview session. It was during this time that the answers were rechecked for any discrepancies or clarifications on the answers given. Once this action was completed, the participant signed a memo stating that the answers provided were given freely without any coercion or distress. Subsequently, the memo addressed the follow-up procedures as well.

The establishment of the protocol for follow-up procedures must be viewed as being equal to the initial interview itself. However, the key factor that will determine the extent of the follow-up interview is the preparation done in the initial interview. Understanding that many participants had additional duties and responsibilities tied to their jobs, it was important to me, as a researcher, to ensure that the follow-up interviews were systematically executed to reduce friction and maintain the relationships that had

been nurtured during the complete evolution of the interview. As mentioned previously, once the participants had received their out-brief, they were briefed on the potential for follow-up interviews. This was done to ensure the accuracy of the data received and inform participants on the next step towards completing research. I believed this step was important because it allowed the participant to further establish a link to the research and it also solidified relationships leveraged in the future research as well; a good experience can lead to more research participation.

### **Data Analysis**

Gibbs (2002) referred to data collected in qualitative research as a language. In an in-depth summation on data analysis he stated, “Language not only incorporates the terminology and vocabulary with which we understand the world, use it and transform it, but also is the medium by which we convey that meaning or interpretation to others” (p. 1). Patton (2002) viewed data analysis in qualitative research as a process of digesting raw data and producing a logical meaning from the information gathered, coupled with the evidence to support the end product.

As the initial data was collected from the research, the process of deciphering and organizing the data began with transcribing data from field notes and interviews. For clarification, this process was not confused with coding and sorting, which will be discussed in the forthcoming entry. This cursory review of the data was conducted to gain situational awareness from the data and to identify information that may establish links to the research questions. To this end, Lichtman (2013) he stated:

Most people find it helpful to read through all the material in their folders. In keeping with the iterative nature of the process, you can begin by reading a

transcript. Add your thoughts and comments to your Researcher Journal file. It is okay to use informal writing here. Remember to date your notes. (p. 251)

As a researcher, I unequivocally believed there had to be an initial foundation established to identify themes derived from the data. Subsequently, it was during this process that data linked to research questions could be aligned with the appropriate research question. For example, interviews that were pertinent to the question Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency (RQ1), were linked to this research, and therefore, on these field notes and direct observation. The same process was conducted for the second research question as well. Additionally, data collected that was not pertinent to the research questions was properly identified and labelled for the actual coding process within NVivo. Though the data may have not had beneficiary properties from the initial review, it still had the potential to be valuable during the coding and sorting process.

The NVivo software program was utilized to assist in the coding process. However, NVivo was secondary to an open line-by-line coding that I conducted. Though this process was time consuming, the benefits of conducting this type of coding before the data is placed into the NVivo software were undeniable. Khandkar (2009) stated, “In the process of open coding, the concepts emerge from the raw data and later grouped into conceptual categories. As its build directly from the raw data, the process itself ensures the validity of the work” (p. 8). For the purposes of coding, collected data such as open-ended interviews, direct observations from field notes, and archived documents pertinent

to DSCA proficiency within the NCR were uploaded into NVivo for coding into nodes.

Wong (2008) stated:

Nodes created in NVivo are equivalent to sticky notes that the researcher places on the document to indicate that a particular passage belongs to a certain theme or topic. Unlike sticky notes, the nodes in NVivo are retrievable, easily organized, and give flexibility to the researcher to either create, delete, alter or merge at any stage. (p. 17)

The benefits of NVivo are undeniable in qualitative research. In my research NVivo was used to decipher the numerous interviews, observation notes, and audio recordings. As a member of the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) group, NVivo has revolutionized how researchers conduct comprehensive analysis in qualitative research. Wong (2008) stated, “This software allows for qualitative inquiry beyond coding, sorting and retrieval of data. It was also designed to integrate coding with qualitative linking, shaping and modelling” (Wong, 2008). Bergin (2011) further expounded the merits of using NVivo in his research by stating, “NVivo has always set the standard in qualitative analysis” (p. 7). Once the collected data was synthesized, it was placed into the NVivo software to start the coding process to assist in the process of identifying themes that would ultimately help to produce succinct findings and recommendations.

With a computer-generated software package that removes much of the legacy manual work from the analysis, researchers have to abstain from indolent research practices. Understandably, it is still imperative for researchers to conduct a rigorous initial assessment of the quality of the data received and for possible identification of

potential themes from the collected data. Wong (2008) reinforced this point stating, “Ultimately, the researcher still has to synthesize the data and interpret the meanings that were extracted from the data” (Wong, 2008). By cross-referencing data from interviews, observations, and pertinent archived documents, coupled with using NVivo to conduct additional analysis, this systematic form of triangulation certainly aided in producing cogent results and findings.

Kaplan and Maxwell (2005) alluded to the process of subjectively identifying and attempting to address discrepant cases in research as a key factor in bolstering the validity of the holistic body of research. In an effort to provide a comprehensive analysis that dissects every facet of DSCA proficiency, establishing a protocol for the treatment of discrepant cases was centred on the following precepts. Before data was determined as discrepant, a rigorous analysis was conducted by the researcher to cross-reference data that supported the research and the discrepant data for a final analysis (Bickman, L., & Rog, D., 2009). It is from this analysis that a determination was made to execute two courses of actions.

The first course of action was to alter the conclusion based on the final analysis done to authenticate the discrepant case. Though this may not have been the most palatable course of action, it was certainly an acceptable course of action because it reinforced the validity of the research and allowed the data, rather than the researcher, to guide the research. Subsequently, if that course of action was chosen, steps taken in the second analysis would be carefully annotated to strengthen the reliability of the research.

The next course of action was to accept the conclusion from the discrepant cases without modifying the future conclusion. This course of action, which was advocated by

Wolcott (1990), allowed the researcher to report the discrepant case and enabled the reader to draw their own conclusions from the research.

### **Trustworthiness**

In both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, trustworthiness is paramount for advancing the inquiry into the chosen subject area. However, as Cope (2014) mentioned, qualitative research has been viewed as less rigorous due to a certain degree of subjectivity and anecdotal reasoning whereas quantitative research is rigid with respect to the uses of experimental methods. Trustworthiness for my research was ensured by measures such as triangulation, coding with software to reinforce validity and reliability, and maintaining a detailed audit trail with the use of NVivo software. In their article advocating greater trustworthiness in qualitative international business research, Sinkovics, Penz, and Ghauri (2008) stated:

We advocate formalized procedures of gathering, analyzing and interpreting qualitative data and discuss these issues in view of the emergence of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). Although formalization and the aim to establish trustworthy research results does not necessarily presuppose CAQDAS, we maintain that its application enhances the trustworthiness and thus quality of qualitative inquiry. (p. 691)

Comparatively speaking, trustworthiness equated to credibility for the overall integrity of the research. If the integrity of the research was called into question, the findings and results, and subsequent recommendations have little to no impact on DSCA proficiency within the NCR. Credibility in qualitative research ultimately centers on three key factors: the rigor implemented to gather quality data, the researcher executing the

research, and an inherent belief in the value of the qualitative methodology (Patton, 1999).

### **Credibility**

Credibility for this body of work was ensured by conducting a systematic triangulation of data collected in the research, presenting detailed debriefings to the research chair and committee members for feedback, providing a thick description of research, and rigorously analysing the data contributing to the research (Shenton, 2004). Additionally, credibility was assured by keeping detailed field notes which complement the researchers' decision trail and by soliciting feedback from research participants to ensure that the themes and trends identified were consistent with the research data provided (Noble & Smith, 2015).

### **Transferability (External Validity)**

Shenton (2004) stated, "The concern often lies in demonstrating that the results of the work at hand can be applied to a wider population" (p. 69). In Chapter One, it was revealed that the research centred on determining DSCA proficiency is nascent. However, along with the recent study conducted by Haynes (2014) and Porter (2010), my research has the potential to expand the scope of DSCA proficiency. By identifying threads, trends and themes pertinent to emergency managers and their military counterparts, follow on researchers can use my research as the baseline to start their inquiries. With respect to transferability, Thomas and Magilvy (2011) stated, "One strategy to establish transferability is to provide a dense description of the population studied by providing descriptions of demographics and geographic boundaries of the study" (p. 153).

Therefore, in keeping with their recommendation, a detailed description or thick description was provided to bolster transferability. This description addressed data collection methods, the environment in which the research was executed, the participants and samples used, and my ancillary notes that encompassed the experiences of the researcher while conducting each phase of the research.

### **Dependability**

In practical terms, dependability in qualitative research was centered on the simple question that if the research being conducted is repeated by another researcher, will the same results be obtained (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011)? Commensurate with dependability in qualitative research is a comprehensive analysis of the methodology, design, methods, and analyses that have been used to articulate results and findings. To ensure dependability in my research, three measures identified by Shenton (2004) were implemented to bolster the dependability of research. The measures were:

- a) The research design and its implementation, describing what was planned and executed
- b) The operational detail of data gathering, addressing the minutiae of what was done in the field;
- c) Reflective appraisal of the project, evaluating the effectiveness of the process of inquiry undertaken. (pp. 71–72)

With the aforementioned measures and a transparent audit trail, the integrity of the research will certainly withstand scrutiny as it makes a meaningful contribution to understanding DSCA proficiency.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability in qualitative research equates to a holistic audit of the research that is being conducted. Confirmability for the proposed research on DSCA proficiency was ensured by the software system NVivo. The software package provided a systematic audit of the data used and can be reviewed by others who wish to verify the authenticity of the data. Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) used the NVivo system in their research and stated:

NVivo was able to locate all the passages that matched the criteria set in a query. Locating ensured that any issue described in the findings was not the perception of just one person, but rather confirmed that a number of participants held the same opinion. In addition, this confirmation guaranteed dependability in different contexts. (p. 15)

Additionally, the audit trail was coupled with field notes or a reflexive journal that was kept throughout the research. This document captured the researcher's thoughts and actions during data collection, and any noteworthy events that occurred while conducting the research (Koch, 2006; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989).

Inter-coder reliability mandated that there must be at least two researchers who participate in the coding process, whereas intra-coder responsibilities are conducted by a single researcher. For my research, I assumed all intra-coder responsibilities (Stacks, 2011). For reliability purposes, it certainly bodes well when there are two researchers checking the data. However, since this was not the case for my research, it was incumbent upon myself to ensure that the same reliability was duplicated to ensure trustworthiness. With this responsibility, the protocol that I used was derived from Smith (2010), who stated:

To code only when your mind is fresh and clear and (ii) make explicit notes to yourself about how and why you categorized the items. These notes might be part of your content analysis diary. If you find you are changing how to classify certain items that should be grouped together, you may have to go back and revise your earlier classification. (p. 213)

### **Protection of the Participant's Rights / Ethical**

Protecting human subjects during any research is an essential priority for institutions of higher learning. From mandating training that researchers must attend and pass, to developing institutional guidelines centred on the protection of human subjects, researchers and institutions are continuing to develop new protocols and procedures to ensure that there are no gaps in participant protection. In their introductory course "Protecting Human Research Participants", the National Institute of Health (2011) stated:

Research with human subjects can occasionally result in a dilemma for investigators. When the goals of the research are designed to make major contributions to a field, such as improving the understanding of a disease process or determining the efficacy of an intervention, investigators may perceive the outcomes of their studies to be more important than providing protections for individual participants in the research. (p. 1)

For my research, steps that were taken to ensure the subjects' rights to privacy and protection from harm ranged from viewing the Office of Human Research Protections website for the latest guidelines and regulations, to consulting with

institutional review board with research proposals that articulated how the subjects' rights and protection would be guaranteed during the actual research.

Subsequently, research could not be conducted until the IRB granted official approval after the proposal was submitted. Though these steps were certainly beneficial to the collective research, steps such as reviewing PH 398 and establishing a research protection checklist were beneficial as well.

This checklist consisted of a series of questions that researchers can align with his or her research to ensure their research does not have the potential to harm or violate the rights of the human subject. It began by identifying the potential harm or the possible violations of participant rights. Once those harms and violations were identified, the researchers clearly articulated the mitigation measures that were used to eliminate the harm or potential rights violations. Finally, as an extra precautionary measure, the researcher expounded on additional safeguards that were used in the research to ensure human subjects' rights or any threat of potential injury posed to them was consistently re-evaluated to ensure that the mitigation factors mentioned previously remained relevant.

Protecting the rights of participants informing this study was essential for the integrity of the study. Understanding their contribution was vital for informing the study; each participant will receive a consent form that served as the precursor for participating in the research. The consent form disclosed the purpose of the research, the actual conduct of the research, the participant's role in the research, and any potential risk that may be associated with the research. Additionally, the participants were informed that if at any time they felt threatened or in danger, they could exit the research. Finally, the confidentiality of the research was discussed in detail to assure the participants that the

information they provided could not be linked to them, and every protocol would be established to ensure their identity would be protected. At the completion of this overview, each participant signed their consent form with the understanding that at any time, they could ask to be excused from the research.

At the completion of Chapter Three, the oral defence for my proposal was executed, which was followed by several gates that I had to successfully negotiate in order to start the data collection phase of the research. Walden University (2015) stated:

IRB approval is required before collection of any data, including pilot data.

Walden University does not accept responsibility for research conducted without the IRB's approval, and the university will not grant credit for student work that failed to comply with the policies and procedures related to ethical standards in research. (Walden University, 2015)

The process of obtaining approval from the IRB took 4–6 weeks. Once the approval was given, it was explained to me in an official letter that it was good for only one year. Though this process may have seemed cumbersome due to the time required for approval, I unequivocally believed it was essential for ensuring the protection of the participants and for solidifying the integrity of the research.

### **Treatment of Participants**

For my research, the protocols established to eliminate ethical concerns related to recruitment materials and processes resulted from a combined effort between the organizations that were being solicited for participation and myself. Recruitment for participation in any research is essential, and special considerations must be taken into

account to ensure all ethical concerns are completely eliminated from the equation. With regard to my research, it was decided that all research participants' participation would be on a strictly volunteer basis. Due to certain legal requirements coupled with the research being conducted by the military, I could not personally solicit members of any organization to participate in the research. Once the military's legal review was completed and the organization agreed to participate, the organization itself disseminated the requirements for participating in the research. Conversely, with regards to the recruitment of emergency managers, this protocol was not instituted. Emergency managers were contacted directly for participation.

### **Ethical Concerns**

Eide and Kahn (2008) stated, "Qualitative research poses ethical issues and challenges unique to the study of human beings" (p. 199). Coincidentally, as a researcher, my internal bias, values, and personal background did not allow me to infringe on the integrity of the research. Rather than artificially inducing bias and personal agendas into the research, I believed that as a novice researcher I had to follow the direction of the research rather than establishing predetermined destinations for his or her work. With regards to my research, the guidance received from the IRB was followed explicitly to ensure that protections with redundant measures were in place to protect the participants and the integrity of the research. From a preliminary assessment of the data collection protocol, there were no identified components that could have potentially led to physical or mental harm for the participants. Additionally, the consent form for my research

outlined procedures for stopping the interviews if the participant had an adverse reaction while the session was in progress.

To address the issue of anonymity, names were not used and all data collected via interviews, observations, and audiotape were stored in a safe that only I had access to. Finally, if participants decided to withdraw from the study, they were released without prejudice from the researcher.

For this study, all agreements were viewed as contracts of protocol between myself, research participants, and the organizations that provided the participants. With regards to the federal title 10 organization, a legal review was conducted by the organizational Judge Advocate to ensure the research did not violate any standing protocol for title 10 representatives participating in doctoral research. To facilitate the review, a brief overview was given to the leadership to explain the purpose of the research and the actual conduct of the research in which their members would be asked to participate in. This protocol was also followed with the title 32 National Guard organization that was solicited to participate in the research, and with the emergency managers in the NCR who were asked to participate in the research as well. Finally, as part of the process of solidifying the agreements, each organization was assured that they could withdraw from the research at any time.

For the purpose of this research, all data collected was considered anonymous. As mentioned earlier, protecting the anonymity of the participants was of utmost importance throughout the data collection phase and beyond. The measures that were implemented to ensure discretion were carefully considered, but labelling data as confidential required a different protocol, especially with the participation of DoD service members. A

confidential classification required the military to mandate how I would collect, store, and maintain the data until the classification was removed. This classification would also determine how the data would disseminated in findings and recommendations. It was for these reasons that the label “anonymous” was used on all data received, including that from the emergency managers. As a disclaimer, though the data was not classified as confidential, it was handled as such to ensure the data and those who submitted it remained anonymous.

For my research, protocols for handling and protecting the data collected from participants was considered just as important as the protocols for protecting those who divulged the data. In essence, protecting the data was protecting the voices of those who I formed a bond of trust with to decipher a phenomenon worthy of research. Data from this research was only handled by myself. To ensure protection, no other individual had access to the safe where recordings and hand-written documentation were stored. Additionally, a password-protected program was used for the NVivo software, which was used for coding the data used for the research. Finally, the data was only disseminated if a request was made by the research chair, the IRB, or participants who wished to clarify the information that they provided.

From the aforementioned procedures, the protocol for treatment of sensitive data was addressed to ensure accountability. By ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of the participants who agreed to take part in the research, and by physically protecting the data they provided to inform the research, I unequivocally believed that every precaution was implemented to uphold the researcher’s duties and responsibilities throughout the study.

Additionally, the legal reviews that were conducted by military organizations also bolstered protection for their service members.

### **Presentation of the Results**

The presentation of results will be conducted in three phases. The first phase will begin with a finding briefing to the leadership of each organization that provided participants for the research. These organizations provided the population for the research, therefore it is only fitting that they have an opportunity to view the findings and recommendations before they are submitted to a much wider audience. The second phase will consist of a briefing to the emergency management governing body of the NCR. A comprehensive presentation will be conducted to inform the audience on the purpose of the research, the research problem, data collection, and analysis. The presentation will conclude with findings and recommendations that are based solely on the research conducted. Finally, to inform a wider audience on DSCA proficiency in the NCR, a condensed version of the research will be presented for publication in emergency management magazines and for publications by military organizations that focus primarily on defence organizations supporting civil authorities during catastrophic events.

### **Summary**

Chapter Three served as the road map for executing the research. A comprehensive articulation was presented in defence of the methodology and the case study design, which was used in previous dissertations on DSCA proficiency. Next, after explanations that the methodology chapter encompasses the road map as to how the research will be conducted, the role of the researcher was highlighted to verify a clear

understanding of the duties and responsibilities that accompany the actual research that will take place. Responsibilities such as remaining impartial and allowing the research to provide a road map to answer research questions rather than setting predetermined assumptions that provide a more palatable outcome composed this entry.

Additionally, the use of the appropriate instrument for collecting data was addressed to articulate why previous instruments used to measure DSCA proficiency are not feasible or suitable for this study. Further, it was mentioned that though previous instruments were deemed insufficient for the study, the instrument that will be used will be sent to the United States Army DSCA training team for their concurrence or non-concurrence on the tool's ability to gauge DSCA proficiency among the populations.

Subsequently, the chapter concluded by describing the population and the sample size that is projected for use in the research. The rationale for the population and sample size dictated the data collection and analysis. This section systematically laid out a process for collecting data through the use of open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews and analysing the data through an open coding process by the researcher. This process was further bolstered by an automated coding and sorting process facilitated by NVivo to bolster reliability and validity. Finally, ethical considerations such as protecting the confidentiality and the anonymity of those who participated in providing the data for the research to ensure protocols were addressed to mitigate potential violations that may degrade the research.

Chapter Four will present the results and the findings gleaned from the research population used to determine DSCA proficiency within the National Capital Region. The chapter will also outline the interview question responses and their correlation to the

research questions. Subsequently, these responses will serve as the precursor for discussions and recommendations in Chapter Five. Additionally, themes and trends from the responses will be presented in an effort to provide greater understanding of the contributing factors that led to an optimal or less-than-optimal proficiency level among the collective population.

## Chapter 4

### Introduction

The purpose of the qualitative case study was to measure the proficiency of DSCA among emergency managers and their military mission partners inside the NCR. Currently, no mechanism within the NCR exists that measures DSCA proficiency between these two populations. Additionally, the research recommendations from Haynes (2014) and Porter (2010) on DSCA proficiency advocated further research to determine if the patterns they found are systemic in other regions. Porter stated that,

The researcher recommends an examination of familiarity with the domestic support mission that DOD forces currently have. Even after recent actions to assign forces a domestic civil support mission, it is unclear whether DOD units are equal to the non-warfighting tasks as are NG forces, which perform domestic support missions much more frequently. (p. 142)

After conducting similar research in the state of North Carolina to measure DSCA proficiency among emergency managers, Haynes made two recommendations from his findings. With regard to building DSCA proficiency and establishing baseline standards for all participants in DSCA operations, he recommended “a rigid program to evaluate state and local emergency management integration of the military where first responder training should be funded. In addition, to ensure standards are applied consistently throughout the emergency management community” (p. 168).

Hayes’ second recommendation, which served as the impetus for my research, encapsulated the broad scope of DSCA proficiency that must be examined to determine the underlining variables that holistically affect DSCA proficiency. He stated that:

Future research should build on this study's findings by examining emergency manager's decision-making processes; military and civilian support structures (i.e., coordinating organizations, how-to literature, and case studies), public policies, and social interactions (i.e., learning and using trust and reciprocation for public good). This research could examine the various layers of emergency management, and address the gaps in the both the civil and military emergency planning programs, which could provide valuable information to local, state, and military emergency managers. A qualitative study could be conducted that builds on the themes found in this study to improve funding for integration gaps. (p. 170)

In keeping with Hayes' salient points, this research examined the layers of proficiency by soliciting emergency managers and members of the military to gauge their internal DSCA proficiency. The two research questions that guided this inquiry are as follows:

1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?
2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the National Capital Region impact collective DSCA proficiency?

These two research questions served a primary purpose to validate, challenge, or present extenuating circumstances in comparison to other studies on DSCA proficiency. Their value in the research was integral throughout and certainly aided in the content.

The research method for my research did not follow the plan that was initially presented. Originally, the plan was to interview participants from a Title 10 organization (active duty military), Title 32 (Army National Guard), and emergency managers from within the NCR. After receiving approval from the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB; approval #09-27-16-0482079) to conduct my research, each organization was contacted to solidify participation. However, as I learned during the solicitation, in order for U.S. Army organizations to participate in research, the Army Research Protection Office (AHRPO) must review the proposed research. This protocol was implemented to ensure that the research did not infringe on the rights or well-being of those in the military solicited to participate in research outside of the DOD. The approval process from the AHRPO began with an official review of my Walden IRB application once it was approved, submission of a curriculum vitae, interview questions for the potential participants, and a signed approval letter from the military organization solicited. Once these documents were submitted, it was explained to me that even though the prospective military organizations had initially agreed to participate in the research, a legal review had to be conducted to ensure that participant protections were safeguarded. This approval process began in July 2016, and I was officially notified that my research was approved on October 13, 2016.

Unfortunately, as I waited for the permission from the AHRPO, my proposed face-to-face interviews were changed as well. This change occurred due to my assumption of new responsibilities in the Middle East. I immediately informed the Walden IRB and submitted a change in procedure form, which was approved on November 4, 2016. After receiving permission from the Walden IRB to alter the research,

I informed the potential participants that the interviews would have to take place over the phone, and that follow-ups would be conducted via email. The participants of Title 10 organization scheduled their interviews over a 2-week period, while emergency managers scheduled their interviews over a 3-week period. In the process of scheduling the interviews, I was informed that the primary Title 32 organization solicited for the research was designated as a lead organization for the 2017 presidential inauguration. This distinction was coupled with a massive planning and execution effort, which guaranteed that their participation in the research would not happen. In an effort to find a viable replacement, a different Title 32 organization was solicited. Unfortunately, the alternate Title 32 organization was designated for an operational deployment to outside of the continental United States. This development meant that my research would only consist of emergency managers in the region and a Title 10 organization within the NCR. Finally, I had to ask the Walden University IRB to expand the age requirements for emergency managers to participate in the research and for permission to use Nvivo 11 instead of Nvivo 10. This request was made due to younger emergency managers assuming the roles of director of emergency management in key counties and jurisdictions inside the NCR and a newer version of Nvivo being available for data analysis. I received formal approval for these requests on December 11, 2016.

### **Setting**

The setting for the research centered within the NCR. The NCR is not the immediate area within and around Washington DC. This region comprises seven counties (Frederick, Montgomery, Prince Georges, Loudon, Fairfax, Prince William, and Charles), with independent emergency managers leading daily emergency management operations.

These emergency managers are beholden to their states and not to any entity within the NCR. Additionally, within the region, there are six major Department of Defense installations: Marine Base Quantico, Fort Belvoir, Fort Lesly J. McNair, Joint Base Myers Henderson Hall, Joint Base Anacostia Bolling, and Joint Base Andrews in Maryland. These organizations conduct a full spectrum of military operations ranging from military ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery to greeting foreign dignitaries arriving in the United States.

Unfortunately, inside the NCR, there is no single command or organization that controls emergency management operations. Due to federal restrictions, as outlined in DSCA directives, federal organizations such as the military forces within the region cannot provide support to local governments until there is an official request by the local government authorized official. Until such a request is submitted, local jurisdictions have full control of managing the incident on the ground. Subsequently, though military forces may deploy to a jurisdiction when additional assistance is requested, local authorities maintain operational control.

During the course of gathering data for the research, many of the participants were conducting major planning operations for the 2017 presidential inauguration, which affected their participation in the study. Though some organizations had greater responsibilities than others due to their proximity for scheduled events, as a collective group, their primary focus was to ensure their internal organizations are prepared for scenarios that could negatively impact the inauguration. Some of the organizations experienced a significant influx of personnel to facilitate operations, while others only experienced a minimal influx of personnel to augment staffs for operational readiness.

Understanding the complexity of orchestrating this event through seamless execution, many of the organizations participated in numerous rehearsals to ensure that all participants had a common operational framework for the inauguration. Planning and rehearsals were conducted internally to determine deficient areas that required changes to operating procedures. As the lead planning organization for this event, Title 10 organization hosted numerous symposiums and conferences to ensure that each organization understood its primary duties and responsibilities.

Though the 2017 Inauguration planning was not a catastrophic event synonymous with DSCA operations, the planning and preparation were certainly indicative of major DSCA operations. Furthermore, with the potential for hostile acts directed against local populace and dignitaries in attendance, it was imperative for all the involved organizations to develop succinct plans designed to mitigate multiple hostile acts. Simply stated, the inauguration itself was the forcing function that provided emergency managers and their military counterparts with the opportunity to solidify coordination and familiarize each organization with their counterpart's operational capability for responding to a potential catastrophic event. Phillips (2009) stated, "Coordination means more than providing information about what is happening...[It] means that all stakeholders are informed about and allowed to participate in the process" (Phillips, 2009, p. 64).

Additionally, Joint Publication 3-28 entitled DSCA stated that

Non-DOD actors, including local civil authorities and first responders, are frequently not familiar with US military terms, definitions, and doctrine. When working with non-DOD actors/partners, especially in an emergency situation,

clear, effective, and mutually understandable communication is essential. DOD elements will be able to work much more seamlessly, efficiently, and productively by employing operational concepts and terms that other departments, agencies, and authorities already understand. (p. 1)

### **Demographics**

Seven counties, two jurisdictions, and the District of Columbia form the geographical boundaries of the NCR. No single entity or seat of power governs the region. Each county has autonomy to conduct its daily operations without operational reach or directives from a higher seat of power. However, to ensure that there's a form of cooperation across all spectrums of governments in the region, each member voluntarily participates in the Metropolitan Washington County of Governments. According to their website (Metropolitan Washington County of Governments, 2016), "COG connects leaders across borders to help shape strong communities and a better region. Every month, more than a thousand officials and experts come to COG to make connections, share information, and develop solutions to the region's major challenges."

These challenges also include emergency management operations, which have a certain degree of difficulty due to the numerous federal, state, and local responders in the region. For the purpose of this research, each county lead emergency manager except for one, voluntarily participated and provided essential data to determine DSCA proficiency in the region. Emergency managers ranged in age from 36 to 57 years (Table 1). The longest serving emergency manager had a 17-year tenure, while the shortest tenure was just 10 months. All the emergency managers were certified through an emergency management course, but none of the participants received certification in the official

DSCA training course. Lastly, two emergency managers who participated in the research were directors for the largest counties in their state.

Participants of the Title 10 organization were all above the rank of Sergeant First Class, which was a desired selection criterion. This rank was optimal for the research because officers and non-commissioned officers at or above this rank have completed numerous professional development prerequisites, which speaks to their level of maturity and proven leadership. The shortest tenure of service was of 14 years and the longest was of 30 years (Table 2). All the members of the Title 10 organization were certified in the DSCA training courses (Phase I and II), and the range of time in their current duty positions ranged from 6 months to three and a half years. Lastly, each member of the organization had participated in a DSCA training exercise, but no participant had experience in planning, organizing, or executing an actual DSCA event.

*Table 1*

*Emergency Management Participants*

Participant	Age	Time in position	CEM	DSCA Certified
EM01	46	14 years	Yes	No
EM02	45	1 year	Yes	No
EM03	57	5 years	Yes	No
EM04	36	10 months	Yes	No
EM05	45	17 years	Yes	No
EM06	36	7 years	Yes	No
EM07	41	4 months	Yes	No
EM08	65	8 years	Yes	No

Table 2

*Military Participants*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Years of service</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>DSCA Certified</b>	<b>Time in Position</b>
MM01	24	Lieutenant Colonel	Yes	15 months
MM02	14	Major	Yes	6 months
MM03	17	Lieutenant Colonel	Yes	3 years
MM04	27	Lieutenant Colonel	Yes	3 and 1/2 months
MM05	22	Lieutenant Colonel	Yes	2 and 1/2 months
MM06	30	Colonel	Yes	16 months
MM07	25	Lieutenant Colonel	Yes	18 months

**Data Collection**

For this research on DSCA proficiency within the NCR, the desired population was  $n=30$ . However, as the data collection phase began, this number was reduced by 10 participants due to the absence of the Title 32 organization. Next, the participation of 10 emergency managers was reduced to eight participants. It should be noted that the eight emergency managers were the primary directors for emergency management operations in their counties and jurisdictions within the NCR. The Title 10 organization solicited for the research provided seven participants. Once again, due to planning for the 2017 presidential inauguration, three initial participants could not participate in the research. This development further confirms why the selection of a convenience sample was optimal. The final number of participants was  $n=15$ .

I collected data for this study over a 5-week period. The original collection plan was to conduct face-to-face interviews with each participant at their offices, asking open-ended questions with the aid of voice and video recorders to capture the content from the interviews. Unfortunately, due to extenuating circumstances, the data collection plan was revised to facilitate due to the fact that I was geographically removed from the research participants. To ensure that my research stayed within the guidelines of the Walden IRB protocol, I immediately informed the Walden IRB and submitted a Request for Change in Procedure form. Additionally, separate from the Request for Change in Request form, I also had to change my participant consent form to ensure that face-to-face interviews were changed to telephonic interviews with email as the means for follow-up questions. After a 2-week waiting period, I received permission to begin the research with the changes I requested.

Novich (2008) stated, “Respondents have been described as relaxed on the telephone, and willing to talk freely and to disclose intimate information” (p. 393). For my interview protocol, interviews lasted from 45 minutes to one hour.

The two-primary means for recording data were recorded telephone interviews and the researcher’s field notes taken while asking open-ended interview questions. As the participants answered the interview questions, their responses were recorded on a recording device that served as one of the two official records for conversations. Subsequently, to facilitate line-by-line data analysis, field notes were also taken. Before conducting each interview, participants were informed that the data they were providing was being recorded and field notes were being taken. Though these recording methods proved to be very effective, in several instances, I had to ask the participants to speak

clearly or project their voice, so that the data being recorded could be properly transcribed. As a key after action point, researchers should not assume that their data recording plan is impervious to deficiencies just because they are recording the conversations. If the participants have a low monotone voice, there's a probability that the conversations will not be clearly recorded, which adds additional time to deciphering and confirming information from the interview sessions.

Additionally, at the conclusion of each interview, the participants were given the opportunity to review their answers from my field notes, in order to ensure the information they provided was correct. After confirming the data provided was accurate, the data was stored in preparation for the follow-on data analysis.

During the collection of data, there were several unusual circumstances that I encountered before and during this phase of the research. Surprisingly, the Department of Defense participants were more forthcoming with discussing their planning, coordination procedures, and practices than their emergency management counterparts. On several occasions, emergency managers who participated in the research wanted to confirm my credentials through several means before divulging information on their knowledge of DSCA operations. Furthermore, this was done even after I presented my IRB approval to conduct the research.

In one case, a participant wanted to call the Walden University Dean of the Public Policy to confirm if I was a student conducting research. In many cases, the emergency managers were very direct on areas they would not discuss during the data collection phase of the research. However, in their defense, these circumstances should not serve as an indictment against the emergency managers who participated. Understandably, with

prevailing security concerns at the local, state, and federal levels of government, I unequivocally understood their caution. Finally, it should be noted that when applicable, I was able to satisfy all the requests for additional information.

The below interview questions were asked to measure the proficiency of DSCA and overall knowledge of DSCA operations among emergency managers and their military mission partners. In addition to the original interview questions, two sub-questions were added to provide greater depth on DSCA proficiency. As previously mentioned, during the data collection phase of this research, preparations were under way for the 2017 presidential inauguration. Therefore, an additional sub-question was added to determine if the presidential inauguration refocused the efforts of the emergency managers and their military mission partners on collective DSCA operations within the NCR.

1. Approximately how long have you been in your present job position? (Adopted from Haynes, 2014)
2. Do personnel in your organization have a general understanding of the DSCA?
3. Is DSCA training incorporated into your organization's training plan on a recurring basis?
4. Does your organization conduct combined DSCA training with your emergency management or military mission partners in the NCR? If so, what is the frequency?
5. Does your organization certify personnel in DSCA operations through the DSCA training course?

6. What factors do you attribute to your organizational DSCA proficiency or the lack of it?
7. What recommendations would you make to sustain or improve your organizational DSCA proficiency?
8. Do organizational financial constraints have an impact on overall DSCA proficiency within your organization?
9. Does your organization conduct reviews of your internal DSCA policies or the policies of your counterparts to ensure cogent operations in the event of a major catastrophic event?

### **Sub-questions**

1. Has the planning for the 2017 presidential inauguration fostered greater emphasis on DSCA planning?
2. Do you believe it is value added for an organization executing DSCA operations within a shared region collaborate in planning to ensure a common understanding of roles and responsibilities?
3. Do you believe collective planning and training or lack of it affects collective DSCA proficiency in the NCR?

### **Interview participant's responses**

#### **EM01**

EM01 provided a very candid assessment of DSCA proficiency within his area of responsibility and the NCR. He had 14 years of experience and was not a graduate of the DSCA certification course. When asked whether personnel in his organization have a

general understanding of DSCA, he stated yes. However, when EM01 was asked if DSCA training is incorporated into the organization's training plan on a recurring basis, he stated, "No, not really because every time we've requested military assets, I've usually been the individual that has done that. As a matter of fact going back, we've only made those requests 3 times in the last 14 years." EM01 also confirmed that no member of his staff had attended the DSCA.

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

EM01's response indicated that there were no financial constraints inside his organization, which led to a less than optimal proficiency. Furthermore, the lack of access to professional training was not identified as a contributing factor to a lack in DSCA proficiency. When asked interview question 6—what factors do you attribute to your organizational DSCA proficiency or the lack of it—EM01 stated, "A lack of it is based on the fact that we never really need it except for snow storms when we need high-profile vehicles."

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

When asked if his organization conducts combined DSCA training with his emergency management of military mission partner in the NCR, EM01 stated, "We haven't really done a lot of training with our military partners. Occasionally, we will do exercise or participate in exercise with Marine Base Quantico, but outside of this, it has

been very limited.” As a precept to collaborative planning, it’s important for organizations to understand their organizational plans and the plans of their counterparts. When EM01 was asked if his organization conducts reviews of internal DSCA plans, he stated, “No, not really, we do have a military annex in our emergency operations plan, but quite frankly, we have never seen any military plans at all.” This response led to sub-question 2, in which EM01 stated the following:

Yes, absolutely. It’s important for us to know what the military can bring to the table and also it’s important for the military to know what kind of civilian assets that we can use to assist them in their mission because at the end of the day, all are working on the same problem. We just don’t want to work it cross purposes, which we have seen historically in large-scale disasters.

#### **MM04**

MM04 was very forthcoming on DSCA operations inside his organization and the NCR. With three and a half years of experience in his current position as a planner, he was a graduate of the DSCA training course. He also acknowledged that it was mandatory for new military members in his organization to enroll in DSCA phase I and phase II certification courses. MM04 believed that attending the mandatory DSCA certification classes was a key component for his organizational DSCA proficiency. When asked if DSCA training is incorporated into the organization’s training plan on a recurring basis, he stated the following:

“Yes, DSCA training in the sense of planning and coordination at the staff level. So, what the staff does through command post exercises add to the planning and preparation of events and DSCA operations.”

MM04 also provided insight on how his Title 10 organization uses National Security Special Events (NSSE) as a training tool for DSCA operations. According to Federal Emergency Management Agency Center for Domestic Preparedness:

When an event is designated by the Secretary of Homeland Security as a National Special Security Event (NSSE), the Secret Service assumes its mandated role as the lead agency for the design and implementation of the operational security plan. The Secret Service has developed a core strategy to carry out its security operations, which relies heavily on its established partnerships with law enforcement and public safety officials at the local, state, and federal levels. The goal of the cooperating agencies is to provide a safe and secure environment for Secret Service protectees, other dignitaries, the event participants, and the general public. There is a tremendous amount of advance planning and coordination in preparation for these events, particularly in the areas of venue and motorcade route security, communications, credentialing, and training. (FEMA, n.d.)

In the NCR, a NSSE normally ranges from the annual State of the Union addressed by the president to a summit by world leaders in the Washington DC area. During NSSEs, the Title 10 organization normally fills requests for assistance for national federal agencies such as the Secret Service. These requests can be for a specific piece of equipment or personnel trained on a specific military task. If the Title 10 organization does not have the asset or the capability being requested, they request their higher command, which is United States Northern Command, to requisition the asset or desired capability through the Global Force Management process.

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

When asked if financial constraints contribute to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency, MM04 stated, “Yes, to conduct a large-scale or even a medium-scale exercise would cost money and for an organization, who’s going to pay for it either kills the idea of a large-scale exercise or holds it up in planning”. Contrarily, MM04 did not indicate that limited access to professional training courses contributes to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency. Lastly, MM04 attributed his organization’s DSCA proficiency to the current coordination efforts with local and state emergency managers and the collective participation of emergency managers and the military in exercises and steering committee meetings.

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

Through his responses for interview questions 4, 9, and sub-question 2.1, MM04 conveyed that collaborative planning and training within the NCR affects DSCA proficiency. He stated, “Yes by the exercise environment at least once a year we exercise with the local district, and Virginia county emergency managers on a case-by-case basis. Depending on NSSE’s we conduct planning exercises, rehearsals of concept drills, and table top exercises with local Virginia county Maryland county, District of Columbia local emergency managers.” MM04 believed these planning and training initiatives had a positive impact on DSCA proficiency. This belief was also consistent throughout several military members responses.

**EM02**

EM02 was the second emergency manager who participated in the research. He was 45 years old, with 1 year of experience in his current position. Like EM01, he was a certified emergency manager, but had not attended the DSCA training course. When asked if personnel in his organization have a general understanding of DSCA, he stated, “I have information on DSCA, but I would not go as far as to say that I fully understand the request process.” Furthermore, personnel in his organization were not certified in the DSCA training course. Like EM01’s organization, EM02 noted that DSCA training was not occurring in his organization. In his response, he noted that in his relative short tenure, “I have not seen it since I’ve been here.”

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

EM02 did not indicate that constraints of financial resources were a contributing factor to his organization’s proficiency. However, he made a point that though there were no financial constraints inside his organization, his organization had a responsibility to prioritize what training programs they want to pursue to ensure financial resources were used to improve deficient areas. Regarding what factor attributes to his organizational DSCA proficiency or the lack of it, EM02 believed the negative contributing factor was the constant turnover of personnel. He stated, “Within this region, it would have to be the turnover. Within my office, there has been a lot of turnover, so I think not only from the public side but from the military side as well; we’re constantly trying to learn each other.”

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

EM02's responses clearly led to his belief that collaborative planning and training affected DCSA proficiency within the NCR. He noted that in an effort to improve planning and training with the military, he was currently in the process of designing future training exercises with the military. For sub-question 1, EM02 believed it was imperative for organizations executing DSCA operations in a shared region to collaborate on planning operations to ensure a common understanding of roles and responsibilities. This response was further amplified in sub-question two, but not specifically toward the NCR. When asked if he believes collaborative planning and training has an impact on collective DSCA proficiency in the region, he generalized without directly assessing the impact on the region. He stated, "Yes, training definitely improves preparedness mitigation operations and recovery and a lack of it does the opposite." With regard to the impact on the NCR, EM02 did not provide a definitive answer because he wanted to have more interaction with his counterparts before making an assessment.

**EM03**

EM03 was 57 years old, with exactly five-year tenure in his current position as the lead emergency manager for his county. EM03 had completed his certification and was at the time of the interview pursuing his PhD. EM03 acknowledged that personnel in his organization did not have a general understanding of DSCA or attended the DSCA certification course. Subsequently, DSCA training was not incorporated into his internal

training plan on a recurring basis. EM03 clearly articulated that his organization would not request support directly from the military, which is admissible under DSCA policies. EM03 noted that if such a case were to arise, he would submit his request to the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). This response served as a precursor for his responses on DSCA.

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

EM03 did not convey constrained financial resources as a contributing factor to his organization's less than optimal DSCA proficiency. Additionally, access to the professional training courses such as the DSCA training course was not perceived as a contributing factor. From his viewpoint, DSCA operations have not been historically exercised in his county. Furthermore, his protocol for requesting military assistance requires him to forward an official request for assistance to his higher chain of command. Therefore, DSCA operations were not an operational task that he felt were a priority for his organization.

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

Similar to EM02, EM03 provided general responses to the research question two. As alluded to earlier, his organization did not conduct combined DSCA training with his military counterparts. Furthermore, when asked what factors he attributes to his organization's lack of DSCA proficiency, he stated "I don't know if a reach from the NCR has been made to all the locals from the military and vice versa, that can work both

ways. At the federal level, we do a lot of interaction with the feds.” EM03 also noted that even at the state level of government, in which his county was subservient to, conversations on DSCA were not taking place. When asked sub-question two, EM03 stated, “Any training that is done and not coordinated throughout the region would have a negative impact on DSCA.”

### **MM05**

MM05 had 22 years of military service and 2 and a half years of experience in his current duty position. Like other military members who participated in the research, he attended the DSCA training course and confirmed that it was indeed mandatory for all the members of his directorate to attend the DSCA training course. MM05 also confirmed that DSCA training was incorporated into his organization’s training plan. The training he referred to was the NSSE inside the NCR, where planning and coordination took place for real world events such as the State of the Union addresses, which include DSCA planning. With regard to his overall opinion of DSCA operations in the region, he stated the following:

This headquarters does a good job in my opinion with working command post exercises and the tactical level piece with some of the specialized units around here. Where we have gaps is incorporating our higher headquarters inside these exercises, and there is no actual involvement with any of the locals; that’s a huge gap in our training.

He further expounded on key factors to improve collective proficiency through efforts such as getting local authorities to recognize the value in these training exercises as an imperative. Ironically, this comment coincides with EM03 and EM02’s comments, where

they conveyed that their organizations do not normally participate in DSCA exercises with the military.

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

With regard to financial constraints, MM05 believed that constrained financial resources lead to a less than optimal proficiency. He stated:

We don't have the money to contract out for more simulation; we don't have the money to allow the staff to go 24/7 for a sustained period of time. Those two are the biggest factors from a financial standpoint that limit us in our ability to train for DSCA.

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

MM05 provided rich and thick responses to the interview questions corresponding to research question two. When asked interview question 4, MM05 stated the following:

We do minimal in the regard of planning and training; it's mostly within some of our specialized units inside this headquarters. Our subordinate units do conduct training with some of the local units, but as a whole, this organization does not do regular training with the local authorities. We have a relationship with them, but from an actual training aspect, no.

With regard to interview question 6, his response echoed with previous comments from military members about his organization in general. His comment mainly focused on specialized training conducted by his organization. He stated:

This headquarters does a good job in my opinion with working command post exercises and the tactical level piece with some of the specialized units around here. We do that annually; there's an annual training level exercise we have tried to expand to include using CBIRF (Chemical, Biological Incident Response Force).

MM05's response to sub-question 1 further amplified the importance of organizations in a shared region collaborating in planning to ensure a common understanding of roles and responsibilities. When asked the question, he stated, "Yes, it's very important. If you don't train together to work through the grey area on game day, you won't be effective."

## **MM02**

MM02 was the newest member of the Title 10 organization who participated in the research. With 14 years of military experience and 6 months' experience in his current duty position as a planner, MM02 had completed the DSCA phase I and II certification. MM04 was the first to rate the DSCA certification case, which he had recently attended. He stated that

On a scale of 1 through 10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, I would rate it as a 7 or 8. It gives a basic understanding of what DSCA is and they try to relate it to your specific mission for your organization. Having no DSCA prior experience was great for me.

Though MM02 was the junior member of his organization, he believed his organization had a general understanding of DSCA. During the short tenure, MM05 said that DSCA training was incorporated into his organization's training plan on a recurring

basis. He stated, “It’s part of the initial training plan once you get on board, but once you start working it every day, I guess yes its part of the training plan, but not formally, but more of an on-the-job type training.”

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

Understandably, due to MM02’s short tenure in his current position, he had no frame of reference for financial constraints or limited access to professional courses directly contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency. He divulged that he had not observed any instances where a lack of financial resources contributed to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency.

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

MM02 noted that maybe twice a quarter, his organization conducted combined arms training with his organizational counterparts. However, when asked interview question six, he clarified his statement by saying, “I’ve been here in my job for the first six months; I really haven’t dealt too much with the first responders or emergency managers.” When asked interview question nine, MM02 provided details about his organization’s DSCA policies review, but noted that there was no systematic review of the policies of his emergency management counterparts. This revelation was also made by EM02, who stated this was indeed the case in his emergency management organization. These two interviews provided insight on how the organizations in the region do not understand their counterparts polices for DSCA.

**EM04**

EM04 had the second shortest tenure of all emergency managers who participated in the research, which was 10 months. He was 36 years old and certified in emergency management operations through a national certified emergency management course, but he was not a graduate of the DSCA training course. EM04 revealed that his organization was loosely familiar with DSCA because the training his organization conducted was with his state National Guard. However, due to his contact with the state National Guard only, his organization had no interaction with federal Title 10 authorities. This response was similar to that of EM03, who was an emergency manager in the same state with a similar standard operating procedure for interacting with the state National Guard juxtaposed to Title 10 military forces. Furthermore, like EM03, EM04 clarified that his parent organization would make all requests for assistance for support required outside of the State National Guard. Finally, EM04 divulged that his organization had no DSCA policy or procedure until after a major snowstorm earlier this year.

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

Constrained financial resources were not a contributing factor for DSCA proficiency of EM04's organization. EM04 stated, "We're pretty fortunate in our county in terms of both being a part of the Urban Area Security Initiative, which is a DHS ran program, that affords us a fair deal of Homeland security related and emergency response related funding." EM04 also alluded to limited access being a contributing factor to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency. With his state organization conducting the preponderance of DSCA operations, EM04 believed he didn't know enough about the

encompassing DSCA process, which could be addressed in a professional DSCA training course.

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

EM04's organization did not conduct combined DSCA training with his military mission partners in the region. However, he did state that there are coordination meetings with the state National Guard liaison officers. Though there are several military installations in the region, EM04 stressed the point that the only military was Walter Reed Medical Center. When asked interview question 6, EM04's response was that since the state buffered interaction with the federal military, there was no need to incorporate principals of DSCA. However, when asked sub-question three, EM04 said that collaborative planning and training had an impact on collective proficiency in the NCR. Furthermore, he believed that proportionality wise, counties and jurisdictions closer that were to military installations were probably more proficient than those without installations.

**MM07**

Like MM05, MM07 was a supervisor in the Title 10 organization participating in the study. He had 25 years of military experience, with an 18-month tenure in his current position as the training and exercise director. MM07 was certified in the DSCA training certification course, and he noted that 75% of his subordinates had attended the DSCA certification courses. Like most participants in the Title 10 organization, he believed his organization had a general understanding of DSCA. Like MM02, MM07 believed that the

DSCA certification course was a major factor that attributed to his collective organization's DSCA proficiency.

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

When asked about constrained financial resources having an impact on DSCA proficiency, MM07 stated the following:

To date, not necessarily because oftentimes when we participate with other agencies, we are able to tap into a broader money pool and interestingly enough, if we don't include those agencies, we are actually much more restricted.

Historically, we haven't had to curtail or shut down training because of funds.

Finally, there were no indications that limited access to professional training courses were a contributing factor to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency.

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

MM07, who served as the lead training and exercise director for his organization, divulged that his organization conducted combined DSCA training with local emergency managers maybe twice a year. He stated the following:

We need to do one more semi-annual exercise. Annually, we have a really sexy annual exercise with them; the other one, there is some tangential participation, but it's less rigorous than the other exercises. I think if we had two of those high impact heavy-density interagency plays per year, then we would increase our proficiency at such a point where we would be a T (trained) across the board. In

the band of excellence, we have peaks and troughs and potentially because we only have one major exercise involving those folks (local emergency managers) that the troughs tend to be a little longer than the peaks.

Finally, when asked sub-question 3, MM07 stated, “I would say so; certainly the more one contributes, it’s positive, and the less one contributes, it’s negative.” MM07, caveat to this point, was in a recent training exercise, where there was a huge disagreement among participants discussing how to care for local populace that is affected by a catastrophic event. He noted that collaborative planning and training certainly helped reveal the gap, but it also exposed a deficiency that had to be shelved because there was no viable solution to the problem set, as every organization had a different plan.

### **MM03**

MM03 was one of the longest tenured members of the military organization who participated in the research. MM03 had spent three years in his current duty position as a planner and a total of 17 years of military service. He, like other military members, had attended the DSCA certification course and believed his organization had a general understanding of DSCA. MM03 was the first respondent to reveal that before each NSSE, his organization participated in organizational DSCA professional academics training. This training reinforces organizational responsibilities for DSCA operations should a need occur within the NCR.

### **R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

MM03 noted that there was a financial constraint, which led to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency. Due to a lack of funds, equipment could not be purchased to enable

communication for real world DSCA operations. This admission was unique because other admissions focused more on training, while this admission focused on equipment. MM05 divulged this information that was made known by his immediate chain of command.

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

When asked interview question 4, EM03 stated the following:

“Our Police Management Protective Division does do some on-site and off-site clearing buildings with other SWAT teams here in the area. So they do some DSCA support to other law enforcement agencies here in the area. We do some with Fairfax fire, but at the headquarters level, we don’t do a whole lot of exercises.

Unlike other military respondents, MM03 attributed his organization’s DSCA proficiency to the long-standing relationships with local agencies (federal, regional, and cities). When asked interview question six, he stated, “They know our capabilities and can request the capabilities we can perform for them.” However, MM03 was very direct in saying, “This is helpful, but our permanent or available assets for DSCA are very limited. So, we have a very limited scope of DSCA support without augmentation.” Finally, MM03 revealed that his organizational policies were reviewed by his higher headquarters, but there was no mechanism in place to review the policies of local emergency managers or vice versa. Additionally, there was set time for his organization to review their internal policies.

**EM05**

EM05, at age 45, was the longest serving emergency manager of all emergency managers who participated in the research. He had a 17-year tenure in his current position and was certified in emergency management operations, but not the nationally recognized certified emergency management course. EM05, nor any of his subordinates, attended the DSCA certification course; however, EM05 did believe that key personnel in his organization had a general understanding of DSCA due to his interaction with the National Guard. Lastly, EM05 noted that though DSCA training is not conducted in his organization regularly, it is reviewed regularly due to his affiliation with the state National Guard.

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

EM05 did not attribute constrained financial resources as a contributing factor to his organization's less than optimal DSCA proficiency. However, like his contemporaries, he believed limited access to professional courses was a contributing factor.

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

EM05 noted in his interview that his organization does not conduct combined DSCA training with his military mission partners. When addressing DSCA proficiency among counties and jurisdictions in the NCR, EM05 stated, "One factor is that when you don't have a military installation within your community, you are not as proficient or

knowledgeable as a jurisdiction or community that does have a military installation in their region.” While addressing sub-question three, EM05 stated the following:

I would definitely say planning and training enhance proficiency and if you’re not able to plan, when you write and develop plans, and be in a position to operationalize them, then you absolutely lose the ability to be proficient and you lose the effectiveness when you need to utilize the plans. It’s a key element or a core element of success to be in a position to work collaboratively in planning and training to ensure proficiency.

#### **EM06**

EM06 was 36 years of age with seven years of experience in her current position as county emergency manager. She also had two years of experience as a county emergency manager in another county. EM06 was certified in her state as a certified emergency manager, but had not attended the DSCA certification course. For a frame of reference, EM05’s county was the farthest county from the NCR, but there were military organizations in her county. Additionally, EM06 was in the same state as EM05 and EM03. Like her contemporaries, EM06 stated that her organization did not have a basic understanding of DSCA because her state mandated how counties would request assets should the need arrive. For greater context, EM06 noted that until the governor of her state signed an emergency declaration, the request for assistance would be considered invalid.

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

EM06 did not identify constrained financial resources as a contributing factor to her organization's less than optimal DSCA proficiency. However, access to the training course was one factor that led to the organization's lack of knowledge. She stated, "I had no idea that this training existed."

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

EM06 revealed that her organization used to participate in some of the military exercises inside her county. She stated the following:

We used to participate in some of their exercises, but it's been a few years since they invited us to do that. I think the last one was around the 2011–2012 timeframe; they did it every year and we would participate by standing up our emergency operations center. However, we haven't done that for a number of years.

When asked sub-questions 2 and 3, EM06 was reticent to answer because due to the nascent knowledge of DSCA operations, she believed she could not answer the questions. Furthermore, since her county was the farthest away, she believed her county's priorities were drastically different than those closer to the epicenter of the NCR.

**EM07**

EM07 was the director of emergency management for his state's largest county in his state. He was 41 years of age, with a state certification for emergency management operations. As with his counterparts, he was not a graduate of the DSCA training course, but he admitted that he did receive a briefing on DSCA years ago. He further stated that

in the brief, the presenters divulged what assets were available and how they could be used. EM07 did not clarify if other members of his organization had a general understanding of DSCA. EM07's county was in close vicinity of a military installation, and he stated that his organization had established a relationship with the installation.

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

When asked interview question 8, EM07's response differed from that of other emergency managers' responses who participated in the research. He stated, "On a preparedness side, no; on a response side, me asking for something, and getting a bill, there may be some impact on why I wouldn't go the DSCA route." Next, limited access to professional training was determined to be a contributing factor to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency. Like his fellow emergency managers in other regions, he believed since there wasn't a high frequency in planning or training for potential DSCA operations with federal forces, there was simply no need to attend professional training courses. Therefore, the tertiary impact was a lack of DSCA knowledge that was directly attributed to not attending the course. As a caveat to this response, EM07 clearly articulated that his primary link to military assets was his state National Guard and not Title 10 forces.

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

EM07's response to interview question 4 was intriguing in the sense that his organization provided training to the military organization within his county. This training was not necessarily DSCA training, but a training that could potentially lead to a

common understanding as to how each organization is organized for conducting emergency management operations. He stated the following:

We assist our nearest military installation in training, but not everyone else. We kind of help them fortify their emergency management program and any kind of training we have they can attend. They have asked us to assist them with their emergency operations center structure and provide them recommendations. This is kind of a one-way street because during things like snow operations, they may ask for assistance from us.

Though the training provided by EM07's organization is not considered DSCA by definition, it certainly showed the importance of cooperation and training, which builds relationships that can be leveraged during a catastrophic event. Finally, when asked sub-question 3, EM07 replied

Yes, when we're doing response operations or recovery operations; we want to try and utilize any resource we can to help and alleviate the problem we are dealing with, and if the best way to do it is through the request to the military for DSCA, that is something we should be doing and that is something we should be training for.

Finally, though EM07's organization was providing training to his military counterparts, he admitted there was no protocol in place to review their counterparts' policies or vice versa.

### **EM08**

EM08 was the last participant interviewed for the research. He was 65 years of age, certified as an emergency manager through a certified emergency management

program, and had an eight-year tenure in his current duty position. EM08's knowledge of DSCA operations was vastly different from his contemporaries. He understood the principles of DSCA and explained that prior to his interview, his organization conducted a major DSCA exercise with his military counterparts in the region. EM08 also divulged that due to his proximity to several key military installations within his county, he is in constant communication with his counterparts. Though his experience was sharply different from his fellow emergency managers, he did state that he does not certify personnel through the DSCA training course.

**R1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

EM08 did not believe that constrained financial resources affected his DSCA proficiency, but he certainly believed that emergency managers should have greater access to professional courses to build proficiency. As his counterparts alluded to, EM08 believed that since most states are the approving authority for requesting assets if required for a catastrophic event, local counties and jurisdictions feel there isn't a need to pursue professional training.

**R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

EM08 believed that collaborative planning and training had a deep impact on DSCA proficiency inside the NCR. As an example of collaborative planning and training at the highest levels, he gave an example of a major planning and training exercise that occurred at the Pentagon: "We table-topped an exercise for three days before the

Thanksgiving week. During the exercise, we had DOD and the USNORTCHOM involved in the exercise.” EM08 was very adamant that there could be no replacement for collaborative planning. Additionally, another important factor to planning and training is the relationships that are built because of collaborative planning and training. When asked sub-question 3, EM08 stated

Yes, I believe that many of the emergency management agencies and even local government agencies are not sure what DSCA is all about, what the capabilities are, and how they can get it. This is because we have to go through the states to access these assets, and I think it kind of hampers it.

To fully understand the evolution of DSCA, I compared my interview responses to the responses of a study conducted by Milliman, Grosskopf, and Paez (2006) titled “Emergency Managers’ Views on Improving Defense Support/Military Assistance to Civil Authorities”. Their primary focus was centered on understanding the role of education for emergency managers in Military Assistance to Civil Authorities, which later evolved into DSCA. The below comments are from respondents 10 years ago. Ironically, the responses provided then still resonate today. The respondents stated

- “Educate all emergency managers on what is available from MACA and how to access it.”
- “We have only had one briefing in the five years that I have been Public Safety Director for my county that explained MACA and the resources, capabilities, etc. that the military overall can provide. I would urge a more visible and detailed informational briefings to emergency managers.”

- “Today, very few county officials know about or can access the MACA process. Emergency managers should be provided with specific information regarding the program and how to access the system.”
- “Need to continue to develop working relationships throughout the year between localities and MACA representatives so when a large event occurs, localities will already be familiar with the MACA system and its representatives before the crisis occurs.”
- “If I have received information on MACA, it was overlooked, so I am not sure of what benefits MACA would have for my community...”
- “TELL US WHAT RESOURCES THEY HAVE AND HOW TO BEST ACCESS THEM.” (Caps by the survey respondent). (p. 5)

### **Data Analysis**

The coding process began with a line-by-line coding analysis of 15 interviews conducted with emergency managers and members of a Title 10 organization within the NCR. To understand the true essence of this important first step in coding, Thomas (2003) stated, “Inductive coding begins with close readings of text and consideration of the multiple meanings that are inherent in the text (Thomas, 2003, p. 4). Though this was very time consuming, it gave me a greater appreciation for the data and a general direction to start the code to categorize them into theme evolution. As I read each

interview, I highlighted salient points from the data documents, which evolved into my initial codes. From my personal analysis, I was able to extract 13 potential nodes, which were planning, partnership, training, information, collaborative planning, state requirements, relationships, communication, cooperation, National Guard, certification, policies, and resources. The next step was to upload all interviews into NVivo to build a word search and text search query of phrases to facilitate the evolution from codes to potential themes. Special instructions were written for the Nvivo 11 program to conduct specific word and text searches.

After conducting the first word query, I further defined my search by eliminating certain words from the query. Eliminating words with limited to no value for the follow-on queries made the data more digestible. As a caveat, it was important to understand that because certain words may be weighted more than others in the word search, it does not necessarily mean that the words that weight more are automatic themes. For instance, in my initial word search, DSCA, training, organization, and military were heavily weighted and ultimately formed new nodes for possible themes; however, they were not automatically designated as themes. Subsequently, it was also important to eliminate repetitive words from the interview questions. From my first analysis of the word search, I noticed that some words heavily populated the search results. It was not until I reviewed the actual interview questions that I determined that the words were from the interview questions. These two examples clearly show why researchers must constantly refine their data analysis to ensure that they are clearly and accurately deciphering what the data is communicating. If this process is not followed the result of the research will be in accurate which calls the integrity of the research into question.

After conducting the second word query, NVivo 11 identified the frequency of the words used from the interviews (Table 3). After reviewing the findings from Nvivo 11, I then conducted a tree map and cluster analysis. According to Kaefer, Roper, and Sinha (2015), “Tree maps help us to visualize one or more attribute values within the data.” After analyzing the outputs, I conducted another line-by-line analysis of the interview questions. This may have seemed redundant, but as a novice researcher, I wanted to make sure no relevant information is lost in the transition from my line-by-line coding to Nvivo 11.

Table 3

*Nvivo Word Count*

Word	Length	Count
Training	8	103
Organization	12	67
Military	8	52
Emergency	9	44
Proficiency	11	43
Operations	10	30
Planning	8	28
State	5	23
Course	6	20
Response	8	20
Financial	9	19
Management	10	18
Contributing	12	17
Exercise	8	16
Managers	8	16
Professional	12	16
Factor	6	15
Certification	13	14
Impact	6	14
Limited	7	14

Understanding	13	14
Access	6	13
County	6	13

Finally, I looked for stemmed words, synonyms, specialization, and generalization in all the interviews conducted. The next step was to develop categories. The categories I selected were relationships with military installations, outreach from the military, need for exercises, lack of DSCA knowledge, authority to request assistance, lack of policy reviews, combining training in the NCR, and funding impacts on DSCA. To complete the evolution, I began the process of identifying potential themes by reviewing the summary tab for all interviews under designated nodes. After reviewing the references surrounding the weighted words, my personal analysis, and text search queries, the following themes were extracted: education, state authority, relationships, exercises, funding, and policy review (Table 4).

Table 4

*Themes with Participants' Responses*

Participants	Responses Aligned with Themes
<b><u>Education</u></b>	
EM01	We need briefings from the military on assets available and response times.
EM02	I didn't know there was a course called DSCA.
EM03	We need to have a better understanding of DSCA.

EM04 These questions have raised questions for me. The federal military is a big unknown, which makes it challenging. It is as if they are a black box.

EM06 I had no idea about DSCA training.

EM08 I think we need to start with education. Most emergency managers don't understand what is available and how to implement it; education first and then look for other ways to incorporate DSCA.

### **State Authority**

EM03 If I'm requesting resources, my request goes to the state and not to the NCR. So within the state, the Maryland Emergency Agency will request any type of military assets. So we don't have as a local agency no direct connection with any military assets.

EM04 The state buffers our interaction with the military. They believe it is their responsibility to request assets. Therefore, this leads to our lack of DSCA proficiency.

EM05 We never encountered a situation where we needed any assets from the active duty military. We request assets through the state.

EM06 The only time we can request any assistance is if the governor has signed an official emergency declaration.

**Exercises**

- MM01 We need to improve with more outreach and exercises.
- MM02 Improve exercises with local agencies. Our exercises are focused at the federal level.
- MM02 We need to emphasize the importance of interagency exercises. We need to do a semiannual exercise.
- EM06 We used to participate in some of their exercises, but they haven't asked us to participate recently.
- MM07 We do not conduct exercises with our partners. We have not exercised the whole staff in our organization. Half of the people in our command don't understand DSCA.

**Relationships**

- MM01 That is actually increasing where we are working with emergency managers. In fact, this week I was just at a modelling simulation with Arlington County. How often does this happen; may be once a year.
- MM02 We haven't dealt with local emergency managers.
- MM03 We don't do a whole lot with our local emergency management partners.

- MM06 We need to improve local coordination with the National Guard and state's emergency managers.
- EM03 I don't know if the outreach has been made by the NCR and vice versa.
- EM05 A critical factor for us is not having Department of Defense facilities or installations within our county. I think you will find that counties without military installations are not as proficient as county emergency managers who do have them.

**Funding**

- MM01 Financial constraints do hold us back from participating in some events.
- MM03 Some units do not have equipment that could facilitate their DSCA operations.
- MM04 Large-scale DSCA exercises would cost, and most of the time they are killed in planning.
- EM05 When the governor signs a declaration, the National Guard is free. Therefore, cost would be a consideration when using the active duty military.

MM07 We don't have the money to contract out simulations or have exercises that last for longer periods of time.

### **Policy Reviews**

EM01 We have a military annex in our plan, but I have not seen it.

MM02 We do not review local level plans. I would consider it as a deficient area for me.

EM03 We have no policies on DSCA planning.

EM04 I would suggest we have not reviewed other jurisdiction policies. It's a sound idea, and I think we should do it.

MM03 At the local level, there is no review of our plans.

MM04 The only policies reviewed by us is at the federal level. Personally, I have not reviewed a policy at the state, local, county, or city level.

MM05 No, we do not review our local partners' policies. We exchange business cards and that is about it.

### **Training**

EM01 We have not done a lot of training with our military bases. Only Marine Base Quantico.

- EM03 No, I can't remember being in any type of DSCA training.
- MM05 If you don't train together to work through the gray areas on game-day you want be efficient.
- MM06 Local emergency managers should be included in our DSCA training as well.
- MM07 We do minimal training with local emergency management
- EM05 We don't conduct any formal training with our counterparts.
- EM07 Whoever is responsible for DSCA training needs to bring it to the NCR. We need briefings on reoccurring basis.

A key component of qualitative research is to identify and analyze data for negative or discrepant cases to ensure validity of the research (Maxwell, 2005). For the scope of my research, there were no discrepant cases identified.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Evidence of trustworthiness in qualitative research perceivably endures the eyes of scrutiny more so than quantitative research. According to Shenton (2004), "Although many critics are reluctant to accept the trustworthiness of qualitative research, frameworks for ensuring rigor in this form of work have been in existence for many years" (p. 63). Evidence of trustworthiness for my research began with the process of ensuring that the responses from the participants were accurately captured, which

eliminated any interpretation of a response. A key factor in this process was reading the responses back to the respondents, who confirmed that their responses were accurately written and recorded.

### Credibility

Credibility for any research is paramount when presenting key findings and having the research potentially scrutinized by fellow researchers and those who may benefit from the findings. For the purpose of this research, credibility was ensured by first screening the participants and allowing them to exit the study. Shenton (2004) believes this step is imperative to ensure research credibility. He stated the following:

In particular, each person who is approached should be given opportunities to refuse to participate in the project so as to ensure that the data collection sessions involve only those who are genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer data freely. (p. 66)

Next, credibility was further ensured by a personal line-by-line coding and the coding by Nvivo 11. This triangulation ensured the data was extensively scrutinized to in turn ensure that correct codes, categories, and themes are derived from the data. This later ensured accuracy in answering the research questions that guided the research. Finally, credibility was ensured by the researcher's knowledge of DSCA operations. This knowledge was obtained by being certified in DSCA phase I and phase II courses. This certification is also coupled with two and a half years of experience serving as a DSCA planner. Finally, it was further bolstered by planning and conducting exercises with numerous federal, state and local civil authorities who were solicited to provide data for this research.

### Transferability

Transferability for this research was ensured through several measures. The first measure was to ensure a rich and thick description of multiple aspects of the research from the literature review through data collection and analysis. According to Anney (2014), “Thick description involves the researcher elucidating all the research processes, from data collection, context of the study to production of the final report. Thick description helps other researchers to replicate the study with similar conditions in other settings” (2014, p. 278). Next, by using Nvivo as a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CASDQ), a detailed audit trail was established for future researchers to apply, to further explore DSCA proficiency. As a caveat to the audit trail, it’s imperative for researchers to ensure that the data collected and analyzed is as accurate as possible. Simply stated, research, qualitative or quantitative, is predicated on trust, trust that one researcher executed due diligence through rigorous scrutiny of his/her data, which can ultimately serve as the foundation for future research to further explore the phenomenon.

### Dependability

Dependability, as with the aforementioned transferability, was assured by using Nvivo 11. Using this CASDQ has been extremely beneficial for researchers since its inception. In their article titled “Rigor in Qualitative Case Study”, Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) stated the following:

NVivo provided a record of decisions during the analysis phase of the CsL research. These findings were illustrated in the final research report. In addition, the dependability and confirmability of the data were demonstrated by running

queries within the qualitative data analysis software. NVivo was able to locate all the passages that matched the criteria set in a query. Locating ensured that any issue described in the findings was not the perception of just one person, but rather confirmed that a number of participants held the same opinion. (p. 15)

As a summation to this facet of trustworthiness, Nvivo provided an audit trail for my data analysis, but more importantly, the evolution from theory to research findings were reviewed by the researcher's committee chair, committee member, and University Research Reviewer for soundness. Though their review is not an example of a stepwise replication used to measure dependability, it certainly aids dependability when seasoned researchers authenticate the integrity of the research in its entirety.

#### Confirmability

After completing the research, there were no requirements to adjust confirmability strategies expounded upon in chapter 3. Confirmability was first ensured through the initial stages of data analysis. Before data codes were placed into Nvivo, the researcher conducted a line-by-line analysis of 15 interviews to identify potential codes, categories, and themes. After this process was completed, instructions were written for Nvivo to conduct word searches and phrase queries to ensure that the initial researcher's analysis is sufficient. After the results were presented, the word searches and phrase queries were expanded to ensure that there was no omission of potential codes that could have made a contribution to the code, categories, and theme evolution. By executing this form of triangulation, the potential for researcher bias was reduced, which is a key component that bolsters confirmability. Next, confirmability was achieved by actively searching for negative or discrepant cases in the research. Once again, this measure was taken by the

researcher to ensure that every facet of the data collected and analyzed is taken into account before producing findings and recommendations.

### **Findings of Research Question 1**

Research question 1 was formulated to determine if factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contribute to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency. Interview questions five and eight were used to answer this research question. When these questions were asked to each participant, there was a clear disparity among emergency managers and their military mission partners. Of the eight emergency managers who participated in the research, none reported constrained financial resources as a contributing factor to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency. Contrarily, of the seven Title 10 participants, who provided 72% of the data (five out of seven), reported that constrained financial resources did have an impact on DSCA proficiency, while one participant with a short tenure in the organization could not make an assessment. MM04 stated the following:

Yes, to conduct a large scale or even medium scale exercise would cost money and for an organization, who's going to pay for it either kills the idea of a large-scale exercise or holds it up in planning.

We don't have the money to contract out for more simulation; we don't have the money to allow the staff to go 24/7 for a sustained period of time. Those two are the biggest factors from a financial standpoint that limit us in our ability to train for DSCA.

MM03 noted that there was a financial constraint, which led to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency. Due to a lack of funds, equipment could not be purchased to enable communication for real world DSCA operations. This admission was unique because other admissions focused more on training, while this admission focused on equipment. MM03 divulged this information that was made known by his immediate chain of command.

MM07 was the only military respondent who believed that constrained financial resources did not contribute to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency. He stated that

To date, not necessarily because oftentimes when we participate with other agencies, we are able to tap into a broader money pool and interestingly enough, if we don't include those agencies; we are actually much more restricted.

Historically, we haven't had to curtail or shut down training because of funds.

When asked if limited access to professional courses such as the DSCA training course contributes to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency, no Title 10 participant identified this as a contributing factor. As alluded to earlier, all Title 10 participants had completed DSCA phase I and II of the DSCA certification courses before participating in this research. Furthermore, as a point of clarification, this was not a criterion to participate in the research. Emergency managers aligned with their military mission partners by divulging access to professional DSCA courses was not a factor contributing to their lack of DSCA proficiency. This was surprising because most emergency managers had not heard of the DSCA training course which is the only institution that provides DSCA training.

## Findings of Research Question 2

### **R2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

Interview questions 3, 4, 6, 9, and sub-question 3 were used to provide an in-depth analysis of this research question. I felt it was not only necessary to answer this research question but to understand the underpinning of the research question through carefully designed research questions. In her article titled “Preparing for Interview Research: The Interview Protocol Refinement Framework”, Castillo-Montoya (2016) stated, “A researcher wants intentional and necessary interview questions because people have complex experiences that do not unravel neatly before the researcher. Instead, helping participants explain their experiences takes time, careful listening, and intentional follow up” (p. 812).

For instance, interview question three asked participants if DSCA training was incorporated into their reoccurring training plans. This question was designed to first understand each individual organization’s training on DSCA. The findings showed that 46% of respondents stated that DSCA planning was incorporated into their existing training plans, while 53% stated it was not incorporated. Interview question four asked if the participant’s organization conducts combined DSCA training with their emergency management or military mission partners in the NCR. If so, what is the frequency? The purpose of this question was to gauge the frequency of the DSCA training occurring among the organizations participating in the research. About 79% of respondents stated that their organization did conduct combined training with their military or emergency management partners, while 20% stated they did not. When asked to clarify the training

conducted, responses ranged from once a year training exercises and organizational briefs to detailed tabletop exercises conducted bi-annually.

Deeper analysis revealed that some of these events couldn't be classified as DSCA training. For instance, EM07 alluded to a walk through with a military organization in his region to show them a basic layout for an Emergency Operation Center (EOC). Though this gesture is certainly beneficial for building partnerships, it would not be combined with DSCA training because there is no minimal dialogue on processes or procedures for requesting, receiving, and integrating assets in a DSCA operation. However, a key finding from this question was that nearly all agreed training frequencies need to improve, which is evident from the responses under the training theme. Interview question 6 provided a medium for participants to determine which factors contributed to their organization's DSCA proficiency or a lack of it, if financial constraints or access to professional training were not the key factors. More importantly, it gave the participants an opportunity to divulge potential root causes for their organization's DSCA proficiency or a lack of it. As expected, answers were wide ranging as Figure 3 shows.

Table 5

*Emergency Managers' Quotes from Interview Question 6*

<b>Emergency Managers' Responses</b>	
	We never need it
	Turn-over of people
	Out-reach between the military and EMs

	The state buffers our interactions
	The state requests those assets
	Relationships
	No idea about DSCA training
	No DOD facilities near us
<b>Military Members' Responses</b>	
	DSCA training
	Relationship with organizations that have a stake DSCA
	Long standing relationship with local and federal agencies
	Current coordination with local and state EMs; our current plans
	DSCA phase II; frequency of DSCA planning
	Command post exercises
	DSCA training

The responses from Table 5 clearly showed disproportionality among the two populations as to what factors they think contribute to their DSCA proficiency or a lack of it. Emergency managers felt they were clearly deficient by their responses, while their military counterparts felt they were proficient when responding to which factors they attribute to their DSCA proficiency.

Interview question nine—does your organization conduct reviews of your internal DSCA policies or the policies of your counterparts to ensure cogent operations in the event of a major catastrophic event—served an essential purpose as well. Irrespective of training and planning taking place among the organizations who participated in the research, I felt it was equally important to determine if these organizations also had

DSCA policies to mitigate the effects of a catastrophic event. Subsequently, if they did, do they review these policies or the policies of their counterparts to ensure cogent operations and succinct coordination if a catastrophic event occurred. Training and planning are certainly essential, but policies dictate the constraints, limitations, and standard operating procedures, from which training and planning promulgate. Once again, responses fell along population lines. All military respondents stated that they did review their internal DSCA policies, but did not review the policies of their emergency management counterparts in the region. Emergency managers who participated did not have internal DSCA policies and did not review the policies of their military members.

Finally, sub-question 3 (Table 6) summed up the feelings of the participants on research question two.

Table 6

*Quotes from Sub-question 3*

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Participant	Quotes from Participants
MM04	Yes...absolutely. Collaborative planning and training involving “The Whole of Government” ensures the exercising of proficiency in Communications, Resource Allocation, and Procedural Compliance (with regard to Policy and Authorities). T10 (DOD) forces bring the “High Demand-Low Density” capability and forces that civilian agencies may require in a disaster; therefore, continuous collaborative planning and training is essential to mission success.

- MM07 I would say so; certainly the more one contributes, it's positive, and the less one contributes, it's negative.
- EM05 I would definitely say planning and training enhance proficiency and if you're not able to plan, when you write and develop plans, and be in a position to operationalize them, then you absolutely lose the ability to be proficient and you lose the effectiveness when you need to utilize the plans. It's a key element or a core element of success to be in a position to work collaboratively in planning and training to ensure proficiency.
- EM07 Yes, when we're doing response operations or recovery operations, we want to try and utilize any resource we can to help and alleviate the problem we are dealing with, and if the best way to do it is through the request to the military for DSCA, that is something we should be doing and that is something we should be training for.

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### **Conclusion**

As a frame of reference, I previously served as a planner in the NCR.

Understandably, my nearly three-year tenure shaped many of my opinions of DSCA proficiency in the region. However, the findings from this study gave me new insight into why my myopic evaluation of DSCA in the region was not reflective of reality. The findings that promulgated from the data clearly provided context for the two overarching research questions. It was truly surprising to see that five of seven military participants

believed their organizational proficiency was affected by the constraints to financial resources. From executing more inclusive exercises with emergency managers focusing on building DSCA proficiency, to purchasing equipment to aid the military in actual DSCA operations, there was clear evidence of financial constraints having an impact on DSCA proficiency.

Subsequently, when evaluating access to professional courses, these findings were consistent with my personal observation, which was that most attendees were in the military or were affiliated with the military. This dynamic was certainly reflected in the research after the data revealed that all military participants had attended the course (100%), while none of the emergency managers had attended the course (0%). In his research on emergency manager's DSCA proficiency in the state of North Carolina, Haynes' research revealed that

None of the 10 managers reported they had formal DSCA education. Seven of the 10 managers (70%) reported they were not well educated on DSCA policies and guidelines. The data supports both literal and theoretical repetition. First, five of 10 (50%) respondents revealed they were confused by policies and guidelines. One respondent when asked whether she knew the purpose of DSCA, the manager reported, "No, not really. It's to assist the civil authorities – like the name says?" (p. 129)

These findings would certainly suggest that emergency managers are disproportionately represented where DSCA education is concerned. As a planner in the NCR, I would oftentimes wonder why emergency managers or their subordinates would not attend numerous planning sessions and symposiums on DSCA planning. The study

conducted by Haynes and my current research would suggest there is certainly a need to build emergency managers' baseline knowledge of DSCA. However, after conducting my research, I found that their lack of participation was not predicated on their unwillingness to learn or be good partners in the region; it was because of extenuating circumstances unbeknownst to the military. Since their state emergency management offices provided guidance, standard operating procedures, financial resources, and state assets to help them mitigate the effects from catastrophic events, there was no need to affiliate with large-scale DSCA planning and training. Once again, Haynes' research also had similar findings. He stated, "Nine of the 10 respondents (90%) reported they generally depended on the state for effective coordination" (2014, p. 132).

As alluded to earlier, during the time this research took place, planning was underway for the 2017 Presidential inauguration. Understanding the scope and scale of the event, I thought it was value added to gauge emergency managers and their Title 10 active duty military partners on its impact toward DSCA operations. When asked research sub-question 1, 10 out of 15 (66%) respondents believed the 2017 presidential inauguration fostered greater emphasis on DSCA planning, while 5 out of 15 respondents (33%) believed the inauguration did not foster greater emphasis on DSCA. Those who thought the inauguration fostered greater emphasis on DSCA operations cited greater cooperation and collaboration among organizations in the region. Contrarily, those who believed the inauguration did not foster greater emphasis on DSCA had a different viewpoint. Their response mainly centered on geography and past history. Since most of their counties were outside of the NCR epicenter, and they had no previous engagements

with the military with regard to DSCA, their assessment was that there was no greater emphasis.

Another key finding consistent among the collective population was the belief of collaborative training inside the NCR and its relationship to DSCA proficiency. This belief was captured by EM07, who stated that “I would definitely say planning and training enhance proficiency and if you’re not able to plan, when you write and develop plans and be in a position to operationalize them, then you absolutely lose the ability to be proficient.” Though training and planning initiatives among the two populations were not as regular or extensive as many would have liked, they all agreed it was essential for preserving DSCA proficiency. Furthermore, as the responses for sub interview question 2 showed, they also believed that each entity should understand the other’s roles and responsibilities in the region. This belief was captured in EM02’s response:

Yes, absolutely. It’s important for us to know what the military can bring to the table and also it’s important for the military to know what kind of civilian assets that we can use to assist them in their mission because at the end of the day, all are working on the same problem.

The data provided for this study gave tremendous insight into DSCA operations inside the NCR. While each member of the research population was certainly committed to protecting local populace should a catastrophic event occur, their candid responses have provided a foundation for collective dialogue on improving planning, cooperation, training, and forging relationships to build a stronger DSCA apparatus in the region. Understandably, each member of the population will certainly protect their internal equities. States will not absolve themselves of their responsibility for providing guidance

to their county emergency managers on executing DSCA operations with internal state assets before requesting federal assistance. Furthermore, federal military forces in the region will not violate DOD directives by executing an actual DSCA operation until assistance is requested by the appropriate civil authority. However, by building stronger relationships and understanding what each member of the collective population can contribute to the total DSCA effort allows each member to capitalize on the other strengths and remove barriers that could ultimately hinder a major operation.

Though it will be discussed in chapter 5, these common beliefs serve as pillars for the Advocacy Coalition Framework, which is predicated on members of the coalition having common core beliefs that forms the connective tissue between the two entities.

### **Transition**

Chapter 5 will provide the interpretation from the research findings. The interpretation of findings will be delivered in a manner that examines the research conducted to measure DSCA proficiency in the NCR. Next, the chapter will also expound on limitations for the study, recommendations based off the findings from the research, and implications for positive social change. Finally, the chapter will conclude with my reflection over the past three years on this truly rewarding journey.

## Chapter 5

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to measure the proficiency of DSCA inside the NCR among emergency managers and their military mission partners. Currently, there is no mechanism in place to measure DSCA proficiency within the region, and if there is no mechanism in place, there has to be a collective effort among emergency managers and military members to address this oversight? Chapters 1 and 3 divulged that other studies have been developed to measure DSCA proficiency. These studies revealed that emergency managers did not have an optimal level of DSCA proficiency, but the reason for their lack of DSCA knowledge was left unanswered. Milliman, Grosskopf, and Paezs (2006) conducted a quantitative research across five states in the northeast, which revealed that 72 emergency responders did not have the optimal level of proficiency in DSCA operations. Haynes's (2014) study among emergency managers in the state of North Carolina and Porter's study among emergency managers in the state of Louisiana also revealed a nascent knowledge of DSCA operations. The trends from these studies suggest that there is an issue with DSCA proficiency. Therefore, the focus of this study was to determine if the same trend exists within the NCR not only among emergency managers but also their military mission partners who were not solicited for the previous studies.

This study was conducted to determine the proficiency levels of emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR. Based on the recommendation of a previous study, it was my intent to conduct a qualitative case study

to determine if the same findings from previous studies existed among three populations within the NCR. Additionally, having served in this region as a military planner, I felt there was a true obligation on my part to inform the leaders and organizational members with unbiased research to determine DSCA proficiency. The populations were emergency managers, a Title 10 active duty military organization, and a Title 32 National Guard Organization. Unfortunately, the Title 32 organization was omitted from the study due to their obligations beyond the scope of this research.

Over a 6-week period, I interviewed 15 participants to determine the proficiency of their organizations. These interviews were guided by two fundamental research questions:

1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?
2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the National Capital Region impact collective DSCA proficiency?

I used nine interview questions related to the research questions to glean data from the participants, which facilitated answering the research questions and provided insight into the contributing factors that lead to optimal or less than optimal proficiency. In an effort to add greater depth to the research, three sub-questions were added that focused on participants' views on DSCA planning during the 2017 presidential

inauguration, and their feelings towards cooperation among the populations who are charged with executing DSCA operations within the region.

After the interviews were completed, I reviewed the data and executed the coding process using Nvivo 11 as a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDS) to determine themes from the collected data. After this process, six themes emerged (education, state authority, relationships, exercises, funding, and policy review), which showed a significant disproportionality among in DSCA proficiency among emergency managers and their military counterparts. Furthermore, these themes also provided insight into the contributing factors that either led to an optimal proficiency or a less than optimal proficiency among the two populations.

The findings from my research were consistent with the findings from other studies conducted on DSCA proficiency. Emergency managers who participated in the research had a very nascent knowledge of DSCA operations. Many had no knowledge of DSCA, while some revealed that since their state emergency management officials conducted coordination with the state National Guard on their behalf, there seemed to be no need for them to understand the process. Comparatively, the military members who participated in the research clearly had an optimal level of DSCA proficiency. The DSCA training courses were mandatory for all the members within the Title 10 organization, and to reinforce planning and executing of DSCA operations, they held training events coupled with academics to ensure that their members remained proficient. However, the military members also revealed that financial constraints had an impact on their DSCA

proficiency, in part due to the limited number of exercises they can participate in and equipment they can purchase to aid in actual DSCA operations.

### **Interpretations of the Findings**

#### **RQ1. Are factors such as constrained financial resources and limited access to professional training courses contributing to a less than optimal DSCA proficiency?**

This research question provided the first glimpse into the disproportionality of DSCA knowledge within the NCR among emergency managers and their military mission partners. Five of seven military members stated that financial constraints were a factor in their organization's DSCA proficiency, while none of the eight emergency managers who participated identified financial constraints as a contributing factor to their organizational proficiency. Additionally, all of the military members agreed that access to professional training was not a contributing factor to their DSCA proficiency.

Conversely, nearly all the emergency managers expressed concern that their lack of knowledge was predicated on the simple fact that they had either no knowledge or nascent knowledge of DSCA. This point was expounded upon by EM02, who stated, "I didn't know there was a course called DSCA." EM03 stated, "We need to have a better understanding of DSCA."

As the literature in Chapter 2 suggested, this salient point is not diametrically opposed to findings in other research studies and peer-reviewed articles. The most ardent representation of this point was made by Milliman, Grosskopf, and Paez, (2006) in their research recommendation from their research in which they interviewed over 50 emergency managers. They stated:

It is important to conduct follow-up studies on these initial DSCA education efforts to ensure that their effectiveness in promoting EM knowledge and ability to work in DSCA “sticks” not just with EM officials, but also at an institutional level. This is particularly important given the concerns about EM turnover expressed by some participants in our study. Such research also needs to recognize that each state has its own unique culture and context in terms of the likely events that would trigger DSCA.

Thus, future studies need to evaluate whether any federal based education programs on DSCA will interface effectively within these different contexts. Finally, our research on EMs in DSCA education, suggests that it may be important to determine the views of personnel in other government agencies (e.g. state EMs, other civilian authorities at the local or state level, FEMA, etc.) on DSCA education. Expanding the scope of the DSCA education research in this way would help to ensure that future catastrophic events involving DSCA will trigger more effective and coordinated responses from each agency involved. (p. 11)

The financial constraints on the military organization that participated in the research and access to professional training courses, which were shown to have an impact on the education theme, ultimately have tertiary impact on the advocacy community. Stirct (2015) outlined this concept in his article titled “The Advocacy Coalition Framework and Nascent Subsystems: Trade Union Disclosure Policy in Canada”. It essentially stated that if members of the coalition do not share an appreciation for their coalition members’ shortcomings or deficiencies, the end result could have a major

impact on the advocacy community as a whole. For example, the data showed that a lack of DSCA education had a negative impact on DSCA proficiency as outlined in the education theme. This belief was repeated by the emergency managers and military members. Perhaps the best example was EM08's response. He stated, "I think we need to start with education. Most emergency managers don't understand what is available and how to implement it; education first and then look for other ways to incorporate DSCA." The collective populations' beliefs on education are precursors to establish grounds for addressing a potential issue through a policy introduction designed to mitigate the issue, which will ultimately strengthen the collective advocacy community. Regarding this point, Stritch (2015) stated:

Unless advocacy coalitions are ubiquitous, there will also be situations where some organizations and individuals are advocates on an issue, and share common policy core beliefs, but do not coordinate their advocacy. Where advocates share policy core beliefs—regardless of whether or not they coordinate their activities—then we have what I have termed an advocacy community. (p. 442)

**RQ2. Do initiatives such as collaborative planning and training among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR affect collective DSCA proficiency?**

This research question was unanimously agreed upon by all the participants that executed collaborative planning and training can have a positive impact on DSCA proficiency and if negated, it could have a negative impact on DSCA proficiency. As alluded to earlier, it was important to develop interview questions and additional sub-questions to grasp the scope of planning and training among the two populations.

However, from the results of the primary research questions and sub-questions, it was found that all the participants agreed that collaborative planning and training definitely has an impact on DSCA proficiency. Unfortunately, there were few occasions in which planning and training were being executed on an optimal frequency among the two populations. Perhaps the most telling responses out of the 15 were made by EM02 and MM05. When asked if EM02 believed that collaborative planning and training have an impact on collective DSCA proficiency in the region, he generalized without directly assessing the impact in the region. He stated, “Yes, training definitely improves preparedness mitigation operations and recovery and a lack of it does the opposite.” MM05 went further in his response by explaining the extent of his organizations’ planning and training with their emergency management counterparts. He stated the following:

We do minimal in the regard of planning and training; it’s mostly within some of our specialized units inside this headquarters. Our subordinate units do conduct training with some of the local units, but as a whole, this organization does not do regular training with the local authorities. We have a relationship with them but from an actual training aspect, no.

From the literature, the Federal Emergency Management Agency manual titled “Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans” (2010) truly encapsulates the benefits of planning by communities such as the NCR. The manual stated the following:

Effective planning ensures that the whole community is represented and involved in the planning process. The most realistic and complete plans are prepared by a

diverse planning team, including representatives from the jurisdiction's departments and agencies, civic leaders, businesses, and organizations (e.g., civic, social, faith-based, humanitarian, educational, advocacy, professional) who are able to contribute critical perspectives and/or have a role in executing the plan. (p. I-2)

Additionally, literature such as Sinclair, Doyle, Johnston, and Paton's (2012) article titled "Assessing Emergency Management Training and Exercises. Disaster Prevention and Management" truly codify why emergency managers and their military mission partners in the NCR must bridge the gap between both planning and training for a positive impact on DSCA proficiency. They stated:

For organizations to maximize these benefits, they need to develop more sophisticated and evidence-based approaches to training needs' analysis, design, and evaluation. This needs to become multi-level, encompassing person, team, organizational, and multi-organization levels. Given the complexity of disaster response environments and the competencies and systems required, local government training should be based on correspondingly comprehensive techniques such as assessment centers to provide holistic training and evaluation. (p. 517)

The authors' recommendations clearly articulate the benefits of collaborative planning and training, and the participants' responses clearly show their desire to energize efforts to maximize training opportunities. In order to establish a general framework for all the entities in the region, I believe the research I have conducted can unequivocally serve as the center of gravity for dialogue on achieving this goal.

The current operational environment in the NCR presents a clear dynamic where the advocacy community has agreed on a common belief with regard to the impact of DSCA planning and training initiatives. Though they may have diametric positions on how to fix the problem, the collective advocacy community does have interdependency. Fenger and Klok (2001) illustrated this point in their article titled “Interdependency, beliefs, and coalition behavior: A contribution to the advocacy coalition framework”. They stated, “When we take the interdependencies between actors into account, even when beliefs are indifferent, symbiotic interdependency may result in coordination (Fenger and Klok, 2001, p. 163).

### **Limitations**

The primary limitation of this study was using the Joint Forces Headquarters as the only military headquarters solicited for the research. Being the primary military organization responsible for all installations in the region and location for the primary planners for DSCA operations, I decided to limit my research population to that headquarters only. Next, due to ongoing planning and preparation for the 2017 presidential inauguration, it was difficult to designate interview times and follow-ups to interview questions. Subsequently, due to inauguration planning and an operational deployment by the designated Title 32 organization (National Guard), I was not able to interview the collective research population as outlined in chapters one and three. To bolster trustworthiness among the collective population in the region, a different Title 32 organization was solicited for the study. Unfortunately, due to prior obligations that were made before my solicitation, they were unable to provide any participants to inform the

research. However, for the Title 10 organization and emergency managers who did participate in the research, I was able to gather rich and thick data that facilitated answering the two over-arching research questions for the study. Finally, for the two populations that did participate in the research, saturation was achieved, which further bolstered trustworthiness of the research.

### **Recommendations**

The scope of my research centered on measuring DSCA proficiency among emergency managers and their military mission partners within the NCR. This research permeated from a recommendation from Haynes to include military organization in a study to determine their understanding of DSCA. Though the effort was made to include Title 10 (active duty military) and Title 32 (National Guard) in this study, circumstances beyond my control did not permit so.

Therefore, for my first recommendation, I believe it's imperative that a future study includes all populations. Though my research did bridge the gap on one of Haynes recommendations, which was including military members, I believe in order to ensure due diligence for the DSCA community in its entirety, Title 32 forces must be incorporated. As some emergency managers alluded to in this study, their state of origin normally interfaces with the military, which in their case was the state National Guard. Therefore, it is only fitting to include Title 32 forces to gain their perspective on DSCA operations within their state, especially with emergency managers. I unequivocally believe that this linkage can provide even greater depth into DSCA proficiency among the collective populations. Additionally, by including all the three organizations, a

comparative analysis can be carried out to determine the proficiency levels among the three separate organizations and the common denominators contributing to their optimal or sub-optimal proficiency. As the literature in chapter two showed, studies and literature on DSCA operations are still nascent. As the environment we live in becomes more complex with unique problem sets, it's important for those who are conducting DSCA operations to gain a full understanding of their internal deficiencies. If we do not embark on this journey, we cannot comprehensively formulate plans to meet future challenges.

Next, in order to continue the evolution of DSCA, I recommend the states that were represented by their counties and jurisdictions emergency managers in this study make a significant contribution in DSCA education. This study clearly showed a disproportionality of DSCA knowledge in the NCR just as Haynes' research showed a severe lack of understanding of DCSA by emergency managers in the state of North Carolina as well. It's indisputable that each state has the right to establish policies and directives outlining how DSCA operations will be conducted and what are the authorized relationships between emergency managers and their military counterparts.

However, states need to understand that federal forces are more responsive than National Guard forces, which require a call up for mobilization. As Hurricane Katrina showed, time is the most precious resource in executing a DSCA operation. If timely decisions are to be made, states may have to authorize affected counties to execute independent operations until the state response apparatus is at full operational capacity. However, if the affected county or jurisdiction emergency manager does not have the institutional knowledge to execute a large-scale response with his or her military mission

partner, this oversight could ultimately create a conundrum that could cost lives. The DSCA training course is free, and by serving in the capacity of county emergency managers in the NCR, this population certainly meets the prerequisites for attending the course. However, if Offices of Emergency Managers at the state levels do not authorize this action, they will continue to contribute to the educational delinquency of the very people who are desperately in need of institutional knowledge.

Finally, once further research is conducted on DSCA proficiency and the findings are instituted into organizations who have a responsibility in DSCA operations, there needs to be a feedback mechanism to continuously monitor proficiency levels of key stakeholders. This research was based on this principle, and as the findings showed, there are issues and concerns that must be addressed. The two themes of training and exercises revealed that there is a huge disconnect among the two populations in the NCR. The participants in this research alluded to financial constraints, which limit exercises, and collaborative training, which can serve as a great feedback mechanism with the appropriate metrics for evaluation. However, if leaders do not have the foresight to properly fund and decipher the results from these mechanisms, positive progress in DSCA operations will be non-existent. Unfortunately, this unadvisable course of action has the potential to create a quagmire that may prove difficult to recover from when emergency managers and their military mission partners are asked to put their untested skillsets into practical application.

I plan to release my finding to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in order to show the collective body of decision makers in the region that

my research has provided the grounds for a comprehensive conversation on DSCA proficiency and the challenges that the region is facing. The results of the findings may be well received or viewed with skepticism by the intended audience. However, despite what position is taken, this research can now serve as the impetus from which the conversation on DSCA proficiency can begin.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Before discussing the implications of social change for this study, I believe it is essential to understand what social change is in order to frame the discussion. According to Leict (2013), social change is the significant alteration of social structure and cultural patterns through time. Our very own Walden University Social Change web page states that

Walden University has provided a diverse community of career professionals with the opportunity to transform themselves as scholar-practitioners so that they can apply what they've learned to effect positive social change. Walden is focused on inspiring and celebrating the remarkable achievements of our community members who continue to make a difference by addressing challenges where they live, in their professions, and in the world around them. (Walden University, n.d.)

With these definitions and views in mind, I believe the research I conducted can certainly make a contribution to social change in the NCR. First, this research originated on a recommendation from a previous study in which the researcher saw what he believed was an issue with DSCA proficiency in his state. My research originated from the same position in the region in which I reside, and off the recommendation of the

previous researcher who recommended ways in which to expand on his research to make an even greater contribution for advocating change in DSCA proficiency. In essence, these actions established a chain of custody to build on an issue and inform individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies why there's a need for change and how that change can positively impact the society in general.

Arguably, social change starts with the individual first. From the individuals who participated in this research, they have overwhelmingly showed that there's a need for change in DSCA proficiency. As alluded to earlier, over a ten-year span, there have been numerous studies on DSCA, and the common denominator is educating our emergency managers. This fact is not anecdotal, but rooted in hard data that leaders can use to determine courses of actions to educate individuals who are entrusted with tremendous responsibilities. From this research and the collective body of research in general, leaders at every level can prioritize their organizational resources and priorities to ensure that individuals have every tool at their disposal to improve individual proficiency. Once the individual has obtained an optimal level of proficiency, the organization to which he or she belongs to now becomes the agent for change.

By fostering a learning and growing organization, leaders can look for innovative ways to routinely measure their internal organizational DSCA proficiency and collaborate with other organizations to ensure that the collective group has a common understanding of their partners' operational responsibilities, deficiencies, and capabilities, which creates an operational framework to formulate plans and policies.

Simultaneously, institutions can also invoke change. By reviewing the results and recommendations from the available research on DSCA proficiency, institutions such as the Army DSCA training team can tailor academic curriculums to ensure their teachings are based on recent research. Research collected in an unbiased manner from populations who have a vested interest in altering or making wholesale changes as to how their discipline is trained and evaluated should be considered as treasure trove for building institutional knowledge. This point was captured by Dunlop, Logue, and Isakov (2014) in their article titled “The Engagement of Academic Institutions in Community Disaster Response: A Comparative Analysis”. They stated that

Academic institutions of higher education possess a tremendous range of resources relevant to a community’s overall disaster resilience. Their multidisciplinary construct inherently fosters interdisciplinary thought and collaboration, valuable when considering novel solutions for challenging problems. (p. 88)

As this change manifests in individuals, organizations, and institutions from this research, cultures, communities, and societies in general can also take part in social change. The NCR is a conglomerate of culture, communities, and societies. Though they may have different belief systems, this research coupled with previous studies provides them with the necessary knowledge to demand a higher level of DSCA proficiency from those entrusted to execute tasks synonymously with DSCA operations. Vigoda (2015) expounded on this point in his article titled “Are you being served? The responsiveness of public administration to citizens’ demands: An empirical examination in Israel”.

According to him, “Citizen’s control over the operations of public agencies is a core necessity in every democracy. It cannot be attained when there is insufficient knowledge on the fit between what citizens desire and what governments offer” (Vigoda, 2000, p. 165). Optimally, when this paradigm is internalized, cultures, communities, and societies within the NCR will fully embrace positive social change and serve on equal footing with their fellow emergency managers and military members. Subsequently, this evolution in regional social change can foster a sense of belonging. Holmes (2011) encapsulated this view when he stated it

- improves the quality of policy being developed, making it more practical and relevant, and helping to ensure that services are delivered in a more effective and efficient way;
- is a way for government to check the health of its relationship with citizens directly—to check its reputation and status;
- reveals ways in which government, citizens, and organizations could work more closely on issues of concern to the community;
- gives early notice of emerging issues, putting government in a better position to deal with them in a proactive way, instead of reacting as anger and conflicts arise;
- provides opportunities for a diversity of voices to be heard on issues that matter to people;
- fosters a sense of mutuality, belonging, and a sense of empowerment, all of which strengthen resilience.

### **Theoretical Implications to Positive Social Change**

When evaluating the ACF and its empirical implication to social change for this study, it should be mentioned that the theory itself originated from a challenge by Paul Sabatier to develop new theories to better understand the processes of policy formation – a precursor for change. According to Cairney (2014), “It has been subject to an unusually high number of revisions in the light of experience and a desire to extend its insights” (p. 485). These two examples are synonymous with social change and the research conducted for measuring DSCA proficiency and certainly promote positive social change in the NCR.

In its most rudimentary form, ACF focuses on census building among members in the coalition by understanding their beliefs, values, assumptions, and perceptions of problems that have the potential to have an impact on the collective advocacy community through policies (Cairney, 2014). According to the research findings of this study, members of the NCR coalition have both diverging and shared beliefs on DSCA proficiency. Additionally, they each have different contributing factors that may have led to an optimal or less than optimal DSCA proficiency, which can certainly be considered as their internal organization’s perception of the problem or in some cases, mere assumptions. Yet, they all encompass a set of values that transcend organizational boundaries and focus primarily on providing an essential service to local populace and fellow constituents. From my observation it seemed this value was a prerequisite to conduct such a potentially dangerous mission. The Barrett Values Center captured the importance of values when they stated:

Every individual and every organization is involved in making hundreds of decisions every day. The decisions we make are a reflection of our values and beliefs, and they are always directed towards a specific purpose. That purpose is the satisfaction of our individual or collective (organizational) needs. (Barrett Values Center, n.d.)

However, by using the findings from this research, coupled with the ACF methodology, ambivalence and predispositions can be ostracized and true consensus building can now begin to address the central issue of fixing DSCA proficiency within the region. More importantly, this process can be executed while simultaneously using beliefs, values, assumptions, and perceptions of problems as the guiding axioms for the actual consensus building, which permeates into positive social change. Wooden (2014) amplified this salient point in his dissertation titled “Mission Assurance as an Operating Process for the Department of Defense Through the Advocacy Coalition Framework”. According to Wooden, once consensus building is instituted using the ACF

Resources can be appropriately identified and allocated, and leadership will become refocused in order to prioritize functions and resources with an intra-organizational orientation. This in turn will serve to enhance the all-hazards planning and response capabilities of the enterprise. At the same time, all of these tasks must take into account the current political environment as well as the unique mission requirements of the agencies in order to balance the construct development in order to ensure the construct is not overly general or too constricting (p. 100).

Finally, the desired outputs from consensus building are shared visions and goals codified in policies that provide succinct guidance and a linear strategy to achieve optimal DSCA proficiency. This process is not esoteric, but there are complexities in the desired formation of policies that must be considered. One being organizational equity preservation, which will inherently play a major role in policy formation that has the potential to translate into positive social change. Brokering these equities to reach common ground is synonymous with the ACF and the utility of the framework is certainly suited for the challenge. This point was validated by Christopher Weible and Paul Sabatier, original architects of the ACF, and Kelly McQueen (2009). According to them,

This complexity requires a conceptual simplification to guide research agendas, to enable communication among scholars and practitioners, and to develop effective decision making strategies. One policy process framework that has been developed to simplify the complexity of public policy is the advocacy coalition framework. (p. 121)

### **Positive Social Change**

This research is the third study on DSCA proficiency. As alluded to earlier, the patterns from those studies are consistent with the findings from my research. With these new findings, conditions certainly exist for a conversation on why there is disproportion among those who will execute DSCA operations in their counties, state, and region? With regard to positive social change and my recommendation, the data now exist for leaders at every level to internally evaluate their current systems, plans, policies, and standard

operating procedures to determine the proficiency of their organizations. Coupled with this organizational triage should be a comprehensive plan that systematically lays out a plan to prioritize what must be fixed with consideration to available resources.

This evaluation should certainly be considered non-attributional because as the research findings revealed, many organizational leaders have been relieved of their responsibility to conduct traditional DSCA operations; therefore, they cannot be judged on a task they have no metric for evaluation. Simply stated, how can they be evaluated on a criterion that has never existed at their level? However, a potential linkage does exist between emergency managers and their military mission partners within the same boundaries.

By working cross boundaries to determine where gaps exist in planning, resourcing, and executing DSCA operations, newly formed cooperation serves as an impetus for positive social change by leveraging institutional knowledge and combined organizational resources to develop plans that will benefit local populace in the event of a catastrophic event. Subsequently, by continuously nurturing this cooperation with routine dialogue, planning, training, and evaluations, there's a standing mechanism in place to meet the challenges and mitigate asymmetrical threats that are becoming prevalent in our ever-changing society.

### **Reflections of the Researcher**

Without equivocation, I believe that the manner in which this research was conducted personifies cogent qualitative research. All participants were treated with dignity and respect, and to the best of my knowledge from the data they provided, which

was substantiated in many cases by their counterparts, were accurately captured in the findings without researcher bias. Simply stated, it was the findings from their data that guided the research juxtaposed to any researcher bias.

My research has taken me on a journey that has been truly enlightening. In every sense of the word, I still consider myself a novice researcher, but I'm a novice researcher who now understands the importance of research. As a researcher, even a novice, there are responsibilities engrained at the beginning of the research process that guide you through the research process. Responsibilities such as ensuring anonymity of those who participate in your research and letting the data lead you to a conclusion rather than letting researcher bias infringe on the integrity of the study. However, the most important lesson that I learned was to respect the process itself. Researchers far and wide have endeavored on this journey to provide groundbreaking findings that now have a tremendous impact on our society. Therefore, in keeping with this lineage, I believe it's imperative to respect the process and protect the time-honored tradition of conducting research that has the potential to better lives and help leaders make informed decisions that promote positive social change.

Before starting this endeavor, I genuinely viewed my research through a myopic lens. Having served as a planner inside the Military District of Washington, I unequivocally believed that I could predict the outcome of my research because of my experiences. However, as I started this study, I began to realize that my perceptions of certain organizations were clearly misconceptions that were not factually based. This was a valuable teaching point in how perceptions can influence research if left unchecked.

As the research progressed, I immediately understood the impact my work could have once I began interviewing my 15 participants. Many participants did not have a clear understanding of the DSCA process, but as the interviews continued, and when they began to ask questions which furthered the dialogue, I felt I was making a genuine contribution to improving DSCA proficiency.

To me that is the true essence of research: first we find a topic that we are truly passionate about based on what we perceive to be legitimate issues; next, we gather the necessary data from participants who help to inform the research. We then conduct analysis, and from that analysis, we render an end result that either confirms or denies our hypothesis. Subsequently, the true joy is to share the work with colleagues and those most affected by your study. However, before rendering the results, it's the responsibility of the researcher to ensure he/she has followed protocols and procedures that lead to succinct findings that can withstand scrutiny. As a novice researcher, I've learned this lesson, and hope to pass it on to others who are about start or are currently navigating this journey.

### **Conclusion**

Before retiring from the military, my last duty location was a mere three miles from the Pentagon. The same Pentagon that was viciously attacked on 9/11. On that terrible day, emergency managers and members of our military displayed exceptional courage, selfless service, and sacrifice that is synonymous with the positions they hold and the responsibilities they shoulder. Out of that catastrophic event, numerous lessons

that have been learned pontificated on to ensure if such an event occurs again, our men and women will have the knowledge and the capability to mitigate the threat.

However, this research, which is a further contribution, has discovered that there are proficiency issues among those who will execute DSCA operations in the region. As we learned on that terrible day, a single organization cannot act alone in providing a comprehensive response and recovery operation designed to restore essential services while simultaneously protecting local populace. Therefore, there cannot be an unbalanced equilibrium of DSCA proficiency among the collective group where one organization is proficient while another is severely lacking. Though we may not be able to stop those who wish to inflict harm through nefarious activity, we can ensure there's a synchronized response that is swift, coordinated, and seamless.

Furthermore, negative contributors such as government bureaucracy, safe guarding organizational equities, and mere stubbornness to conform have no place in this endeavor. This research showed there are significant gaps and deficiencies that must be addressed. Leaders can potentially balk at one set of research findings, but to balk at three sets of findings and one exploratory study over a ten-year period by four separate set of researchers with nearly identical results is simply incredulous.

Be it man made or natural, we must be prepared to deal with catastrophic events that have the potential to easily overwhelm us as hurricane Katrina and the 9/11 attacks showed. To this point, I believe there are three fundamental questions that leaders and subordinates who will execute DSCA operations within the NCR must ask themselves. Are we collectively doing all we can to ensure our efforts are sufficient to mitigate the

effects from a large-scale catastrophic event? Next, do we understand the scope of our individual responsibilities during a catastrophic event and the capabilities at our disposal to facilitate an operation that reduces loss of life by executing a succinct response and recovery operation? If these questions cannot be answered collectively, the absence of constructive responses solidifies the underlining point that tremendous work will be required for DSCA proficiency in the NCR.

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## Appendix A: Walden IRB Approval

This email is to notify you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your application for the study entitled, "Measuring Defense Support to Civil Authorities proficiency within the National Capital Region," conditional upon the approval of the research partner, as documented in the Army Human Research Protections Office's notification of approval, which will need to be submitted to the Walden IRB when obtained. The researcher may not commence the study until the Walden IRB confirms receipt of that AHRPO approval notification.

Your approval # is 09-27-16-0482079. You will need to reference this number in your dissertation and in any future funding or publication submissions. Also attached to this e-mail is the IRB approved consent form. Please note, if this is already in an on-line format, you will need to update that consent document to include the IRB approval number and expiration date.

Additionally, I have attached a copy of this approval letter on letterhead per prior correspondence.

Your IRB approval expires on September 26, 2017. One month before this expiration date, you will be sent a Continuing Review Form, which must be submitted if you wish to collect data beyond the approval expiration date.

Please note that this letter indicates that the IRB has approved your research. You may NOT begin the research phase of your doctoral study, however, until you have received official notification from the IRB to do so. Once you have received this notification by email, you may begin your data collection. Your IRB approval is contingent upon your adherence to the exact procedures described in the final version of the IRB application materials that have been submitted as of this date. This includes maintaining your current status with the university. Your IRB approval is only valid while you are an actively enrolled student at Walden University. If you need to take a leave of absence or are otherwise unable to remain actively enrolled, your IRB approval is suspended. Absolutely NO participant recruitment or data collection may occur while a student is not actively enrolled.

## **Appendix B: Interview Questions**

1. Approximately how long have you been in your present job position? (Adopted from Haynes, 2014)
2. Do personnel in your organization have a general understanding of the DSCA?
3. Is DSCA training incorporated into your organization's training plan on a recurring basis?
4. Does your organization conduct combined DSCA training with your emergency management or military mission partners in the NCR? If so, what is the frequency?
5. Does your organization certify personnel in DSCA operations through the DSCA training course?
6. What factors do you attribute to your organizational DSCA proficiency or the lack of it?
7. What recommendations would you make to sustain or improve your organizational DSCA proficiency?
8. Do organizational financial constraints have an impact on overall DSCA proficiency within your organization?
9. Does your organization conduct reviews of your internal DSCA policies or the policies of your counterparts to ensure cogent operations in the event of a major catastrophic event?

### **Sub-questions:**

1. Has the planning for the 2017 presidential inauguration fostered greater emphasis on DSCA planning?
2. Do you believe it is value added for an organization executing DSCA operations within a shared region collaborate in planning to ensure a common understanding of roles and responsibilities?
3. Do you believe collective planning and training or lack of it affects collective DSCA proficiency in the NCR?

### **Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation**

Community Research Partner Name: Joint Forces Headquarters National Capital Region  
Contact Information:

Dear Kelvin Brown

The purpose of this memo is to confirm that the Joint Forces Headquarters National Capital Region is in full support of your research within our organization. As a prerequisite for the command supporting your research proposal, a legal review was conducted and the brief you provided outlined the research parameters which involved interviewing 5-10 members of our organization.

We understand there will be no coercion of members of our organization to participate in this research and their participation will be strictly voluntary. Furthermore, participants will retain the right to withdraw from the study at anytime and protocols will be established to ensure confidentiality of the participants at all times.

In support of your proposed research, I confirm that I am authorized to approve this organization's participation in the research and there are no conflicts with our internal policies.

Finally, I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

## **Appendix D: Request for Change in Procedures Form**

Please email this change request form to [irb@waldenu.edu](mailto:irb@waldenu.edu).

1. To the IRB, I am requesting to expand the age of emergency managers who are participating in my research. The current is range is from 45 to 65. I would like to request the age is extended from 35 to 65. Additionally, this request does not impact my consent form, recruitment letter, or questionnaire.

2. With this form I have also included a revised consent form with Please send [irb@waldenu.edu](mailto:irb@waldenu.edu) a copy of all documents revised or added as a result of the proposed change (i.e. consent/assent forms, recruitment letters or ads, revised protocols, questionnaires, etc.) with changes clearly highlighted. If the change involves a request for additional subjects, indicate the number of additional subjects for which approval is requested.

3. If your request involves a change in research staff, please provide contact information for all new personnel, as well as any relevant degrees and qualifications.

Your request to change study procedures/staff will be reviewed by the same method in which the study was first reviewed, either by the full-committee or through the expedited review process, unless the change is minor and can be managed through expedited review. The IRB staff will route changes for review through the most rapid means possible and will provide an update as to the status of this request when confirming receipt of the form.