

Changing the Paradigm of Crisis Management: How to Put OD in the Process

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ABSTRACT

The present article presents a synthesis of the guiding principles in four areas of crisis management, planning, coordination, leadership and civil behaviour, and outlines interventions in organizational development that may contribute to the achievement of these principles. This OD incursion stems from the observation that despite advances in the knowledge of crisis management, organizations apply them to a greater or less degree, so that dysfunctional behaviour continues to operate against an efficient resolution of crises. This observation is confirmed by a qualitative meta-analysis based on five major disasters that strike many countries around the world in the last 10 years. Various interventions proposed by OD in terms of human processes, structural design and human resource management, as well as strategy, could possibly be coupled with crisis management guiding principles to increase individuals' and organizations' resilient capacities in times of crises. The conclusion lays out the necessary conditions for cross-fertilization of the two fields.

INTRODUCTION

This article is interested in the potential contribution of OD to crisis management. This incursion from OD stems from the observation that despite advances in knowledge about crisis management, organizations integrate them more or less effectively, to the extent that behaviours that could have been avoided continue to impede the efficient resolution of crises. Given these findings, a number of researchers are seeking models or frames of reference allowing organizational members, and more specifically managers, to integrate acquired knowledge and lessons already learned in the area of crisis management; this is to increase systems' resilient capacities, to avoid the most common errors in conduct and minimize negative impacts for organizations and civil society. This idea of transferring knowledge with a view to enhancing organizational abilities and capacities is consistent with the notion of resilience proposed by Quarantelli (2001) and Rosenthal and Kouzmin (1996). OD could thus provide what Bourrier (2001) calls the *missing link*, that is prolong the concern with crisis management and organizational resilience in a sustainable manner while stressing what happens *outside* of the crisis period. We think that the field of crisis management offers a

particularly interesting opportunity for researchers and practitioners of OD to put into practice this new strategic orientation based on crisis management practices. In short, we expect OD to bring a changing paradigm in crisis management by breaking out the dysfunctional patterns too often adopted in the process of managing crises.

A DIAGNOSIS BASED ON FIVE CRISES

- *Choice of cases*

In the last decade, many countries have experienced major disasters that have captured the collective imagination due to their very serious consequences in terms of death and material damage. These events mobilized public services, as well as the highest governmental authorities. They gave rise to a number of investigative reports by experts in the field or national commissions. These reports constitute invaluable sources of information for researchers (Quarantelli, 2005). Thus, the present research was designed employing a qualitative approach consisting of content analysis of reports on five national disasters, Hurricane Katrina in the United States (2005), the tsunami in Southeast Asia (2004), the heat wave in France (2003), SARS (2003), and the ice storm in Canada (1998). Each of these crises was considered as a *case*. These five cases were chosen based on their great visibility, the fact that they were studied in depth by committees of experts or commissions of inquiry, their extensive coverage in the media and the considerable upheaval they caused for the populations of these countries as a whole.

- *Classification of the material*

This was a two-stage process. First, we did a review of the crisis management literature to identify a certain number of guiding principles in crisis management practices, principles considered by researchers as standards to respect in effective crisis management. These principles or “standards” were grouped into four categories—planning/preparation, coordination, leadership and behaviour of civil society. Secondly, we selected a number of quotes from public reports of experts and classified them¹ into each of these four categories.

¹ The principle of multicoding was used in classification, i.e. there were always at least two coders to analyse the material for each of the five crises. Discussions were held to establish a common understanding of themes and their classification.

For each category, we created an unranked meta-matrix as defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) to obtain an overall view of the material.

Research questions

The research questions we have addressed are as follows:

1. Does crisis management in the five cases chosen respect the guiding principles outlined in the literature in terms of planning and preparation; coordination; leadership; and the behaviour of civil society?
2. What are the most common failings?
3. What type of contribution can OD make to increase crisis management efficiency?

We will present the answers to the first two questions. The third question will be dealt with in detail in the second part of this text.

- Overview of the results

Table 1 summarizes the principal results² of our research. Let us examine these results for each of the dimensions of crisis management: planning/preparation, crisis coordination, crisis leadership and the behaviour of civil society.

a) planning/preparation

We note that the public authorities of three of the five regions studied had crisis management plans. The government of Ontario had no plan to fight a pandemic before SARS. This situation significantly worked against preventative intervention and coordination of various actors in the health system since, in the very midst of the crisis, they had to create a plan, starting from zero. However, the need for planning in the area was well-known and brought to their attention on a number of occasions previously, including by Judge Krever in the course of the contaminated blood scandal inquiry.³ In the Indian Ocean region, a number of experts (Kelman, 2006; Oloruntoba, 2005; Schaar, 2005) took stock of serious deficiencies in national planning, in basic support infrastructure and risk evaluation. Thus, since the 1980s, studies have demonstrated the importance of being better prepared to deal with a tsunami but the Indian government, in particular, considered that this threat was not the most dangerous or significant for the country.

² A more detailed version of our research results is in the process of being finalized.

³ La *Commission sur le SRAS [the SARS Commission]*, 2006, Volume 4, pages 35 to 40.

Table 1
Diagnosis of crisis management practices on planning / preparedness, coordination, leadership and civic behaviour

Guiding principles	Katrina (USA)	Heatwave (France)	Tsunami (South-East countries)	SARS (Ontario, Canada)	Icestorm (Québec, Canada)
Planning / preparedness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal planning⁴ - Capacity assessment - Risk assessment 	Yes ⁵ Weak	Yes ⁶ Weak	No Weak	No Weak	Yes Weak
Coordination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercise of authority - Communication - Cooperative structures 	Conflicting and centralized Difficult Not effective	Centralized Difficult Not effective	Confusing Difficult Variable	Centralized Difficult No	Confusing Good ⁷ Variable
Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Before the crisis - During the crisis - After the crisis 	Weak Problematic Unknown ⁸	Weak Problematic Unknown	Weak Problematic Unknown	Fair Problematic Unknown	Fair Good Unknown
Civil society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - civic behaviours - emergence of spontaneous "leaders" 	Mixed appreciations ⁹ Yes	Mixed appreciations ¹⁰ Yes	Mainly positive ¹¹ Yes	Mainly positive Yes	Mainly positive ¹² Yes

⁴ Written plans, procedures, emergency routines, jurisdictional specifications.

⁵ Stafford Act (generic)

⁶ "Plan Blanc" which is generic and not specifically for a heatwave crisis

⁷ "Good" at the national level.

⁸ Leadership undertaken mainly by experts.

⁹ Evacuation has been a major problem

¹⁰ Indifference of families has been noted.

¹¹ Positive thanks to NGOs and humanitarian help.

¹² Dependence upon public services has been noted.

In Indonesia, the government had started to develop a national tsunami detection system to warn the population of danger, but this system was far from ready at the time the quake struck on December 26th, 2004. Finally, while France and the United States had crisis management plans at the time of the heat wave of 2003 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, these quickly revealed their limitations. Thus, in the French case, the dangers linked to a heat wave were not amongst the concerns of society at large and public health organizations in particular. At the time Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf of New Mexico in the United States, the American administration was in the midst of revising its crisis planning so that the lessons drawn from the simulation exercises were not fully integrated into the plans. Following the September 2001 attacks, the orientation was towards reinforcement of a military command and control system, a direction a number of observers considered ill-suited to natural catastrophes.¹³ The constitutional foundations of the *Stafford Act*, according to which the federal government intervenes only at the request of the states, are also poorly adapted to incidents on a national scale.

In short, our findings on the planning/preparation dimension corroborate previous research to the effect that having a plan is a necessary but insufficient condition to deal with a crisis and planning is a process that must be based on a multirisk approach to improve preparation, aspects which were absent in the five crisis cases studied.

b) coordination

Coordination problems are prevalent in these five crises. The cumbersome, halting nature of bureaucracy, the tendency to isolate the different actors, the gap between actors on the ground (or those intervening directly with the population) and administrators, the tendency towards centralization in decision-making and the organization into a hierarchy, the multiplicity of actors generating confusion and sometimes duplication of efforts, and inefficiency in managing donations and international aid are mentioned in practically all the crises studied. Thus, problems associated with the collection of funds, and analysis and sharing of information hindered the fight against SARS. In addition, tense relations amongst various levels of government, and between the provincial public health authorities and local offices did not help to resolve the crisis efficiently. Judge Campbell, who presided over the

¹³ *A Failure of Initiative*, 2006, page 15, "We train soldiers to fight wars. You can't kill a storm."

SARS Commission in Ontario, reported that numerous local offices thought management had high expectations but provided neither support nor timely and accurate information to doctors-hygienists in the field. In France during the heat wave, experts designated to investigate reported that the “*Institut de veille sanitaire*” and the “*Direction Générale de la Santé*” operated in seclusion, no member of these institutions visited hospitals to take stock of the situation, and it was only very late that they discussed possible measures to curb the crisis with interveners from the hospital sector. In the case of Katrina, the principle of the *pull system* maintained an extremely hierarchical vertical relationship between levels of government, which led to delays in responding to the crisis. Certain interveners attempted to by-pass problems in applying the *National Response Plan* by taking their own initiatives while responding at the same time to the task assigned by FEMA. Research and rescue activities are amongst those most affected by this situation since, all too often, a number of rescue teams were deployed to the same spot, stranding many other victims. In the case of the tsunami, despite international assistance of more than six billion dollars, donations were not managed efficiently and only a portion was used to assist communities in need. The absence of functioning cooperative structures thus diminished the efficacy and consistency of the response, each organization having a tendency to operate independently of the others.

c) leadership

The main criticisms of national leaders in the crises studied concern the delay in taking action following warning signs of a crisis, as well as their lack of visibility during the crisis. Thus, the Toronto daily, *The Globe and Mail*, reports the absence of the Canadian prime minister, Jean Chrétien, as well as the lack of visibility of the Canadian Minister of Health, Anne McLellan, leaving the public to believe that the SARS crisis was not a federal government priority. Under the headlines *Where are the leaders when they're needed?* and *Chrétien criticized for lack of involvement in crisis*, the journalist Cheadle writes “a *political leadership vacuum has made a bad situation much worse and helped fan domestic and international perceptions that containing SARS is not a high priority*”. The same phenomenon was raised by the press with respect to the Premier of Ontario, Ernie Eves, who, after having declared a state of emergency, remained on the sidelines throughout the crisis. Under the headline *Premier offers too little, too late in SARS crisis*, journalist Campbell of *The*

Globe and Mail reports “from the early days of the SARS outbreak four weeks ago, the Premier said he wanted to keep a low profile on the issue. He certainly has succeeded [...] It's one thing to let the professionals handle the SARS outbreak. But the Toronto area desperately needs a politician who understands the symbolism of such a crisis. Mr. Eves has shown he's no Rudy Giuliani”. Compared to the role played by the Québec premier, Lucien Bouchard, during the Québec ice storm crisis, his Ontarian counterpart is judged severely. The same criticisms— slowness to act and a failure to be proactive—were hurled at the Prime Minister of France, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, as well as the Minister of Health, Jean-François Mattéi, during the heat wave of the summer of 2003. Thus, in an article in *l'Express*, Jean-Marc Biais reports “at a minimum we could reproach the Prime Minister and his Minister of Health for having led a poorly timed public relations campaign from the top. In the course of this, Jean-François Mattei had the bitter experience of visiting the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital services (Paris). A nurse did not want to shake his hand. “It is shameful,” she told him. “We needed much faster action”. The journalist continued, mentioning that “Jean-François Mattei was, before being named to government, head of the Timone hospital services in Marseille, one of the largest French hospital establishments. As such, he was familiar with the heat wave that struck the Phocæan city in 1983. Also, he would have had to be more sensitive to alarming information....” The lack of preparedness was also stressed by the four main leaders involved in crisis management after Hurricane Katrina (Michael Chertoff, Michael Brown, Kathleen Blanco and Ray Nagin), and by the Indonesian Prime Minister, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. The Thai Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, for his part, emerged from the crisis fairly honourably. According to *The Times*, “most Thais revere him as a man of practicality and action, a welcome change after 72 years of weak civilian governments punctuated by military coups”.

After-crisis leadership is most often relegated to experts who are assigned responsibility for leading national commissions of inquiry. Aside from the impressive number of recommendations from these commissions, recommendations usually based on a reinforcement and increase of formal crisis routines, it is practically impossible to determine the degree to which public authorities will follow through on these recommendations. Management judged inadequate by the public and media also leads to a search for those

responsible or scapegoats, such as Michael Brown, Director of FEMA for Katrina, Doctor Lucien Abenheïm, Director of DGS during the heat wave and Doctor Collin Cunha, Director of Public Health in Ontario during the SARS outbreak.

d) civil society's behaviour

The participation of civil society, through expressions of support and solidarity is carefully depicted in the crises examined. The role of religious and charitable organizations during Katrina was underscored in the report of the committee established by the American House of Representatives that states that “*countless numbers of charities provided billions of dollars in relief to those in need (...) The efforts of charitable organizations in the Gulf Coast represent the largest disaster response effort in US history*”.¹⁴ In France, the report of experts on the heat wave, while revealing the isolation of senior citizens, in particular those living in institutions,¹⁵ shows that victims' families mobilized to come to their aid. Consequently, the information mission of the Senate under the aegis of Mr. Létard attests to families' devotion to their senior members. Rodriguez (2006) reports that, in a number of communities in India and Sri Lanka, citizens actively engaged in activities to comfort the victims and begin to rebuild. Tightly-knit communities of fishers demonstrated remarkable altruism. The report of the SARS Commission puts great emphasis on the courage, exceptional dedication and even heroism of frontline healthcare workers who did everything possible to counter the risks of the pandemic associated with SARS. At the same time, most experts deplore the fact that these unseen efforts on the part of civil society were not at all or not effectively coordinated with the official system of assistance established by the states. Thus, the American Red Cross, a nongovernmental organization mobilizing thousands of volunteers, was denied access to many shelters for victims of Katrina.

Cases of looting are mentioned in most reports, notably those on Katrina and the tsunami¹⁶ although it is difficult to assess their extent.

Moreover, the lack of information and late or inaccurate communication of information are deplored by experts in all the crises studied. Rodriguez (2006) mentions that a month

¹⁴ *A Failure of Initiative*, page 343.

¹⁵ The mission established by the National Assembly (or Jacquat Mission) noted a number of bodies that were never claimed.

¹⁶ The question of looting does not arise in the case of the heat wave or in that of SARS.

after the disaster, a number of members of local fishing communities remained in a state of uncertainty about their families, their savings, and where they would live. Plans for relocation proposed by the state suffered from a lack of participation by communities concerned. Certain groups mentioned that the government, without an appropriate preliminary investigation, suggested relocating them to regions threatened with flooding or the presence of wild animals. These groups had the impression that their needs, cultures and interests, that would allow them to return to a relatively normal life, were being neglected.

In summary

In the light of the results we have presented, it is possible to affirm that the guiding principles advanced in the literature to orient and inspire effective crisis management were neither followed nor respected in our five crisis case studies. Shortcomings appear at all levels, that is, in terms of planning and capacity for preparation, in coordination, and at the level of leadership, as well as in understanding the behaviour of civil society. The next section attempts to explore avenues arising from the field of OD that could contribute to developing a fresh look at crisis management.

CONCEPTUALIZING AN OD'S MODEL FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT

This section attempts to respond to the third question of our research. In order to assess the contribution of OD to crisis management, we have compared various interventions proposed in this field—those relative to the human process, those related to technostructure, those from human resources management and interventions of a strategic nature—with the guiding principles emerging from the crisis management literature, principles conceived as adding to the efficacy of organizations' responses to crises and contributing to the reinforcement of organizational resilience. These guiding principles are structured around four dimensions of crisis management: planning / preparedness, coordination, leadership and civil behaviour. The result of this conceptualization is presented in Table 2. The following sections explore the bases of the categories proposed in this conceptual framework in greater depth.

OD FOR CRISIS' PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS

The theme of planning and preparation is extensively discussed in the literature, certain authors (Alexander, 2005; McEntire & Myers, 2004) claiming that it constitutes the very essence of crisis management and, as such, plays an eminently strategic role. Some authors including Sapriel (2003) see this process of an organization's overall strategy as possibly assuming the form of a SWOT (evaluation of internal strengths and weaknesses; and evaluation of external threats and opportunities).

According to Perry and Lindell (2003), an organization's capacity for preparation grows as a function of four criteria: an evaluation of the risks (*vulnerability assessment*); an evaluation of the capacity of the organization and of the community to face crises (*capacity assessment*); the development and maintenance of individuals' qualifications; and the establishment of a supple and flexible structural design that may be rapidly deployed at the time of a crisis. Moreover, this capacity for preparation is never established once and for all. Indeed, key individuals may leave the organization, bringing with them valuable expertise; the context of resources may change to the point of altering the importance accorded to planning (Boin & McConnell, 2007; McConnell & Drennan, 2006); the nature of risks may evolve, etc. This is why this OD capacity must be constantly maintained by the updating of plans, the training of personnel, and public education through practice exercises and simulations. The value of such exercises is stressed by a number of authors, including Hart (1997), Perry, (2004), Pollard & Hotho (2006), and Crichton & al. (2000).

Many authors such as McEntire & Myers, 2004 and Perry & Lindell, 2003 deplore the fact that managers have a tendency to limit planning to the existence of written plans, rather than seeing this as a continuous process. In addition, Quarantelli (1988) considers that planning is too focussed on one type of crisis in particular and fails to consider the similar consequences of various types of crisis. This observation is shared by a number of authors (Alexander, 2005; Boin & Lagadec, 2000; McConnell & Drennan, 2006; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1995) who believe that planning/preparedness

Table 2
Conceptual Framework of OD Interventions in Crisis Management

		Principal Dimensions of Crisis Management			
		Planning	Coordination	Civil Society	Leadership
OD Interventions	Human process	Survey feedback		Educational programs	Adaptation of the managerial grid and other leadership programs
		Laboratory training	Teambuilding, Brainstorming		
	Technostructure	Collateral organizations			
		Process consultation (facilitator)	Crisis cells, integration of emerging groups		
	Human resource management	Coaching, mentoring	Job design (enrichment and / or enlargement)		
		Stress management			
	Strategy	Organizational diagnosis based on the open systems approach <i>SWOT</i>	Network structure Differentiation between strategic plans and contingent tactics		
		Search conference, top management planning meeting		Managing external communication	

should be part of a larger integrated multirisk approach. According to this view, the process of crisis' planning and preparedness should be integrated into the organization's overall strategy. Consequently, it is essentially strategic OD interventions that are sought here. Responsibility for piloting and monitoring such a process should be assigned to a senior manager in the organization who has access to a well-established budget to accomplish this task. Now, to accomplish this task effectively, this manager should acquire the skills of an OD practitioner in managing the consultation process. The capacity for preparation can be measured as a function of the strengths and limits of the organization, and evaluation of potential risks requires analysis of the external environment. The development of crisis scenarios and simulation exercises should be considered strategically. This type of exercise is similar to the famous model of *SWOT* in strategic management. Specialists in crisis management also insist that the conception of crisis management plans stem from a process in which all stakeholders, that is personnel, eventual collaborators or partners, and civil society, participate.

In this regard, OD offers interesting avenues, including the search conference and team planning meetings, interventions consisting of bringing together a group of actors from diverse horizons and professional fields to reflect on the means required to collectively face the social issues confronting them (Emery & Purser, 1999; Williams, 1979). Crises fall within this overall framework of reflection. Indeed, according to Williams (1979) the practice of search conferences is a singular learning experience in this sense that it is conceived to develop adaptive capacities of organizations in turbulent environments. The process inherent in the search conference supposes a commitment of the parties involved to rethinking their operational models, organizational routines and culture, so as to operate within a network model (Chisholm, 1996, 2008). In sum, it is a question of establishing a process of planned change based on a shared interpretation of trends in the overall environment. Adapted to the context of crisis management, the search conference would thus have the goal of seating the principal interveners in crisis management at the same table so that they are able to:

- share a common analysis of the organizational risks;
- report on the current system's strengths and weaknesses in order to confront them;

- decide on appropriate actions and the means to act more effectively in the event of a crisis;
- commit to collaborate in a network.

In the light of the guiding principles elaborated by many authors on planning / preparedness, it appears that many interventions developed in OD may contribute:

- to increasing the organization's capacity to prepare to face crises, thanks to improved sharing of knowledge amongst individuals, which allows for survey feedback, a method aiming to bring together relevant information on a given issue, then deliver it to the principal parties concerned for discussion and appropriation;
- to evaluating the risks, thanks to a diagnostic model based on open system theory in other words, an approach whereby organizational actors agree to be influenced by the external environment and seek to adapt to it;
- to update the available information and share a common vision, thanks to survey feedback, which has the advantage of revealing not only explicit knowledge but also tacit knowledge;
- to foster adapted and flexible responses through laboratory training sessions based on simulations or crisis scenarios, thus allowing individuals, employees or managers, to develop the required abilities in terms of creativity; and
- to conceive of planning as a continual process of improvement through identification of a facilitator, a role already well described by practitioners of OD (Schein, 1999).
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OD FOR CRISIS' COORDINATION

The vast majority of scholars, including Dynes (1983, 1994) and Quarantelli (1988) agree that having a plan is a necessary but insufficient condition to respond adequately to a crisis. *Prior planning can limit these management difficulties but cannot completely eliminate all of them* (Quarantelli, 1988:373). Indeed, there will always be a difference between the plan (which constitutes a kind of road map) and direct action (which is the actual route). Moreover, the authors rely on the military distinction between strategy and tactics. Quarantelli (1988: 373) stated that *"the military draws a distinction between strategy and tactics. Strategy, in general, has reference to the overall approach to a problem or objective. But there are always*

situational factors or other contingencies which require particular adjustments to attain a specific goal if the overall objective is to be attained. This is the area of tactics. There are a number of contingencies to consider. Spontaneous actions will emerge from civil society and organizations; those whose mission is more clearly established during crises, such as firefighters, the police and military, hospitals, and governmental authorities at different levels (municipalities, and states or provinces) will have to deal with them. In short, interveners in a crisis must expect to be imaginative and to improvise (Webb & Chevreau, 2006; Lalonde, 2008). Based on specific cases of crisis management, a number of authors including Rerup (2001), Kendra & Wachtendorf (2001), Tierney (2003) and Weick (1993) note that an effective response to a crisis is a combination of anticipation and improvisation.

Many authors stress the great difficulty bureaucratic structures, generally in the forefront in managing a crisis, experience in taking action during crises in a form different from the formal hierarchical organization, i.e. in adopting a more flexible and decentralized model, and adjusting to loosely coupled systemic interdependencies, leaving more space for actors outside the formal system and emerging groups providing assistance. Thus, researchers have underlined an accrued rigidity in the functions of command and control resembling the military model. Therefore, in studies of responses provided by bureaucracies during crises provoked by Hurricane Katrina and the tsunami in Southeast Asia, Takeda & Helms (2006a, 2006b) highlight three major deficiencies: the propensity to centralize decision making, leading to a slowness to react; the difficulty of integrating emerging information or actors operating outside of the formal bureaucratic structure; and the premature commitment to a single type of intervention that, over time and space, proves to be, increasingly ill-adapted and inappropriate, somewhat along the lines of the *garbage can model*.

Dynes (1994) strongly questioned this model, deeming it inappropriate for responding adequately and efficiently to a crisis. Instead, he favours a more organic model—that he calls the *emergent human resource model*, in which the principles of continuity, cooperation and coordination prevail. The author affirms that, in managing a crisis, an organization's members will naturally turn to networks and contact people that they already know to attempt to offer responses to the crisis in the problem solving process mode rather than in a hierarchical and military form of relationship. *The best predictor of emergency authority will not be to create*

an artificial authority structure but, following the principles of continuity, the 'pre-emergency authority' will carry over and will serve as a base for the emergency authority (Dynes, 1994:15). Moreover, the development of such alliances is not done blindly and without any political gamesmanship (Rosenthal & al., 1989). Thus, managers would tend to ally themselves on the basis of organizational status and public legitimacy (Wolensky, 1983).

Quarantelli (1988) provided an excellent summary of the principal challenges in coordination that he sees as revolving around three main elements: communication, internal, external and with the public; the exercise of authority; and the development of cooperative structures.

Coordination in crisis management has much to do with questions of structural design. A number of studies, especially from the perspective of contingency and configuration theories, take account of the need for flexible structural designs and loosely coupled links in dynamic and turbulent environments. The crisis context is just such an environment. Therefore, the question is how to introduce to bureaucratic organizations based on a formal hierarchy a new "modus operandi" allowing for more rapid decentralized deployment, and a sense of being an integral part of a network or even a cluster of collective services. The OD propositions in that regard are threefold:

- in terms of intra-organizational structure, the establishment of a collateral structure is likely to offer this flexibility that is so lacking in crises, by accustoming organizational members to functioning in an unconventional mode, different from the traditionally vertical models for non-routine situations;
- in terms of human resource management, capacities for improvisation could be developed in the context of projects or scenarios requiring a horizontal (*job enlargement*) or vertical (*job enrichment*) broadening of tasks;
- then in terms of the interorganizational structure, the establishment of crisis cells could be based on the socio-ecological perspective of networks.

In 1974, Zand, a researcher in OD, proposed the concept of collateral organization, a structure coexisting in parallel with the formal organizational structure, a structure based on the resolution of complex and atypical problems (*ill-structured problems*), mobilizing multilevel and multidisciplinary resources and expertise, resources and expertise that extend beyond

established administrative groups and units. Considering the changing environments in which organizations evolve today, Zand (1974) believes that managers must rethink the traditional structural models based on the principle of vertical authority and introduce a new model of functioning in a more lateral fashion. The notion of “collateral” derives from the idea that this new form of organization does not replace the usual operational structure but coexists with it and is complementary. This complementarity, according to Zand (1974), operates as follows:

- a collateral organization tries to contribute responses to problems that are not routine and that are not addressed by the formal organizational structure. Managing a crisis is a typical example of a non-routine event.
- the organization consists of a new combination of individuals coming from various units and diverse professional spheres, by this very fact establishing new channels of communication, which is essential in a crisis situation;
- though directed by a manager of the organization, exchanges take place in a more collegial and egalitarian mode, an approach that fits the emerging model promoted by Dynes (1994);
- the collateral organization’s output, i.e. the product of reflection and learning, constitute input for the formal organization, in the form of new behaviour, new skills and abilities to develop for the formal organization. Most scholars in crisis management consider such learning essential.

In their response to the model proposed by Zand, Rubinstein & Woodman (1984) agree that the collateral organization is especially well-suited to crisis contexts, contexts where people of all professional categories are called upon to demonstrate creativity and ingenuity, to invent original solutions to atypical problems, indeed to replace their superiors in exceptional circumstances. The creation of a collateral organizational structure thus affects tasks by enlarging or enriching them.

In terms of inter-organizational structure, the so-called socio-ecological perspective of networks developed by Trist (1983), based on the core principles of interdependence, is particularly helpful in understanding and eventually resolving problems of coordination in crisis management. The network tackles organizations’ meta-problems (Trist, 1983), i.e. their difficulties in facing complex and chaotic environments when they remain isolated in their

bunkers. The crisis cell is often identified in the crisis management literature as the place where actors from diverse organizations, attempting to act in a concerted fashion during key points of a crisis, may interact. This crisis cell would also benefit from employing the socio-ecological perspective of networks proposed by OD. Thus, the crisis cell becomes *the referent organization*; it transcends the particularities of each organization because each examined in isolation proves incapable, indeed powerless, in the face of the meta-problems generated by a crisis *because they lack the requisite variety* (Trist, 1983). To successfully face crises, a number of conditions need to come together:

- relations amongst members of the network must be horizontal and voluntary;
- the network must be self-regulating and constitute a place for collaborative exchanges;
- network members must create rules of procedure that involve each of the constituent parties;
- there must be mutual respect for each constituent's sphere of responsibility;
- there must be a pursuit of common goals in resolving the meta-problems created by a crisis; and
- the network must not be immutable; it must sometimes change form over time and space, for example, to integrate emerging actors.

Clearly, the collateral structure and socio-ecological perspective of the network constitute two interesting avenues for OD to put the guiding principles in crisis coordination into practice.

OD FOR CRISIS LEADERSHIP

Crisis management requires not only speed but also appropriate responses (Perry & Nigg, 1985; Lagadec, 1991, 1996); not only implementing plans and creating tools, but fostering capacities for judgement and for directing the operations. Finally, as discussed in the previous section on coordination, crisis management should not be based strictly on hierarchy and a centralizing approach of command and control, but rather on collective leadership (Wooten & James, 2008), the construction of a shared legitimacy and the principles of continuity and cooperation (Dynes, 1983, 1994; Quarantelli, 1988; Lagadec, 1996).

Some authors (Lagadec, 1991, 1996; Smits & Ally, 2003; Wooten & James, 2008) believe that the manager must develop a certain number of specific abilities in various phases of the crisis. In a recent study, Wooten and James (2008) differentiate key skills for each phase. Thus, they believe that the capacity to give meaning to signs warning of a crisis on one hand, and the capacity to anticipate the potential impact on others, on the other, represent two key skills during the phase of the detection of warning signs. In the prevention/preparation phase, the authors believe that a key skill in this phase is the capacity to convince organizational members of the importance of investing in crisis management planning. According to the authors, for organizational leaders to pay attention to crisis preparation requires a change agent that is skilful in issue selling. The two other skills in this phase would be organizational agility, that is having a detailed knowledge of the organization, a systemic view of interaction dynamics likely to be deployed to face the crisis, and creativity, the capacity to imagine novel scenarios to confront the contingencies of the crisis situation. At the height of the crisis, in the context of direct and active interventions, the capacity to make decisions under pressure, to communicate effectively and to have the courage to take certain risks are, according to the authors, determinant. During the phase of reconstruction and returning to normal activities, the promotion of organizational resilience and the adoption of ethical and responsible behaviour would be the two key skills. On this point, the authors mentioned that, after a crisis, an organization never totally returns to the way it was before the crisis: lessons may be learned about the strengths and weaknesses revealed during the crisis and there may be a review of errors committed that should be avoided in future. Even more importantly, the acknowledgement of these shortcomings will truly raise the stakeholders' support and confidence. The adoption of a learning mentality is a skill that allows for the pursuit of further reflection on the improvement in crisis management practices outside the phases linked to the crisis itself.

With their emphasis on communication, problem-solving and decision-making processes, interventions relative to the human process of OD seems to us particularly appropriate for the development of crisis leadership. However, traditionally, interventions in human processes in OD have been especially based on the organization's internal dynamic and interpersonal dimensions within work teams (Buller, 1988; Jelinek & Litterer, 1988). While

needing the abilities to mobilize people and to be able to communicate adequately with them, crisis leadership also requires a keen sensitivity to the external environment (the capacity to pick up on signals indicative of a coming crisis, the ability to anticipate, a systemic and systematic view of events, and the capacity to work in a network and with emerging actors). Of course, the required skills in times of crisis do not develop in a vacuum; they will have been painstakingly cultivated thanks to appropriate training through coaching or mentoring. While capitalizing on already existing modes of intervention, OD interventions aiming at developing skills for crisis leadership largely remain to be developed. The managerial grid developed in the mid 1970s by Blake and Mouton could prove interesting for the development of crisis leadership but would require adaptation and updating after almost forty years.

OD FOR CIVIL BEHAVIOUR

Civil society's behaviour when confronted with crises is the subject of popular perceptions and myths that a number of researchers have attempted to deconstruct (Connell, 2001; Dynes, 1983, 1994; Helsloot & Ruitenberg, 2004; Perry & Lindell, 2003b; and Quarantelli, 1988). Far from being a group of panicked and irrational actors, civil society brings together citizens who are generally in control of themselves, who make logical decisions and who provide the initial help to their fellow victims. Dynes characterizes the expansion of civic roles in the form of expressions of mutual aid and solidarity towards victims as situational altruism.

The role of civil society affects a number of facets of crisis management and requires multifaceted OD interventions. First, acquiring greater knowledge of community characteristics and civic behaviour in times of crisis is one of the guiding principles identified by scholars working on planning and preparation. Survey feedback allows a sharing of knowledge amongst interveners at this level. Altruistic gestures give rise to the emergence of more or less organized action, an aspect that should be considered when coordinating actions in crisis management. The socio-ecological perspective of networks proposed by Trist (1983) allows us to integrate significant actors from civil society in coordinating crisis responses. The communication aspect is definitely a crucial skill raised by a number of writers, including Wooten and James (2008). In fact, according to Helsloot & Ruitenberg

(2004), the average citizen is little inclined to and not very interested in investing in preparing for a crisis. It is important to take into consideration the level of information to which citizens have access during the period leading-up to a crisis since the time dimension of the crisis will, when it occurs, quickly prevent authorities from communicating relevant information to actors of civil society. Overcoming this obstacle is, furthermore, a real test of strength for those responsible for crisis management. In order to ensure that there is a clear understanding of what is going on, managers need to acquire communications' skills. Laboratory training sessions, as well as coaching and mentoring, are interventions that could be designed specifically with the goal of developing communication skills of managers, as well top management, to deal with the public and media nature of the crisis. In this respect, it is vital to note that the literature bearing on non-crisis communication stresses the importance of selecting a single spokesperson within the same organization for the public and the media.

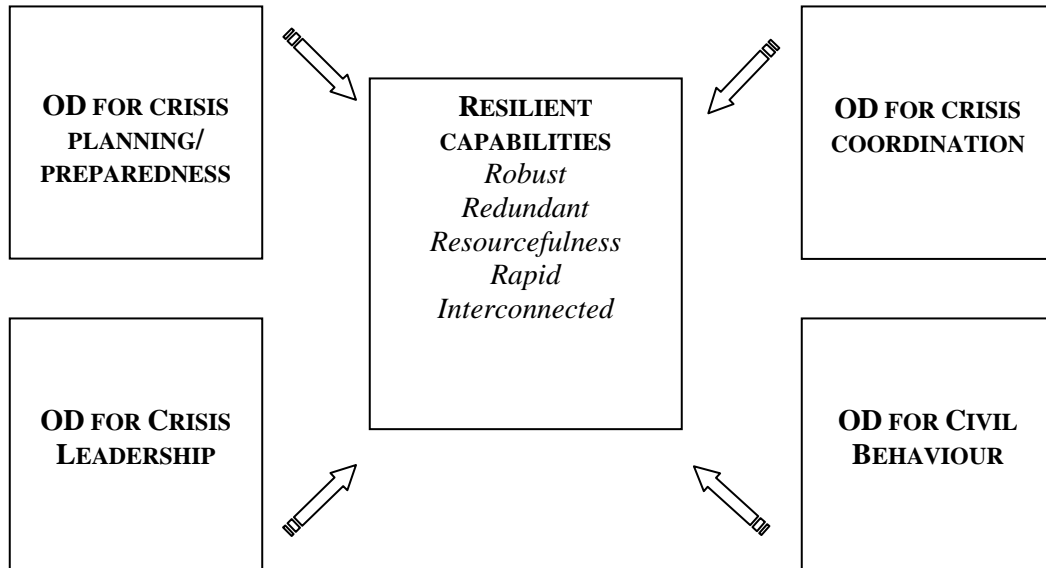
CONCLUSION

This article attempted to paint an overall, comprehensive picture of OD interventions that could contribute to more efficient crisis planning and coordination. The basic idea of OD, with the effect of reinforcing lasting individual and organizational capacities to confront the changes they are experiencing, is connected to the notion of resilience proposed by crisis management.

The research of Tierney (2003) and of Kendra & Wachtendorf (2003) allows us to identify certain characteristics of resilient systems. Thus, according to these authors, resilient systems are:

- robust, i.e. that is, capable of withstanding a high level of stress and tension;
- redundant, in the sense of substitutability (one unit may replace another in case of disruption);
- resourceful, i.e. capable of efficiently identifying the issues or problems, establishing priorities and mobilizing resources;
- quick to take action, so as to minimize the losses and negative impacts of the crisis.

Table 3 Resilience at the hearth of efficient crisis management



To these diverse characteristics, certain authors, including Weick (1993), Mallak (1998) and Horne & Orr (1998) add interconnectivity, that is the capacity to see oneself as a member of a group or larger virtual action system. This notion of interconnectivity is highly correlated to the importance of the mode of functioning in a network, as presented in the section on crisis coordination.

Clearly, organizational resilience, as defined previously, is central to achieving the goals of the guiding principles of crisis management in terms of planning, coordination, leadership and civil society's behaviour, and we here suggest that these principles and goals can be achieved through targeted OD interventions.

Some obstacles may limit the application of OD in crisis management. Thus, some authors, including Buller (1988), believe that OD's focus has traditionally been on improving organizations' incremental internal processes (planned change) and not sufficiently on a strategic analysis of the external environment. For example, risk analysis and evaluation of the capacity of an organization to face a crisis has never been and is still not a concern of OD. In this respect, a number of authors (Buller; 1988; Jelinek & Litterer, 1988) observe that

practitioners and researchers interested in OD must expand their bases of knowledge in terms of strategic analysis of organizations if they wish to be relevant today.

Many issues in crisis management, knowing how to manage under pressure, in an uncertain and turbulent context, adjusting to functioning in networks, and learning to innovate and improvise, are recurrent themes in strategic management, and, furthermore, particularly relevant in twenty-first century organizations. A review of the OD literature in the context of this article reveals a growing interest in a grand integration of OD in strategic management, which is promising for a more integrated view of OD and crisis management. Nevertheless, this review also reveals that such integration is not painless and tends to widen the gap between traditionalists, attached to the foundations of the field of study and its humanist philosophy, and pragmatic individuals who hope for a renewal of the field and a reconciliation of development objectives of people concerned with the imperatives of performance and productivity. To make a real and significant contribution to crisis management, a number of authors believe that OD practitioners and experts must move beyond this debate and propose new models of intervention to managers, without which they will remain isolated. *“Until OD can help organizations solve these basic issues of survival, collaboration and values will always take a back seat”* (Jelinek & Litterer, 1988: 32). Now the field of crisis management is seeking such models that allow for a strengthening of resilience and the calibre of response when a crisis arises. It is to be hoped that OD interveners will know how to fit into this new paradigm.

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