

A CITY IN CRISIS:  
COMMUNICATION NETWORK, ETHICS, AND POWER IN  
THE CITY OF DALLAS

by

SANA SALMA SYED

DISSERTATION

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Supervising Committee:

Maria Martinez-Cosio, Supervising Professor  
Ivonne Audirac  
Enid Arvidson

## ABSTRACT

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Sana Salma Syed, Ph.D.  
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Supervising Professor: Maria Martinez-Cosio

The conceptual framework for this research builds on Manuel Castells's work to find the specific network configuration of actors, interests, and values that engage in their power-making strategies to operationalize a communication network and understand the roles and powers of programmers and switchers at a local level. The study explores the role and purpose of communication networks within cities from the perspective of administrators and elected officials and their responsibility to provide communication as a public good. The research design is an organizational autoethnography of the city of Dallas that incorporates various perspectives from those who were a part of the network.

The research outcomes suggest that media are not the only entities with powerful communication networks and mass communication capabilities. At the request of citizens, cities are working harder to provide access, information, engagement, and additional communication during crises. Dallas is an example of cities building powerful communication networks that are comprised of various channels. The research explores the operationalization of an organizational communication network within the city of Dallas and its power, particularly during a crisis of legitimacy from the vantage point of those who control the network and manage the message.

This research offers definitions for an organizational communication network and network power and explores how to operationalize it. Ethics policy recommendations for networked cities, both large and small, are also presented.

*Keywords:* communication network, organizational communication network, power, ethics, Network Society, agenda setting, crisis communication, Information Age, Digital Age, social media, Castells, Foucault, Habermas, Arnstein, McCombs

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Dedication

I have a small circle of loved ones who stood by me through some of life's greatest challenges. I am grateful for their love and support through the brightest and darkest days. My time with Dallas as a public servant was life changing, and I have immense respect for those who continue to fight for the rights of the public, particularly at the local level. This work is dedicated to former Dallas City Manager A.C. Gonzalez, for taking a chance on me and believing in me, and to the first responders of the city of Dallas.

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This doctoral research is a culmination of six years' worth of setbacks, losses, and wins. It is symbolic of a rebirth in life, and a reminder that dreams can be conquered.

I was fortunate to have three women who challenged me the most throughout the duration of this program to agree to be members of my dissertation committee. Each has been tested in her own way and overcame tremendous obstacles to be where she is today. I admire them greatly.

Dr. Cosio was my champion who pushed a little harder every week, sent me back to the drawing board over and over again, but helped create a body of work that I'm extremely proud of. This dissertation would not have been completed without her constant mentorship and counsel.

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## INTRODUCTION

America's 45<sup>th</sup> president has engaged communication networks in unprecedented ways, pushing societal norms to a new level and, some suggest, misdirecting the media through 280-character messages (Gillman, 2018; Tabor, 2017; Konnikova, 2017). He successfully repealed the Obama-era policy on net neutrality, threatening equitable access to information through technology (Breland, 2018; Collins, 2018); he proposed a Muslim ban, triggering national protests (ACLU, 2018); and another round of national protests began regarding children being separated from their parents once they entered the U.S. border as a new immigration policy was abruptly unveiled (Rizzo, 2018; Allen, 2018; Harris, 2018; Morello, 2018). These are global and national policy decisions involving communication networks, ethics, and power that may be mirrored on a smaller scale in municipal government. These actions compromise public trust and call into question government's legitimacy and capacity to provide communication as a public good and contribute to information sharing in the public sphere.

Castells defines the public sphere as a space where the communication of ideas between civil society and institutions takes place. The structure of society is composed of the relationships between government, civil society, and their interaction through the public sphere (Castells, 2008). World order is rooted in the structure of society, as it references the shared meaning and common language that precedes the need for diplomacy, leveling power makers and civil society (Castells, 2008).

Castells's (2008; 2013) work addresses civil society in global terms. He argues that public affairs is constructed around global communication networks, as the majority of the world's population (55 percent) lives in urban areas that are interconnected; in the United

States, 82 percent of the population lives in urban areas (United Nations, 2018). While Castells acknowledges the existence of local networks down to the state level, he does not address the importance of local networks, or the ethics and power implications of these conduits of information for cities. By overlooking the rise of communication power at the local level, we miss the opportunity to understand communication as a public good within cities and the responsibility of administrators to provide the public with information, access, and engagement so that they are educated participants in the public sphere and contribute to the “world order” occurring in their respective cities.

Critics and supporters of Castells’s research have discussed communication networks within cities, but either in abstract terms or by focusing on communications technology. The research that advances Castells’s theory lacks information about what a model for organizational communication networks looks like within cities, how to apply it to practice, or how to address potential ethical conflicts through policy.

Castells (2011) himself concedes that he is speaking in abstract terms, creating an opportunity for researchers. But there are some critical points he makes that can translate into practice. Primarily, it is Castells’s Habermasian reference to crisis of legitimacy, which he claims occurs when citizens do not recognize themselves in the institutions of society (Castells, 2008; Castells, 2013; Habermas, 1987). Furthermore, with the majority of citizens in the world mistrustful of their respective elected officials and questioning their governments, the crisis of legitimacy also occurs when the impact of media politics, the increasing corruption of politicians, the growing separation of the political class from civil society, and social movements can cause people’s disaffection toward democratic institutions (Castells, 2018). Democratic institutions that continue to thrive do so because

of the public's confidence in government and other institutions that compose the structure of society (Castells, 2018). On a global scale, Castells (2018) claims that Brexit, the presidency of Donald Trump, the election of Emmanuel Macron, and the rise of the extreme right in the West are examples of impending crises of legitimacy, but he does not explore these at the local level, such as in cities.

Madon and Sahay (2001) point out that marginalized social groups continue to coexist with dominant forces in cities to maintain networks based on face-to-face communication. Yet, Madon and Sahay (2001) argue that for the poor, face-to-face contact and informal communication are their greatest hope at raising issues that are critical for their survival. Building on Castells's work, they stress that communications technology and face-to-face interactions continue to coexist in the city, gaining confidence from the public and legitimizing government as an institution. Castells does not deny this, but he also does not explore the comprehensive organizational communication network in relation to the global network, raising questions about how local organizational communication networks are developed and sustained, and what their value is as a form of infrastructure in a city.

Castells (2011) calls for an analysis of power relationships by examining the specific network configuration of actors, interests, and values, how they engage in their power-making capacities to comprise communication messaging, and how the construction of meaning to the public occurs. Castells (2011; 2013) does not explicitly identify these actors in his work.

This research uses organizational autoethnography as a method to explore the city of Dallas's communication network and the key actors involved. The researcher's role allows for narration of the communication process from the point of view of an actor with

the power to program and switch the network, and with intimate knowledge of the goals of the network and other key actors in the network. By triangulating with notes, photographs, news coverage, and interviews from other actors who were a part of the network, the researcher is able to investigate who did what, how, where, and why. Thus, the conceptual framework builds on Castells's work, to study the specificity Castells suggests is needed on how an organizational communication network is operationalized, and to understand the roles and powers of the programmers and switchers. Castells built the theoretical framework, and this research investigates the application of his theories.

To better understand communication networks, ethics, and power in cities, organizational autoethnography was used to examine the city of Dallas, paying particular attention to two crises that shaped the city's communication efforts: the first case of Ebola in the U.S. and the July 7 Dallas Police Department (DPD) shooting. By developing its own organizational communication network, the city helped shape national discourse during these crises.

This work seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How did the city of Dallas operationalize a communication network?
2. What is the power of networks, particularly during a potential crisis of legitimacy?
3. What are the ethical implications for operationalizing communication networks in cities?

By addressing these questions, this research allows us to examine communication networks in cities to understand the power dynamics that take place during crises and



offer policy considerations for practitioners. The analysis presented in the research has long-term implications for large cities across the United States, and possibly around the world.

### **The Network Society**

Habermas stresses the significance of communicative action, two-way communication, and communication as a public good. Castells (2013) builds on these conceptual ideas and proposes an approach for examining these dynamics through his communication network theory. This offers an opportunity for researchers to expand upon his work to address the specifics of how major urban cities are developing their own networks in the age of mass self-communication (individuals disseminating information to the masses on their own, autonomous of powerful media networks). New technologies provide tremendous opportunity for cities to be more responsive and dynamic in engaging in two-way communication with the public and encourage greater civic participation, but Foucault warns about the power of the networks that serve as gateways for knowledge for the public. For Foucault, danger arises when power is misused to constrain knowledge, resulting in communication networks that can become oppressive or coercive (Foucault, 1977).

The new era of hybrid communication includes various modes of sharing information that provide opportunities to reach residents through a number of modalities and tools, extending and deepening the role communication plays in shaping the power-making processes in institutions and in the public domain (Castells, 2013). Castells (2013) claims that the diffusion of horizontal communication networks and multiple entry points into the communication system have increased the influence of the average citizen. I argue

that technological advances have allowed cities to create organizational communication networks that are circular and also have multiple entry points into the communication network through mass self-communication and social media. The ease of accessibility to the networks can greatly impact an organization and its respective audience. This research outlines the four key elements of organizational communication networks in cities: access, information, engagement, and crisis communication.

Tapping into Castells's work on communication networks, this work examines the operationalization of network gatekeeping functions and the inclusion and exclusion of nodes from the network, highlighting the key role of gatekeepers in enforcing collective power of some networks over others or of a network's relation with disconnected social units (Castells, 2013). These gatekeepers include switchers and programmers. The programmers define the goals of the network (and have the capacity to reprogram it) and the switchers have single-purpose domination power, affecting multiple levels of social structure (Castells, 2013). Castells argues that the programming of the dominant networks of society needs to set compatible goals between networks, and they must communicate with each other and limit contradiction (Castells, 2013).

These networks are also challenged by the expansion of mass self-communication, resulting in grassroots support from the average citizen and allowing social actors to stand up to the power of the state (Castells, 2013), as we witnessed during the Black Lives Matter movement and the Arab Spring. The use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, websites, texting, and new technology tools allow every citizen with a device to immediately engage with thousands of viewers around the world. But there are challenges posed by this immediacy

in terms of the accuracy of the information conveyed and assumptions made by viewers as they view a picture, watch a video, or read a post.

Another major source of power is networks' programming capacity, which depends on the ability to generate, diffuse, and affect the discourses that form human action (Castells, 2013). Discourses shape the public's view on issues through communication networks because they organize socialized communication, which allows the public to contemplate issues that affect their lives (Castells, 2013). It is also important to understand the role of communication as a public good and its role in civic participation.

Communication is an effective tool to wield power, but while there are no laws governing it, there are often policies and ethics guidelines within municipalities that outline the proper way for public servants to communicate what would be considered unethical or an abuse of power. Habermas and Foucault agree that the abuse of power is one of the greatest issues of our time, but they disagree on how best to address this abuse (Habermas, 1987; Foucault, 1977; Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002).

Castells has illustrated the power and ethical implications of media communication networks, but these have been reconstructed by organizations (with the help of the Information/Digital Age and mass self-communication) to create organizational communication networks. This suggests the need to explore how discourse and strategy of inclusion and exclusion are connected to organizational communication networks, but also to explore power and ethics dynamics in communication as a service to the public (Sassen, 2015; Habermas, 1987; Foucault, 1977; Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002). This research provides insights into switchers and programmers within the city of Dallas to illustrate how they shape and operationalize a network. It also explores the ethical challenges faced

by the organizational network as elected officials and other stakeholders sought to appropriate the power of the network. I was able to contribute to this research because in my former capacity as the director of the city's Public Information Office, I was authorized to operationalize a network, be both a switcher and programmer, and I faced ethics issues along the way.

The conceptual framework presented examines Castells's network society through the lenses of communication, power in knowledge, and ethics. The role and purpose of communication networks within cities is explored from the perspective of programmers and switchers and their responsibility to provide communication as a public good. The research design is an organizational autoethnography of the city of Dallas that incorporates various perspectives from those who were a part of the network.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Dallas: Lessons in Public Trust

Black Lives Matter, a national social movement to protest the treatment of African-Americans by the American justice system, was not a movement that was birthed overnight. Its roots stretch back decades into U.S. history, and Dallas has its own piece of the story parallel to the rise and fall of the Nazi movement in Germany. In the early part of the twentieth century, following a legacy of Jim Crow, African-Americans in Dallas County struggled to survive, working menial jobs such as waiters, maids, and field workers (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008). The impact of historical segregation and public policies that limited opportunities for African-Americans is still evident today as communication networks continue to privilege those with access to internet and political influences. Due to systemic segregation and out of necessity, African-Americans organized their own cultural pursuits and means of communication including *The Dallas Express* and *The Southwestern Baptist* newspapers (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008). Social inequality was mandated by Jim Crow etiquette, and at the beginning of the twentieth century, Dallas continued to be a violent place for African-Americans (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008).

Dallas historian Marvin Dulaney (1993) has detailed the case of Allen Brooks in 1910, an elderly man who was accused of abusing a white child (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008). Brooks was arrested but was never tried because a mob of nearly 5,000 took him from the jail, dragged him through the streets of downtown Dallas, and handed out pieces of his clothing and mangled body as souvenirs (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008). In 1921, Alexander Johnson, a bellhop at a downtown Dallas hotel, was kidnapped by the Dallas Ku Klux Klan, branded with the KKK symbols, and killed; his purported crime was publicizing a

sexual encounter with a white woman (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008). Rumors implicated Dallas police officers and the KKK in both incidents, in which no one was prosecuted (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008). From 1885 to 1942, approximately 340 African-Americans were lynched in Texas (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008). The photos of lynchings were an effective communication tool at that time for keeping African-Americans as second-class citizens despite their population growth; these incidents provide grim examples of abuse of power (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008).

African-Americans also faced public policies that kept them from wielding any power in Dallas. Early local ordinances barred African-Americans from access to housing, law enforcement, voting, public facilities, health care, and employment (Lawe, 2008). In 1907, the Dallas City Council revised its charter to codify strict segregation of all races in public schools housing, recreational activities, and church (Lawe, 2008). The city charter was amended again in the 1930s, this time requiring all candidates to run at large and on a non-partisan basis, further preventing people of color from holding political offices (Lawe, 2008). African-Americans in Dallas fought for their right to full citizenship through civic and protest groups, community-based organizations, and social clubs (Lawe, 2008). The Black community also fought for their right to vote, to integrate into the Dallas Police Department, and to build schools for African-American children, and they eventually succeeded (Lawe, 2008). African-Americans were making gains in improving their political, social, and economic conditions, and the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 gave them more power to see these efforts through; this helped their position in the political arena, but the fight became more confrontational (Lawe, 2008).

Over the course of several decades, African-Americans made significant achievements in entering politics, school boards, and powerful positions within city leadership; today, the Dallas city manager, district attorney, and chief of police are all African-American. The white backlash to desegregation led to many white families leaving the city and the school system (Lawe, 2008). In the early 1970s, at least 54 percent of the students in the Dallas Independent School District were white – by the end of the twentieth century, that number dropped to about ten percent (Lawe, 2008). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Dallas experienced severe racial tension because of the lack of Hispanic representation in municipal government and the use of deadly force by police officers; accusations were made that the civil rights movement bypassed the city (Dittmer et al., 1993). There was a civil rights movement in Dallas from the 1930s to the 1950s to address racial injustice, discrimination, segregation, and repression (Dittmer et al., 1993).

Between 1990 and 2000, Dallas became home to 174,000 additional people, and 75 percent of those were Latinos (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008). The decisions made by two federal judges in the 1970s, Jerry Buckmeyer and Barefoot Sanders, led to desegregated housing and schools and changed the political structure of the Dallas City Council, Dallas Independent School District, Dallas County Community College District, and the Dallas County Commissioners Court (Dittmer et al., 1993; Lawe, 2008).

While great gains have been made toward equality, Dallas still has a distinct line that separates the poor in South Dallas from the affluent in North Dallas geographically – and inequity has become a big part of the equation in the city. A recent study found that the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), which provides public transportation to Dallas residents, is only helping citizens in South Dallas reach one percent of jobs (Simek, 2017).

A *Dallas Business Journal* report found that banks approved more government-backed loans to small business in a small portion of Frisco than in nearly two dozen of Dallas' southern neighborhoods, hurting the ability of prospective entrepreneurs in South Dallas from starting a business (Prior, 2017). Since 2012, three to five percent of loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA) have gone to Black small business owners, seven to nine percent went to Hispanics, and whites received 60 percent of the financing (Prior, 2017). The Center for Public Policy Priorities says one in three Dallas children lives in poverty, and geographic isolation compromises education and job opportunities (Koprowski, 2017).

Economic situations, corruption, and discriminatory policies and practices contribute to the deterioration of public trust in government and administrators (Gracia, 2015). Over the past several years, government has turned to digital platforms to rebuild trust with citizens, and their efforts have seen a positive effect on trust in public administration (Gracia, 2015). The internet is thought to increase government transparency, helping restore public trust and the legitimacy of government and government actions (Viitanen, 2011). With limited resources, cities are exploring avenues to recover the levels of public trust so that communication efforts are effective (Gracia, 2015). Less than half of the world's population trusts public institutions, but governments rely on citizen trust and participation to develop and execute public initiatives that benefit society, such as public projects and public policies (Gracia, 2015; Castells, 2001). A city's long-term success depends on citizen trust in public administration (Gracia, 2015; Warkentin et. al, 2002).

### **Communication as a Public Good**



In the 1970s and 1980s, the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) and the UNESCO Mass Media Declaration failed in their efforts to successfully enforce the freedom of expression and the press; at the same time, government agencies tried to suppress information, but technology was emerging at a faster pace and eventually these government agencies lost their credibility and their power (Vincent et al., 1999). By the mid-1990s, the internet was emerging as a disruptor – it was changing the way millions around the world accessed information and communicated (Vincent et al., 1999).

Understanding the looming power of communication networks, world leaders called for a Telecommunications Policy Roundtable to address the U.S. National Information Infrastructure (NII) in 1993. The roundtable participants drafted principles and guidelines related to communication technology and its significance as a public good (Vincent et al., 1999). Member organizations specifically addressed the communications system and its impact on society; they wanted to know who owned these communication networks, who would have access to them, and what steps would be taken to preserve public institutions and these systems as a public good (Vincent et al., 1999). Even as the internet was emerging as transformative technology, the policy roundtable was concerned about the technological disparity that was emerging in the early 1990s, how all people would have access to the means of communication, and the government's responsibility to ensure that communications technologies served the public (Vincent et al., 1999).

The group asked the U.S. president and Congress to have a high-level vision for the National Information Infrastructure, to recognize the various needs and socioeconomic diversity in this country, and to ensure openness, participation, and discussion (Vincent et al., 1999). They recommended the following principles to guide policy: universal access,

freedom to communicate, vital civic sector, diverse and competitive marketplace, equitable workplace, privacy, and democratic policymaking (Vincent et al., 1999).

Today, this fight to address communications as a public good is taking center stage again as net neutrality is debated nationally. In September 2016, U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Ajit Pai proposed a Digital Empowerment Agenda; the goal was to provide traditionally underserved communities with broadband access and digital opportunities (Karikari, 2017). Two years later, he became the poster child for the dismemberment of net neutrality, an Obama-era policy that advocated for equitable access to communications technology. The current digital media landscape offers an opportunity to address exploitative and socially oppressive tendencies of traditional media. Media and communications technologies policies can serve as a blueprint for human communication (Karikari, 2017). Policy can and should elevate opportunities for civic engagement by protecting vulnerable people from social and economic exploitations that are attached to advancements in communications technologies; policies should include guidelines for equitable design and implementation and to protect communication as a public good (Karikari, 2017).

Even in the United Kingdom, good governance and state responsiveness have been confronted with a growing consensus that the future requires a more active and engaged civil society which can express demands of the public and a more responsive and effective government that can secure the delivery of essential public services (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001). Governing institutions and international conventions may have adopted statements and declarations on access to information and one's rights to information (Birkinshaw,

2010), but there is a gap in research about the communication that organizations, particularly government organizations, are required to provide as a public good.

### **The Networked City**

Castells also views communication as a public good, but much of his research is focused on communications technology, and the medium through which communication is disseminated; his research primarily focuses on the interaction between information technology and society, leaving open the opportunity for research about the interaction between communication (messaging) and society (Castells, 2001).

As communities transitioned from the Industrial Age to the Information/Digital Age, the basis of technologies changed from production to information, and information became the key factor in economic productivity (Castells, 2001; Castells, 2011). Communications technologies such as the internet allowed for the decentralization of communication through multiple networks; power now rests in networks and the process of inclusion and exclusion (Castells, 2001; Castells, 2011; Castells, 2013). Castells (2001) defines the network society as being comprised of three features: the revolution of information technology, the process of globalization, and power networking that is possible through information technology, such as social media and the ability of the average citizen to push their information or message onto a global platform and engage with people of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Castells (2001) explains the crisis of cities and describes the city as a socio-spatial system of cultural communication. Here, he is referring to communication messaging, not communications technology. Castells moves between the terms communications (technology) and communication (messaging) fluidly without delineating the critical

difference between the two. He concedes that his research is abstract and has room for growth and future research (Castells, 2001).

Fuchs (2009) criticized Castells's dialectic vision of technology and society, which encompassed society and society's use of technology. Fuchs argues that technology is not the only driving force of society and Castells falls short in contributing research without the proposition of political implications (Fuchs, 2009). He further criticizes Castells's Habermasian approach to the network society, in which he claims Castells presents networks as inevitable and something to which people must adapt, not exploring the ways in which people could rise, challenge, and address networks through policy (Fuchs, 2009). Smith (2002) criticized Castells for claiming that the global dominated local resistance and said Castells overlooked the power components within cities (Viitanen, 2011).

Researchers have expanded on Castells's work, but primarily building on the communications technology aspect of his research. Madon and Sahay (2001), for example, expand on Castells's communication network theory and explore the global and local networks at play in Bangalore. They found that new networks based on information and communications technologies are increasingly woven into the fabric of network cities that connect powerful groups within the city, between cities, and around the world (Madon and Sahay, 2001). They build on Castells's notion that the presence of a network is a dynamic and powerful collection of interest groups that serve as gatekeepers of information and knowledge and are no longer bound geographically because of the digital platforms now available (Madon and Sahay, 2001).

But these researchers point out that most research undervalues the role of local gatekeepers, such as council members, policymakers, planners, and administrators in their

role of the development and maintenance of networks within the city (Madon and Sahay, 2001).

Today, the United Nations claims that 55 percent of the world's population indeed lives in urban areas, and that projection is expected to increase to 68 percent by 2050 (United Nations, 2018). The city of Dallas is the ninth-largest city in the United States and one of the fastest-growing cities in the country, with more than 1.3 million residents (World Population Review, 2018). In North Texas, national forecasts of population and economic growth indicate that this region will continue to add residents and jobs for years (Vision North Texas, 2018). Between 2000 and 2030, the 16-county region is expected to add 1.6 million households comprised of 4.1 million people and 2.3 million non-construction jobs (Vision North Texas, 2018). This illustrates an average annual population growth rate of 2.6 percent over those 30 years, unprecedented for the region (Vision North Texas, 2018). The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) prepares long-range planning forecasts and projects that North Texas will have more than 9.1 million residents by 2030 (Vision North Texas, 2018).

Castells (2001) claims that large metropolitan areas like North Texas have introduced a new geography of networks and urban nodes throughout the world. He asserts that the higher the value of people and places in the network society, the more they are connected in interactive networks, whereas the lower their value, the lower their connectivity; the disparity between major communication infrastructures reinforces segregation in communities (Castells, 2001; Madon and Sahay, 2001).

Madon and Sahay (2001) provide Bangalore as an example; the poor who live there are excluded from engaging in the planning of the city and subjected to the hazards of

poverty, inadequate health care, illiteracy, and other socio-economic problems that they do not know how to address. The poor in Bangalore create their own informal channels to mobilize support and communicate. With the support of local NGOs that had a line of communication established with government, the poor of Bangalore were eventually empowered and had a place in the network of key stakeholders in the city (Madon and Sahay, 2001).

**Network Disparities.** These disparities lead to a weakening of political accountability and a lack of citizen participation (Castells, 2001). The critical role of cities is that leaders are able to geographically and digitally share a closer spatial platform with their community and therefore be at a greater advantage to serve the needs of their respective communities (Castells, 2001). Castells (2001) claims that while there is not much political legitimacy left in the world, the little that is left exists at the local level. Castells (2001) defines the local level as a network-state that is comprised of local governments (cities, regions) as nodes in the state's network.

As Fuchs (2007) pointed out, the gap in this research is the real-life application of this theory. In Texas, for example, cities are constantly looking for ways to circumvent state law, and there are fierce fights between state and local government (Diaz, 2018). Local governments want to govern themselves, and this has serious implications for messaging at the local level (Diaz, 2018). Texas city officials have publicly made statements against state policies and proposals, including issues such as immigration, police pensions, bathroom bills, and abortions, and assured their respective communities that they break from the state on these issues and will continue with their own local policies (Diaz, 2018).

This is why researchers must challenge Castells's claim about the network society at the local level being comprised of the network state that encompasses the revolution of information technology, the process of globalization, and power networking that is possible through communications technology. The network is about more than just communications technology, it is also about communication messaging – the message being disseminated.

This research will illustrate how a networked city can be defined as one that possesses an organizational communication network of channels (rather than nodes) that a government agency can use for communication as a public good, and will also provide ethics and power implications for the creation of such a network.

### **Civic Communication Today**

Cities continue to struggle with how to engage a wide spectrum of people who are civic-minded, and those who have become invisible in the big city. The use of online information and interactive civic messaging through a website or electronic forum has had a significant influence on civic engagement over the past 10 years, more than traditional print, broadcast, and face-to-face communication (Castells, 2013).

Because of feedback via social media and community surveys, cities are making efforts to connect with more people and take advantage of new technology to reach those who have become isolated or difficult to reach through traditional means, such as town hall meetings and press releases. Vision Internet claims to be a leader in government website design, development, and hosting that increases government efficiency, builds transparency, and promotes engagement with citizens (PR Newswire, 2018). In its 2014 survey, the company found that municipal and county governments are relying more heavily on the digital sphere – websites, social media, and mobile services – to connect with

the public, but struggle to make them effective (Hughes, 2015). Among the 334 municipal and county governments, the 2015 survey findings include:

- 77 percent of respondents rated their websites as essential to overall communication
- 82 percent felt social media had a significant impact on operations
- 49 percent provided citizen-facing services via mobile devices

Government is full of information, data, facts, figures, numbers, and statistics that are sometimes easy and sometimes complicated to explain (Olson, 2015). The key to engaging residents is to not overwhelm the public with information, but to help interpret the information to more fully raise the issues that impact them. Governments, particularly cities, are challenged to make complex operations and services understandable, and how to communicate specific information in the right amount using the proper channels to ensure that the message is understood (Olson, 2015). Some steps to help develop a clear, concise, consistent, and effective message are: identify your audience, define the problem, identify the solution, and identify potential questions and arguments (Olson, 2015).

**Digital Channels.** Only 34 percent rated their websites as effective, and 29 percent rated their social media presence as effective (Hughes, 2015). Vision Internet said they were interested in the findings because of the dramatic shift in how local government is utilizing technology to communicate (Hughes, 2015). Government agencies overwhelmingly understood the significance of technology in their service to the public, but cited obstacles such as culture, procurement, and the competing priorities within city budgets. The majority of respondents cited funding issues for not moving forward with



technological advancements (Hughes, 2015). Those who did invest in technology reduced the size of their websites from thousands of pages to a few hundred, increased the bounce rates (how long people stay) from a few seconds to a minute, and used social media to engage with the community, attracting thousands of users (Hughes, 2015).

Social media is also having an impact in the communication efforts of local governments (Hughes, 2015; Graham and Avery, 2013). Facebook and Twitter are most widely used, and cities appear to focus most posts on events instead of promoting citizen dialogue and government transparency on substantive issues (Graham and Avery, 2013). There is room for improvement, as substantive and transparent engagement will help build trust and encourage accountability (Graham and Avery, 2013). Social media's popularity, low cost, ease of use, and large reach make them tools that public information officers (PIOs) must utilize to engage with their communities to meet democratic ideals (Graham and Avery, 2013).

**Public Access Television.** Public access television has also become a significant factor in the communication networks that cities develop today, providing the public with access to public meetings and community programming. Public access has existed for decades, with its roots dating back to 1967 when the U.S. Congress passed the Public Broadcasting Act (FCC, n.d.; Linder, 1999). This legislation led to the creation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which is based in Washington, D.C. and funded by Congress. The CPB created the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and served as the funding organization while PBS served as the programming arm for the new corporation (Linder, 1999). America's first community access cable channel, DCTV, launched in December 1968, broadcasting programs on local prisons, fire departments, parades, and

sporting events (FCC, n.d.). George Stoney became the “father” of public access television and set the precedent for community programming in Canada that other cities across the U.S. tried to emulate (FCC, n.d.). Public broadcasting historically focused on the delivery of information, and nonprofit cable access channels focused on providing a platform for public expression (FCC, n.d.). PEG channels provided local programming not provided by other media – until social media emerged. In 1984, Congress explicitly stated that public access channels are the public’s platform for freedom of speech, particularly those who had no access or opportunity to the electronic marketplace of ideas and contributing to an informed citizenry (FCC, n.d.).

As more cable companies expanded their infrastructure in cities, local government required these companies to set aside public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access channels (FCC, n.d.). Today, nearly 75 percent of franchises charge cable operators franchise fees, which go toward supporting PEG operations, and there are approximately 5,000 PEG channels in the U.S. today (FCC, n.d.). PEG funding only allows for the purchase of operational equipment to sustain programming, such as cameras, editing equipment, and monitors. Some cities have multimillion-dollar budgets but only one or two staff members, and smaller cities with PEG accounts are staffed by volunteers (FCC, n.d.).

**Multimedia Communication.** Today, we are seeing a diffusion of multimedia public access programs across the United States that is becoming a critical contributor to municipal communication networks. In some cases, states are allocating millions of dollars each year to cities, allowing for the broadcasting of hundreds of public meetings in their entirety on cable television, social media, and websites, empowering local politicians and residents. According to Castells (2013), we must understand networks to understand

institutions to understand power relationships in society. The larger the city, the greater the conflicts and the more complex the network and the power differentials. Arnstein (1969) warns of tokenism, an empty ritual of participation that has no real effect on the process. Participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless, only benefiting some and maintaining the status quo.

### **City of Dallas Communication Network**

For nearly a decade, mainstream media have included the use of blogs and interactive networks to support the distribution of content and engage the audience (Castells, 2007) and organizations, such as the city of Dallas, have developed their own networks to provide information, access, and engagement to the public.

The city of Dallas' communication network is multichannel and multimodal. Multimodality refers to the various technologies of communication, and multichannel refers to the various arrangements of the sources of communication (Castells, 2013). The creative audience then processes the information in a multi-directional manner (interactive production of meaning) in the world of mass self-communication through digital platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, websites, and more (Castells, 2013). The grand convergence is not just technological and organizational; convergence refers to communicative subjects who integrate various modes and channels of communication in their practice and interactions with others (Castells, 2013). Global multimedia business networks and government-owned media have taken advantage of the deregulation and liberalization to integrate the networks of communication, the platforms of communication, and the channels of communication (Castells, 2013).

Within the media world, the digitization of information and the expansion of networks of mass self-communication lead to the conundrum of how to monetize the networks through advertising. As a municipality, the city of Dallas cannot broadcast advertisements on public access channels, but it can accept sponsorships and run social media “ads” or Public Service Announcements, PSAs, for issues related to city services and initiatives. The city can also charge facility use rental fees. City marketing initiatives, particularly in large cities, are often left to the respective convention & visitors bureaus.

For PEG channels, cable operators pay fees to local franchising authorities for the use of public right-of-way facilities, and these franchise fees bring in huge revenues for municipalities. In 2007, the city of Dallas took in \$142 million (FCC, n.d.). In past years, the fees were used to support PEG channels and other public communication needs, but the law does not require all the money to go to PEG channels, and very little money does transfer (FCC, n.d.). Some cities invested their funds for public use. Mount Prospect, Illinois, provided disaster coverage and assistance after a devastating storm; Chicago Access Network offers coverage of town hall meetings and other community events and educational programming on five PEG channels; Saint Paul, Minnesota, offered eight programs for a growing Somali population, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, provided more than 22,000 hours of programming on three channels featuring artists, poets, comedians, and neighborhood activists (FCC, n.d.).

Dallas hired iMedia network in 2001 and paid nearly \$700,000 annually to iMedia for management of its PEG channels. By 2009, that number had dwindled to \$196,000 and iMedia was forced to fold (Levinthal, 2008). The president of iMedia, Lisa Hembry, accused the city of Dallas of attacking the public’s freedom of speech and called the lack of funding a

crisis and the end of public access television in Dallas (Levinthal, 2008). What city officials did not realize is that a member of iMedia's staff continued programming of those cable channels by charging churches to send their sermons and children's programming for air time through 2014. The four channels were not being used for any other civic purpose. In 2014, the city attorney's office sent the staff member a cease and desist letter (Appendix A).

The city had four cable channels with the capacity to provide more than 8,500 hours of access to meetings. Wrestling these resources for the public to use as part of a democratized communication network was a difficult battle, but the city of Dallas Public Information Office ultimately regained control of all four cable channels as part of its organizational communication network and in 2015 began broadcasting dozens of public meetings the public previously did not have access to unless they attended the meetings.

The city of Dallas also maintains a city website, [dallascityhall.com](http://dallascityhall.com), a community news site, [dallascitynews.net](http://dallascitynews.net), and three social media accounts with thousands of followers on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The city also provides online access to public meetings broadcast on its cable channels and archive access to past meetings. Administrators also utilize town hall and tele-town hall meetings to personally engage with the public.

**Survey Says.** The city of Dallas conducts community surveys every two years. The survey results were taken into consideration in 2014 to develop a communication plan for the city. In 2014 and 2016, before and after the city had operationalized a communication network, respectively, the surveys found the following:

In 2014 and 2016, residents noted that among the most important public information services were the level of public involvement in decision making and the availability about information about city programs and services (ETC, 2014; ETC, 2016).

Additionally, resident use of public information services rose from 12 percent in 2014 to 23 percent in 2016, which is the same time the city increased access, information, and engagement with residents on the various platforms listed above. The ratings of the quality of public information services also rose from 59 percent in 2014 to 71 percent in 2016 (ETC, 2016).

### **The Other Network: Traditional Media**

Castells (2007) claimed that because politics is based on socialized communication and the ability to shape people's thoughts, the main conduit of information between the political system and citizens is the mass media system, television in particular. He further explains that print media produce original information, television media repackage and disseminate to a larger audience, and radio will work toward customizing the content (Castells, 2007). Castells (2007) asserts that in the U.S., politics is primarily media politics and the institutions work together to establish one another's legitimacy. This does not mean that media have all the power, as they often rely heavily on political actors to deliver information that they need to continuously meet demands for the amount of news that must be produced (Castells, 2007; McCombs, 2006).

While Dallas is home to the *Dallas Morning News*, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, and television stations owned and operated by ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox, these media outlets do not hold a monopoly in the Dallas market; counter-flows impact their form and structure (Thussu, 2007). These companies help develop their own content and circulate and filter content produced by other members of the media organization network, such as *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, Associated Press, Reuters, and

more (Castells, 2013). The various publications are critical sources of inter-media and public agenda-setting (Castells, 2013; McCombs, 2006).

A focus on local experiences allows the media to play a key role, as its networks serve to influence the public as primary sources of messages and images. Media can set the agenda, decide what is worthy to be considered news, and then broadcast it the public. The media agenda is the stories the media focus on at any given moment – the repetitiveness of these stories give them salience, which tells the audience what to think about (McCombs, 2006). Priming by the media can increase the salience of a topic and cause shifts in perception (Castells, 2013). The media may have a direct agenda-setting effect when they politicize an issue and bring it to the public's attention, resulting in government action or they may have an indirect effect on shaping public opinion by the framing of the debate (Castells, 2013). There are opportunities for future research to explore the agenda-setting effects of organizational communication networks within cities.

News coverage of scandal politics contributes to the degradation of the institution involved and other institutions not directly involved, including media (Castells, 2013). This is what we are seeing today with the Trump administration's excessive scandals in just two years. The superfluous amount of coverage of his and his administration's scandals have led to a national turn against institutions, including the media. His tactic has been to delegitimize institutions that could weaken his power, but this has led to the delegitimization of his own administration (Sargent, 2017). Continuous excessive coverage of these scandals could lead to scandal fatigue (Castells, 2013).

**Representation in the Network.** Media influence public trust/distrust, which may influence public participation, such as voting and holding elected officials accountable. As

information gatekeepers, like cities, media can set the agenda, decide what is worthy to be considered news, and then broadcast it the public through their respective networks. But although media claim to be representatives of the public, Castells (2013) raises concern about media's interest in collecting revenue over treating communication as a public good, as issues and groups become invisible through media's lack of representation in the programming that command the global networks of valuation, distribution, and production. He and Sassen point out that exclusion from these networks is comparable to the structural marginalization of people in the global network society, which is a component of economic cleansing (Castells, 2013; Sassen, 2015).

Castells (2013) describes the ideal democracy as one that preserved openness of the political system, community activists control who is elected to office, and if the powerful parties and governments do not manipulate the system in their favor, free and informed people are able to confront their views through a transparent process of shared decision-making, preserving good governance. In his view, society has not yet attained this ideal democracy.

Messages, organizations, and leaders who do not have a presence in the media do not exist in the public mind or public realm (Castells, 2013). Those whose messages reach the public at large are the ones who have a chance to either heighten their political stature or maintain their political institutions (Castells, 2013). Today, complex organizations are interacting with networked users who consume media products and create their own networks through mass self-communication (Castells, 2013).

Media index the salience of news and viewpoints according to the perceived importance of issues among the elites and in public opinion (Castells, 2013). Media rank



importance of particular issues based on government statements (Castells, 2013). Government officials' statements receive priority in the indexing process because they are a primary source of information on major issues and are responsible for implementing proposed policy or action (Castells, 2013). Indexing depends on the positions of the elites, and also on the division among those elites in power (Castells, 2013). The public must have information and counter-frames to exercise a choice in interpretation to have an informed opinion (Castells, 2013). Politicians are a part of a city's communication network and the media's communication network. The agenda-based information they present through mass media can be balanced by objective information (without engaging in a war of words) through the city's channels.

Media framing is a multilayered process that begins with a negotiation between key political actors or interest groups and the media before reaching the public (Castells, 2013). Entman proposes a model called cascading activation, which involves the government, elites, media, news frames, and then the public (Entman, 2007). This model illustrates the relationships between these various groups, the interaction between the actors in a hierarchy of influence that combines agenda-setting, priming, framing, and indexing in one process with feedback loops (Castells, 2013). Government officials are at the top of the hierarchy because of their privileged information and policy choices (Castells, 2013). The agenda-setting process is filtered through the various power-players until the information reaches the public (Castells, 2013). The public, in turn, influence the media through their comments and level of attention (Castells, 2013).

Castells (2013) explains the significance of informational politics, which makes use of the media system and digital media; this is as close as he came to defining organizational

communication networks. In the new age of mass self-communication, governments have engaged in organizational communication networks, which make equal use of the traditional media system, digital media, and in-person contact, and provide another source of information for the general public outside of political voices. Informational politics relies on the identification of values, beliefs, attitudes, social behavior, voting patterns for members within voting districts (Castells, 2013).

Crises are critically important to address, as mismanagement of crises or uncivil political actions can instigate scandal politics, compromising public trust in the political system; scandal politics is a greater determinant of the crisis of trust than traditional media politics (Castells, 2013). Researchers have found that in the U.S., those who rely on television or radio for their information about the politics had more negative feelings toward the political system than those who were exposed to less media (Castells, 2013). Crisis communication is about relationships, and similarly, Kirkhaug (2016) argues that proactive communication for administrators also allows citizen participation earlier in the process, providing even more valuable input, but that means city officials must continuously improve upon facilitating quality communication (Kirkhaug, 2016).

**Public Trust.** News coverage of scandal politics contributes to the degradation of the institution involved and other institutions not directly involved, including media (Castells, 2013). This public trust/distrust may influence public participation, such as voting and holding elected officials accountable. The public has a number of options before withdrawing from the political system – including mobilizing against political options, mobilizing to become an indispensable constituency (such as Evangelicals), supporting third-party candidates as a protest vote (such as Nader and Stein), supporting an insurgent

candidate (such as Obama and Trump), choosing not to vote, or increasing social mobilization outside the system (Castells, 2013) – but these actions would be difficult to sustain without a strong communication network, particularly one that already belongs to an established institution.

Media politics and scandal politics lead to crisis of political legitimacy, but a decline in public trust does not necessarily lead to decreased political participation; politicians will find new ways to reach a disenfranchised constituency and voters will find ways to mobilize outside the political system, collectively creating a gap between political institutions and political action, creating a crisis of democracy (Castells, 2013).

The dominance of media politics and the politics of scandal is connected to exposure to political corruption and the decline of political trust (Castells, 2013). Perceived corruption alone can have an adverse effect on political trust (Castells, 2013). The public's increasing exposure to media platforms exposes them to more uncivil political actions, contributing to the decline of political institutions (Castells, 2013). Scandal politics contributes to a crisis of trust (Castells, 2013). However, when the public already loses faith in the government, it can collectively experience scandal fatigue, reducing the impact scandals have on the public's perception of government (Castells, 2013).

### **Citizen Participation**

Public administration practitioners have tried to be inclusive of the diversity of city dwellers for decades through a citizen participation model that has evolved historically and is grounded in one-way communication. In 2002, the city of Cincinnati used this model to address efforts toward creating various types of housing stock in an inner-city neighborhood plagued with crime and violence. The city provided updates, but the

terminology was vague. They provided data, but it was ambiguous. They provided updates about the development that was approved by diverse stakeholders but did not monitor the work being done or communicate adequately during the implementation (McTague and Jakubowski, 2013). The failure to uphold key characteristics of the citizen participation process resulted in tokenism in the process, plan, and participants because future development happened without adherence to goals and objectives agreed upon by citizens (McTague and Jakubowski, 2013).

Citizen participation in civic matters in the U.S. has gradually become more institutionalized at all levels of government, particularly in the 1970s (Depoe and Delicath, 2004). Advocacy organizations have found that current approaches to citizen participation are falling short in meeting the needs of a diverse public and have demanded changes in how public participation is solicited and used (Depoe and Delicath, 2004). In recent years, administrators, citizens, and academics have explored opportunities for more meaningful public involvement in decision making and public policy, such as community-based collaborations, community advisory boards, citizen review panels, and online discussion forums (Depoe and Delicath, 2004).

**Network Limitations.** Citizen participation has its limitations. It operates on a technocratic model where policymakers, administrators, and experts see their role as educating and persuading the public about the legitimacy of their decisions (Depoe and Delicath, 2004). Citizen participation often happens too late in the decision-making process or after decisions have been made, a form of tokenism (Arnstein, 1969; Depoe and Delicath, 2004). It can be adversarial, it can often lack adequate forums and technological infrastructure to support dialogue among many stakeholders, and it often lacks enough

oversight to ensure that the public feels a real impact as a result of decision or policymaking (Arnstein, 1969; Depoe and Delicath, 2004).

Arnstein expands upon Foucault's work as she seeks to hold the powerful accountable for contriving to substitute non-participation and tokenism as genuine participation (Arnstein, 1969). Under tokenism, the public may seek to advance a platform of issues, but that does not necessarily lead to influence or results; they still lack power (Arnstein, 1969). The citizen power category of partnership, delegated power, and citizen control provides citizens the capacity to make decisions or have full managerial power. Arnstein (1969) concedes that her famous ladder-illustration is a simplification; the real-world ladder could have dozens of rungs.

Channeling Foucault, she also acknowledges power dynamics at every level, as this model is applied to a variety of institutions, including the federal government, places of religious worship, universities, public schools, city halls, and police departments. "Have-nots" and the powerholders both maintain differing points of view, competing vested interests, subgroups, and obstacles to push their respective agendas (Arnstein, 1969). The powerholders' obstacles include racism, paternalism, and resistance to power redistribution, and those in the have-nots' category include a weak socioeconomic infrastructure and knowledge-base, alienation, and distrust (Arnstein, 1969).

Manipulation, the lowest rung in Arnstein's ladder, includes placing people on advisory committees or advisory boards to educate them or engineer their support, contributing to a distorted participation system that powerholders use as a public relations tool (Arnstein, 1969). Delegated power refers to the level that allows for negotiations between citizens and public officials that results in decision-making authority. Citizen

control, the final rung in Arnstein's ladder, calls for community-controlled schools and neighborhood control; this level allows the public to govern a program or an institution, to be in full charge of a policy and managerial aspects, and the power to negotiate the conditions under which changes can be made (Arnstein, 1969).

**Challenging Old Models.** Today, some cities have maintained regimented process for collecting public input and archaic requirements for public announcements that include publishing in at least one local newspaper, by mail, or on the city's website, then reviewing data, proposing a plan, and allowing final comments on the plan via these methods (Kirkhaug, 2016). It is an improvement in public affairs that administrators incorporate the question of how will the public react to everyday decision making (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). But in the Information/Digital Age, technology has opened the door to experiment with new technological infrastructures, such as crowd-funding tools that can be used to garner support for public projects, apps that allow people to report a code violation or pothole, and social media polls and campaigns that can reach audiences that may not attend town hall meetings.

A challenge to participation is the perception of corruption that can morph into a crisis of legitimacy, defined as the widespread disregard of political leads and their ability to make decisions on behalf of citizens for the well-being of society (Castells, 2013). The perception of corruption continues to grow because of the publicity of it, which means it is directly linked to media coverage and public affairs (Castells, 2013). Consistent negative media coverage results in media malaise, which refers to the public's apathy and isolation that grows; with advent of social media, and traditional communication mediums of television, radio, and print, the public are increasingly exposed to uncivil political actions,

which contributes to a loss of confidence in political institutions (Castells, 2013). Other researchers argue that the increased coverage actually increases civic engagement, as people who are more engaged are more connected to the news (Castells, 2013).

Researchers concede there is a level of complexity that comes with urban issues, the quality of communication, and conveying the intent of participation (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Kirkhaug, 2016). The complexity includes the challenges of meeting the needs of various stakeholders, giving everyone interested in speaking an opportunity to participate, facilitating participatory processes among planners, developers, and politicians equally (Kirkhaug, 2016). There is also criticism that local media cover urban issues without a clear understanding of context and the complexity of governing a large urban area. The complexity is magnified when cities face major crises which are covered “live” and which require new information for 24 hour media cycles.

Quality communication requires resources, money, and human power, which may result in public backlash during times of scarcity if there is no clear return on investment that is communicated effectively to stakeholders (Mohammadi, 2010; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Kirkhaug, 2016). Public participation can also be a heavy time commitment, slowing down the decision-making process; it is not cheap, fast, or easy (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). In addition, citizen participation can be dominated by special-interest groups with access to mass communication tools that can sway public opinion quickly and without complete information (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). Often, these issues are brought to light as a result of a crisis which motivates participants to engage in the decision-making process (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004).

**Best Practices.** Commonly cited strategies to encourage citizen participation in urban areas include carefully selecting a representative group of stakeholders, develop a transparent decision-making process, identifying a clear authority in decision making, engaging in regular meetings, and having appropriate financial resources to support citizen participation (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). Kirkhaug (2016) provides some guidance on quality communication by stressing that communication can be auditory, visual or tangible, and as a core component of engagement, should be clear and concise, and focused on context and sensitive to opinion. He explains that the careful consideration of which channel to push communication through, an organization must have a relatable tone of voice, intertwine motivation and visualization, and offer opportunities for two-way communication. These are great suggestions, as it is an attempt to stress engagement and quality communication, but it is an over-complication of communication and lacks strategic elements, key performance indicators, directions on how to utilize digital channels, and a link to the organizational communication network.

### **Organizational Communication Networks**

There is an opportunity for public administration to move away from one-way citizen participation and evolve into organizational communication networks that account for access, information, engagement, and crisis communication; programmers and switchers of networks must be inclusive and engage people of various socioeconomic backgrounds, to empower them to improve their own quality of life, hold elected and public officials accountable, and to understand how they can bring about systemic change (Habermas, 1987; Castells, 2013; Sassen, 2015). While Fuchs (2009) argued that Castells



focused on abstract contributions and communications technology at a global level, there are some applicable components to his research for local networks.

Network gatekeeping examines which nodes are included or excluded from the network, highlighting the key role of gatekeepers in enforcing collective power of some networks over others or of a network's relation with disconnected social units (Castells, 2013). These gatekeepers include switchers and programmers. The programmers define the goals of the network (and have the capacity to reprogram it) and the switchers have single-purpose domination power, affecting multiple levels of social structure (Castells, 2013). Programs of the dominant networks (such as media and government) of society need to set compatible goals between networks and they must communicate with each other and limit contradiction (Castells, 2013). Another major source of power is the networks' programming capacity, which depends on the ability to generate, diffuse, and affect the discourses that form human action (Castells, 2013). Discourses shape the public mind through communication networks because they organize socialized communication, which allows the public to contemplate issues that affect their lives, and not be distracted by entertainment and politics (Castells, 2013).

Whoever controls the message is whoever controls the agenda, and because mass self-communication has tilted the scales of power, the agendas of both the rich and the poor are being consumed by millions connected through social media today (Castells, 2007; Castells, 2013; McCombs, 2006). Newly emerging communication practices have seen remarkable success through blogs, social media, videos, and citizen reporting (Benkler, 2006; Castells, 2013). These have collectively created an active role toward individual freedom that invites democratic participation, fosters a more critical and self-reflective

culture, and contributes to increasing information and human development (Benkler, 2006).

An examination of history and geography shows that there is a close association between the concentration of power and the concentration of communication media (Castells, 2013). Castells (2013) is referring to the media communication network, and almost every media outlet presented in his diagram is present in Dallas, the largest city in North Texas. Media can maximize advertising revenue by expanding potential audiences by moving content across platforms (Castells, 2013). While cities may not be able to do the same, the organization can capitalize on specific channels within its network to develop a revenue stream for the general fund. For a city such as Dallas, with a population of nearly 1.3 million and a budget of \$3.1 billion, with a constant shortage because of financial pressures from public safety and infrastructure maintenance, the prospect of creating a revenue stream from a communication network could be critical, such as through sponsorships on public access TV and facilities rental fees.

### **Communication Ethics in Cities**

Ethical concerns are an everyday part of city administration and can affect the relationship between city staff, managers, elected officials and major private stakeholders. Ethical decision-making often requires weighing several, and sometimes contradicting, principles (Bowman, 1997). Several ethical issues can confront public servants in their daily roles. Managers may ask an employee to do something that they know is against city policy. An elected official may try to use public funds for campaigning. A major private stakeholder may attempt to bypass their elected representatives and influence the work of city staff directly.

Ethics in government has been a topic of concern for many decades. The 1980s was a time that witnessed a deepening interest in ethics after experiencing privatization, materialism, and self-righteousness driven by fraud on Wall Street, issues at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, scandals involving the U.S. Justice Department and Congress and more (Bowman, 1990). Career civil servants constantly faced questions of what constituted appropriate behavior in exercising public trust and Bowman's 1990 study surveyed attitudes of public administration managers across the country in understanding ethical issues in public affairs. The survey examined perceptions regarding ethics in society and government, the nature of integrity in public agencies, and overall organizational approaches to moral standards (Bowman, 1990).

Survey participants noticed a growing interest in ethics, but they were skeptical that anything would come from that interest (Bowman, 1990). Almost all managers in public organizations acknowledged that they are confronted with ethical issues at work and they were comfortable raising these issues at work (Bowman, 1990). Majority of respondents doubted that ethical standards of elected and appointed officials were as high as those held by career civil servants (Bowman, 1990). Respondents also offered that institutions tended to have a reactive approach to ethics instead of one that deterred problems (Bowman, 1990). This point was further illustrated as respondents explained that there was no agreed upon, usable standard or procedure to assist decision making about ethics (Bowman, 1990).

Bowman stressed the need for institutions to have enforceable standards in place that are accepted by those who are governed (Bowman, 1990). The study showed that codes of ethics are critically important in organizations, but the data reflected how limited

the actual impact was (Bowman, 1990). To create a strong and ethical environment, leadership is key as ethical leadership paves the way for the creation of a moral code for others (Bowman, 1990). Equally important is to involve employees in the goals and process of developing an ethics code (Bowman, 1990). An appropriate code is a consensus of documents with clear guidelines and application to all employees and managers, without exception, and with oversight from an ethics board (Bowman, 1990).

Bowman built upon his research in 1997 to see what progress had been made. Almost half of a similarly-sized group of respondents said that their organization had never provided formal ethics training and those who did receive it said it was not provided on a continuing basis (Bowman, 1997). Majority of respondents also said that their organization did not have an internal ethics oversight office or someone to directly address ethical concerns (Bowman, 1997). Some progress had been made in organizational policies, but these institutions still lacked an agreed upon and enforceable standard for codes of ethics (Bowman, 1997)

Ten years after Bowman's study, Jovanovic and Wood (2006) examined the ethics initiative in the city of Denver to see how ethics discussions contributed to an ethical culture. Specifically, they were interested in how ethics emerge within communication. The researchers stressed that public confidence in our institutions is damaged and there is a need to explore what actions lead to consensus in regards to addressing collective problems and improving conditions at work, in the community and in government (Jovanovic and Wood, 2006). Jovanovic and Wood (2016) explain that talking about ethics is critical to more ethical decision making.

ICMA is the International City/County Management Association. A resource in local governments, it also provides some insight into common ethical issues that could surface in cities. Local government managers face the challenge of establishing a solid relationship with a governing body that is based on mutual trust and respect in a public arena, and despite competing interests (Perego, 2010). When either party does not understand its role or respect boundaries, the relationship is damaged (Perego, 2010).

ICMA teaches that managers can help elected officials understand the division of labor between elected officials and staff through council retreats, orientations, presentations by corporation counsel, and regular discussions (Perego, 2010). It is not, however, the manager's job to correct the inappropriate conduct of someone they report to (Perego, 2010). Governing bodies must police the conduct of their peers and speak up when that conduct crosses boundaries (Perego, 2010). It is the manager's ethical obligation to stand firm when elected officials encroach on her/his professional responsibilities and do what is right, even at the risk of losing her/his position (Perego, 2010). Unlike a strong mayor form of government, council-manager form of government requires the city manager to report to the mayor and council and maintain a balance between politics and business operations.

**Ethically Responsible Administrators.** Another aspect of ethics is stakeholder analysis, which also addresses ethical values into management decision-making (Goodpaster, 1991). Goodpaster discusses ethically responsible management, which he believes is management that pays careful attention to stakeholders in the decision-making process (Goodpaster, 1991). Goodpaster defined stakeholders as parties that have a stake in the decision-making of the modern, publicly-held corporation and those holding equity

positions (Goodpaster, 1991). Goodpaster discusses this ethical dilemma from the private sector and corporate standpoint, but it bears validity for government agencies as well. He refers to “Nemo Dat Principle” (NDP) and considers it a formal requirement of consistency in business and professional ethics: Investors cannot expect of managers, or principals cannot expect of their agents, behavior that would be inconsistent with the reasonable expectations of the community (Goodpaster, 1991).

The decision-making of local government organizations is a stakeholder-based process where stakeholders have power and exert influence due to interest in the organization’s operations and outcomes (Gomes, 2006). Gomes (2006) defines a stakeholder as a person, group, or organization that can place a claim on an organization’s attention, resources, or output or is affected by the output. Power also grows from the decision-making process, and those who have power over such processes can coerce others by adhering to or ignoring procedures and political routines (Gomes, 2006).

Within the context of local government, Perkins and Crews (2013) describe stakeholders as private developers, local businesses, environmentalists, and government authorities who work with local planners. These public servants can face competing interests that challenge their own values and with their professional obligations (Perkins and Crews, 2013). The study showed that these public administrators are facing an increasing range of complex ethical dilemmas that they say they are not equipped to deal with due to a lack of resources or mechanisms (Perkins and Crews, 2013).

Ethical dilemmas involve making choices between non-overriding, conflicting moral requirements (Perkins and Crews, 2013). Ethical issues are composed of four key elements: no clear resolution is obvious, the agent is required to do two or more actions, the agent

can do each of the actions, but none will address the ethical conflict (Perkins and Crews, 2013). Most people do not use ethical frameworks to judge morality, but instead draw on life experiences, personal values, and maybe religious convictions (Perkins and Crews, 2013). In the business world, ethical decision-making is not so simple (Perkins and Crews, 2013).

Organizations have distinct ethical work climates and these climates may affect organizational performance (Menzel, 1993). Strong ethical climates of local government organizations have a positive impact on efficiency, effectiveness, quality, excellence, and teamwork (Menzel, 1993). Bureaucratic environments are rife with an emphasis on hierarchy and rule following, and thus are often found to lack a strong commitment to organizational ethics (Menzel, 1993). Procedural emphases in addition to other variables in the workplace reinforce ethics in public organizations (Menzel, 1993). Ethical concerns that are not addressed can affect performance in an organization (Menzel, 1993).

### **The Power of Communication Networks**

Power is the foundation of society and institutions are created to sustain that power and its values, which could also translate to ethics (Castells, 2011). Where there is power, counterpower exists, accounting for the values of those who are subordinate (Castells, 2011). We cannot discuss power without understanding counterpower and the relationship between the two; in network societies, power is exercised by and through networks (Castells, 2011).

Castells (2011) identifies four forms of power: networking power, network power, networked power, and network-making power. In each, he examines gatekeeping of information, who is included (and therefore excluded), the power of and relations of those

who control the network, and how networks cater their networks to those who hold power in other networks. He's very theoretical and abstract in his explanation of counterpower, which he describes is an effort by disruptors to push the dominant from their agendas (Castells, 2011). He explains that humans act based on information they are fed from different networks, and in a networked city, one could argue that there are multiple organizational networks at play at a given moment, such as media, government (administrators), lawmakers, and corporations (Castells, 2011). Castells refers to these various networks as powerholders, with the capacity to program or set the agenda for the network, and switching between networks (Castells, 2011; Castells, 2013). Castells mixes these various stakeholders into one powerful network of media politics, but also acknowledges the existence of organizational networks. There is a case to be made for networks being powerful autonomous machines, yet connected as a part of the institutions structurally in place in society.

He explains that social actors are capable of developing their own networks by garnering resources to communicate and then exercising their gatekeeping power to provide access or limit access to others, based on their interests and values (Castells, 2011). He goes on to claim that standards or protocols of communication outline the rules of network operations and sustain the network, but he does not provide detailed examples of what those standards or protocols could be (Castells, 2011). In the end, power is the relational capacity to impose one's will over another's based on institutional power structures of domination (Castells, 2011). He also specifically mentions that organizations, such as military, and various branches of the government are able to operationalize networks because they have access to technological innovation, knowledge, and are



embedded in society as a power structure which are capable of shaping peoples' lives regardless of their will (Castells, 2011).

Castells (2011) himself concedes that he is speaking in abstract terms, opening a door for researchers to walk through and explore. But there are some critical points he makes that can translate into practice. Primarily, it is Castells's Habermasian reference to crisis of legitimacy, which he claims occurs when citizens do not recognize themselves in the institutions of society (Castells, 2008; Castells, 2013; Habermas, 1987). For cities, crisis of legitimacy is a real challenge for any major crisis they face.

For example, in 2015, as the Black Lives Matter movement was gaining momentum across the United States, cities across the country were being confronted with police killings of unarmed civilians and an unfair justice system (Mellman, 2015). These confrontations signaled a crisis of legitimacy for the police in the African-American community, and institutions are aware that once legitimacy erodes, anarchy begins (Mellman, 2015). The legitimacy of institutions are challenged when officials are seen as repressive and unfair, as officials and police officers were accused of in Ferguson and Baltimore in 2015 (Mellman, 2015).

This is an example of the practical application of Castells's argument. This is why we must examine organizational communication networks within the context of crises and the crisis of legitimacy, as this study provides. As Castells (2011) stressed, power can only be understood within the context of counterpower.

Castells (2007) goes on to warn of how power dynamics are changing in the new communication space as the interests of politicians, social actors, and the media collide. New social practices of communication continue to diminish traditional structures of

power in this space, allowing social actors to set up autonomously their political agenda, at times becoming more powerful through mass self-communication than the corporate world of the mass media (Castells, 2007). The old struggle for social domination as the counter domination continues in the space of the new media (Castells, 2007). The new age of mass self-communication has forced dominant elites to be confronted by social movements, autonomy projects, and insurgent politics (Castells, 2007).

Network power is an alternative form of power that is a result of consensus building and other forms of collaboration within a democracy (Booher and Innes, 2002).

Communicators sometimes feel powerless when politicians do not act on their recommendations, sometimes they must support the organization even if it conflicts with their personal beliefs, and although they want to work in the public interest, their work is often a residual effect of projects already underway in the city (Booher and Innes, 2002).

Unlike many administrators, who often remain behind the scenes, communicators have a very prominent role in municipal affairs. Administrators have had the power to organize attention and focus people's attention on some issues and away from others, similar to communicators (Booher and Innes, 2002). Castells calls this the era of the network society, a time of continued technological revolutions that transforms the material basis of society (Booher and Innes, 2002).

To achieve communicative rationality, diversity is essential to dialogue as it allows for discourse with individuals of different beliefs, experiences, and knowledge (Habermas, 1987; Booher and Innes, 2002). Paradoxically, power depends on listening, one of the conditions for communicative rationality and authentic dialogue (Habermas, 1987; Booher and Innes, 2002). Communicating authentically requires practitioners to be self-aware of

their roles in shaping public discourse, establishing policy, setting agendas, and framing issues (Booher and Innes, 2002). Practitioners and researchers must be more deliberate in accounting for power and reflect on their efforts so that they use their power in a responsible and ethical way (Booher and Innes, 2002).

**Defining Power.** Castells's definition of crisis of legitimacy and counterpower is rooted in Habermas, but his notion of power comes from Foucault, as he claims that relational capacity allows a social actor to influence decisions of others in a way that tilts toward the empowered actor's desire, interests, and values (Castells, 2013; Firer-Blaess, 2018; Foucault, 1977). Castells (2013) claims that power is no longer concentrated in symbolic controllers such as churches and media, and that even institutions and organizations are being tested by the new society that has transformed old forms of power; whoever wins people's minds will rule, regardless of the origin of the source (Booher and Innes, 2002). Replacing the old forms of power are adaptive organizations comprised of teams engaged in dialogue, collaboration, and the development of shared meaning across the organization (Booher and Innes, 2002). While new collaborations have surfaced in the public sector, it has still lagged the private sector in developing the potential of networked relationships (Booher and Innes, 2002).

Foucault explains power as productive and local, rather than oppressive and hierarchical, suggesting real opportunity for change (Foucault, 1977; Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002). He rarely separated knowledge from power; the renunciation of power is a condition of knowledge (Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002). Foucault does not call for the end of power in Habermas's utopia of perfectly transparent communication, but rather, to

give the rules of law, techniques of management, and ethics that allow power to continue with minimum domination (Foucault, 1980; Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002).

Castells (2013) defines power as the relational function that allows a social actor to asymmetrically influence the decisions of other social actors in a way that favors the empowered actor's desires. Power is always asymmetrical because it refers to the relational capacity one actor has over another (Castells, 2013). Power is exercised by means of coercion or by the construction of meaning through discourse; it is framed by domination. There is never absolute power as there is always the possibility for someone to question the power relationship (Castells, 2013).

Critics say the network society Castells defines is actually a capitalist society that shapes social relationships globally (Smart, 2000); building on this concept, an organizational communication network is a democratic society that shapes social relationships locally. Castells acknowledges that networked capitalism produces its own form of inequality, poverty, and social exclusion and global capital markets have newfound power (Smart, 2000). But Smart (2000) believes that rather than the emergence of a new culture or spirit, we are part of the continuing development of capitalism, which is increasingly informational in its operation.

Critics, such as Smart (2000), claim that the relationships between these complex structural transformations are unclear (Gill, 2009). Smart believes that if networks are ubiquitous, as Castells claims, then how are they a significant transformation; Smart argues that this was not really a transformation as it was a change of scale (Gill, 2009). Castells responds by explaining that some social structures would have never emerged if it were not for the technology, and the gains made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century paved the road for the

network society (Gill, 2009; Castells, 2013). Smart (2000) cites Marx when explaining that constant revolutions in the mode of production and exchange are components of modern capitalism's culture of creative destruction; this system produces extremes of deprivation and debt, exclusion, excessive wealth, and feeds into perceived benefits of consumerism (Smart, 2000).

Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and since Smart's critique, the mass media system has been converted from a monopolistic powerhouse of information to a fragmented multimedia system and increasingly segmented audiences (Castells and Cardoso, 2005; Castells, 2013). As the network society diffuses, horizontal networks emerge along with self-directed mass communication which has allowed individuals to bypass the institutional communication systems to produce their own blogs, podcasts, viral videos, and more (Castells and Cardoso, 2005). Mainstream media and television dominate the media space for now, but political competition and political leaders are growing their power in that same space (Castells and Cardoso, 2005). Character assassination and negative messages are the weapons of choice for politicians, and this contributes to a crisis of legitimacy (Castells, 2008; Castells and Cardoso, 2005).

**Empowerment.** Communication can be a vehicle for empowering the public, but it must also acknowledge power relations (Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002). That acknowledgment means that cities understand their organizational communication networks are powerful, and this power can influence populations at a micro level (Foucault, 1977).

For some, empowerment is about legitimacy as political players, and Castells stresses that a citizen's greatest power is holding elected officials accountable and voting

them out when they do not serve the needs of their constituents (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Castells, 2013). Empowerment increases social capital and allows citizens to have a stronger voice in decisions that affect their lives (Mohammadi, 2010). One could conclude that empowerment is to provide information, access, and engagement that empowers a citizen to hold officials accountable and understand the institutional structures and how to navigate them to influence decision makers and policy.

The strongest power the public has is holding politicians accountable by voting them out if they do not listen to their constituents (Castells, 2013). People hold power based on their influence on others, and this process is largely dependent on communication and media politics, which is why the practice of democracy can be compromised when there is a disassociation between communication power and representative power (Castells, 2013). If formal procedures of political representation are dependent on the informal allocation of communication power in the multimedia system, there is inequitable opportunity for actors, values, and interests to operate in the political system (Castells, 2013). When media become the primary arbiter of meaning in a community, we experience a crisis of democracy where democracy is confined within media politics (Castells, 2013). Civil society is the one that can equitably define what democracy means to it and do what is necessary to make it happen (Castells, 2013). Has mass self-communication allowed for the diverse expression of alternative messages and allowed the people to wield the power?

The interaction between cultural change and political change produces social change (Castells, 2013). Any structural change in the values institutionalized in a given society is the result of social movements (Castells, 2013). The process of social change requires a challenging reprogramming of the communication network, rethinking cultural

codes and implicit social and political values and interests that they convey (Castells, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

Castells has made clear his concerns about net neutrality, nationalism, and communication power; he shows himself to be an advocate of communication as a public good (Castells, 2011; Castells, 2013). However, much of his research is focused on communications technology, and the medium through which communication is disseminated; his research focuses on the interaction between information technology and society, leaving open the opportunity for research about the interaction between communication (messaging) and society (Castells, 2001).

Castells (2011) concedes that he is speaking in abstract terms, creating an opportunity for researchers and practitioners interested in operationalizing his theory. But there are some critical points he makes that can help translate theories into practice. Primarily, it is Castells's Habermasian reference to crisis of legitimacy, which he claims occurs when citizens do not recognize themselves in the institutions of society (Castells, 2008; Castells, 2013; Habermas, 1987). For cities, crisis of legitimacy is a real challenge when the public has reason to show a vote of no confidence, which can happen with calls for elected officials, administrators, police chiefs, and executives to step down, or could cause social discord with riots and open challenges questioning the legitimacy of institutions.

Critics and supporters of Castells's research have discussed communication networks within cities, but either in abstract terms or by focusing on communications technology. The research that has worked toward advancing Castells's theory (Madon and

Sahay, 2001; Viitanen, 2011) lacks specificity about the model for organizational communication networks that operate within cities, how to apply it to practice, or how to address potential ethical conflicts through communication policy.

By understanding the operationalization of an organizational communication network and its power, particularly during a crisis of legitimacy, this research allows for the examination of communication networks in cities to understand the power dynamics that take place during crises, and offer policy recommendations for practitioners.

Media communication networks allow for control and power of messaging to the public, but these have been reconstructed by organizations (with the help of the Information/Digital Age and mass self-communication) to create organizational communication networks (Castells, 2008; Castells, 2013). This change suggests the need to explore how discourse and strategies of inclusion and exclusion are connected to organizational communication networks, but also to explore ways in which communication by a public entity, like a city, is protected from the abuse of power that both Foucault and Habermas were concerned with (Habermas, 1987; Foucault, 1977; Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002; Sassen, 2015).

Some organizational communication networks may be utilized to provide communication as a public good (Castells, 2013). Habermas (1987) defined communicative action as the foundation of society, bound by language, as the engagement between people that forms their thoughts and identities; communicative action has the ability to reflect upon language to express truth, values, and self-expression. Communication and communicative action also have the potential to provide information to people of all socioeconomic backgrounds, is accessible and transparent, and provides pathways into



government and organizations that allows people to have the power to impact their respective communities and hold elected officials accountable (Habermas, 1987; Arnstein, 1969). Communicative action encompasses empathy, communicative competence, and justice (Habermas, 1987; Murphy and Fleming, 2010). Communication is essential in helping stakeholders recognize power dynamics (Foucault, 1977).

To understand power relationships and their impact on communication networks, one must examine actors, interests, and values by connecting networks of power to the mass communication networks, which are the source for the construction of meaning in people's minds (Castells, 2013). Power is exercised by programming and switching networks, and when groups such as BLM or the Arab Spring try to disrupt networks, this can lead to a change in power relationships and social change (Castells, 2013).

Castells argues that by engaging in the cultural production of mass media and developing autonomous networks of horizontal communication, the public can become change agents and have their voices heard on issues that matter most to them (Castells, 2013). He argues that we must understand the forms of power in the network society to identify unjust exercise of power and know how and where to challenge it (Castells, 2013). Those who exercise power can be conceptualized as those who are subjects of action, including actors, organizations, institutions, and networks (Castells, 2013). In addition, Castells argues that power elites are too disorganized, and digital networks are too broad for this group to maintain control over the switching and programming of communication networks (Castells, 2013). Instead, Castells argues that dominance of networks occurs through much more subtle strategies through dynamic networks of actors that act as programmers and switchers, thus holding network making power.

Castells (2013) thus explains that programmers and switchers are gatekeepers, who can exercise control of messages and can thus control the agenda, and because mass self-communication has tilted the scales of power, the agendas of both the rich and the poor are being consumed by millions connected through social media and digital communication (Castells, 2007; Castells, 2013; McCombs, 2006).

Castells suggests that social actors are capable of developing their own networks by garnering resources to communicate and then exercising their gatekeeping power to provide or limit access to others, based on their interests and values (Castells, 2011). He claims that standards or protocols of communication outline the rules of network operations and sustain the network, but he does not provide detailed examples of what those standards or protocols could be (Castells, 2011). This research builds on Castells, and his notion that there is a network configuration of actors who engage in power-making strategies by connecting their networks of power to mass communication networks, becoming a source of knowledge for people (Castells, 2011). Using autoethnography, this research explains why certain actors made decisions, and what the impact was on the city, particularly when it was in crisis.

In addition, this research examines how gatekeepers such as programmers and switchers have power over an organizational communication network comprised of channels that a government agency can use for communication messaging. The operationalization of communication networks and subsequent development of an organizational communication network is examined, along with the realization of the power the network possesses during crises. Ethics policy recommendations for networked cities, both large and small, are also presented.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This work is focused on the following research questions: How did the city of Dallas operationalize an organizational communication network? What is the power of networks, particularly during a crisis of legitimacy? What are the ethics implications for operationalizing communication networks in cities?

## **EPISTEMOLOGY**

In the realm of qualitative research, knowledge is not value-free, neutral, or universal. It is not abstract, but rather abstracted from context or certain situations. Knowledge is contextual and situated within a particular conjecture, such as historical, political, cultural, and economic (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The researcher is always situated within the context of knowledge produced. Foucault refers to the conditions under which discourses of knowledge are produced as genealogy. Qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus and objective reality can never be captured (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Creswell (2003) claimed that when designing a research proposal, we must understand the epistemology in the theoretical perspective. This means that researchers must understand how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiry (Creswell, 2003).

For decades, autoethnography has been used as a way to peel back the layers and reflect on experiences and work culture, and women find that by using analytic autoethnographic method, they are able to claim a new sense of empowerment and turn their vulnerability of ridicule and scrutiny into strength (Allen and Piercy, 2005).

Most researchers do not consider their epistemological stance prior to conducting research (Sprague, 2005). An epistemology is a theory of knowing; it directs us to understand a phenomenon (Sprague, 2005). Every epistemology involves assumptions about the knower, the known, and the process of knowing (Sprague, 2005). Put another way, epistemologies are accounts of the knowing subject, the object of study, and the relationship between them (Sprague, 2005). Positivism assumes the sharp dichotomy between the knower and the known, and focuses on how researchers can enforce the dichotomy (Sprague, 2005). Positivism assumes that truth comes from eliminating the role of subjective judgments and interpretations (Sprague, 2005). Non-positivism refers to the thinking after positivism, challenging the traditional notion of absolute truth in knowledge and recognizing we cannot claim with certainty our claims of knowledge when studying humans (Creswell, 2003).

For Foucault, even our objectivity is a social construction; our values and our sense of self are derivatives of how modern power and knowledge work (Sprague, 2005). Foucault claimed that an important part of the development of power and knowledge are rooted in the practices of societal marginalization of groups through classifying and labeling those who are superior and those who are inferior (Sprague, 2005). Social constructionism contributes to our understanding of the production of knowledge by keeping the social character of epistemology in the foreground; it questions the positionality of scholars and provides useful methods for deconstructing ideas, theories, and practices. Foucault said that “truth” can be found in marginalized and repressed discourse (Foucault, 1977).

Advocacy and participatory knowledge claims became popular during the 1980s and 1990s when postpositivist assumptions imposed structural laws and theories that did not address marginalized individual or issues of social justice (Creswell, 2003). The researcher understands her subjectivity and close relationship to interviewees. The subjectivity is deliberate in an attempt to gain a deep understanding of how the city of Dallas operationalized a communication network, what the power of networks can be, and what ethical implications are. The 2014 City of Dallas Community Survey showed that residents want more information from the city and more avenues for being a part of the process (ETC Institute, 2014). To do that, the city must communicate with residents. Council-manager forms of government have finite resources for communication, and the resources available must be dedicated to educating the public so that they may take part in civic government and policies.

Marx, Habermas, and Freire were some of the inquirers who did not feel that the constructivist epistemology was enough to advocate for an action to impact the lives of those who had been marginalized (Creswell, 2003). They believe that inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and political agenda (Creswell, 2003); research should include an action agenda for reform to change lives, the institution in which participants work or live, and the researcher's life. Under this epistemology, specific issues relevant to social issues need to be addressed, such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation (Creswell, 2003). Advocacy researchers begin with one of these issues for research and often include participants in the design of questions, data collection, and data analysis (Creswell, 2003). The research could provide a united voice for reform

and change and could advance an agenda for change in a community to positively impact the lives of participants (Creswell, 2003).

Kremmis and Wilkinson offer key features of this epistemology. The researchers claim that participatory action is recursive of dialectical action and brings about change in practices, and that it is focused on helping people operate autonomously of media, work procedures, and powerful relationships (Creswell, 2003). It also helps free people from the constraints of irrational and unjust structures that limit self-development and self-determination.

Some strategies associated with the qualitative approach include autoethnographies, where researchers engage in a contextual and flexible process and collect observational data, and narrative research, which allows researchers to focus on the lives of specific individuals and convey that story through narrative chronology (Creswell, 2003). The researcher utilized both approaches to tell the story of how the city's communication network was managed, the power of the network, and ethical considerations for practitioners to take into account while acknowledging her positionality throughout.

### **Methodology**

Data was gathered for this research study by utilizing analytic organizational autoethnography, which involves studying an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting primarily observational data. The research process is contextual and flexible. The organizational autoethnography focused on lessons learned from crisis and strategic communication in the city of Dallas.

The organizational autoethnography included 12 total interviews with city attorneys, police officers, the city manager, the EOC director, a city council member, and those involved directly with the issues mentioned (Ebola and the July 7 shooting). These were semi-structured interviews, where I had a list of prepared questions and allowed the respondents to continue the conversations organically. The interviews were recorded on an iPhone and transcribed via Rev.com.

Archival information was reviewed, including newspaper articles, TV interviews, emails, social media transcripts, blogposts, and letters that provided insights into the events of July 7 and the Ebola crises. To improve the validity of the data gathered, common themes and findings that were expressed in the interviews were cross-referenced with the archival data and through member/participant checking. The researcher followed the IRB approval process and was informed that this study does not require IRB approval, as it is considered oral history.

### **Limitations**

Researchers must also take care to not influence the potential respondent through their positionality in a research setting, particularly that of autoethnography (Bourke, 2014). As the spokesperson and director of the city's Public Information Office, I was intimately engaged in the development of communication strategies during the crises. As the lead over communication for the city, I reported directly to the city manager and worked closely with executives throughout the city as I managed communication. I collected emails, notes, and photos during my tenure to support this research.

Qualitative research may include a researcher's beliefs, political stance, cultural background, and more (Bourke, 2014). Research is comprised of a shared space that is

comprised of both researcher and participants, and the identities and biases of both may impact the research process (Bourke, 2014). Acknowledging my bias as a researcher-participant in these crises limits the generalizability of this work as it presents only one city that operates within a particularly social, political, and economic context.

Reflexivity involves the researcher being introspective and self-aware of their respective subjectivity, such as how positionality may affect the research, the topic selected, the claims made in the research, how the researcher uses her/his positionality, and how positionality influences the interactions with study participants (Bourke, 2014). To say anything is to acknowledge positionality, a place where objectivism and subjectivism meet to create a dialectic relationship (Freire, 2000; Bourke, 2014). We can attempt to be objective while understanding our subjectivity (Bourke, 2014). While I worked for the city, I had clear views on social movements such as Black Lives Matter, policing, and politicians, and it was reflected in my efforts to shape and protect the city's narratives during crises. While I may not have always agreed with the city's position on issues, I still did my best to serve administrators and the citizens we were responsible to.

For Foucault, even our objectivity is a social construction; our values and our sense of self are derivatives of how modern power and knowledge work (Sprague, 2005; Foucault, 1977). Foucault (1977) claimed that an important part of the development of power and knowledge are rooted in the practices of societal marginalization of groups through classifying and labeling those who are deemed as superior and those who are deemed as inferior (Sprague, 2005). Social constructionism contributes to our understanding of the production of knowledge by keeping the social character of epistemology in the foreground; it questions the positionality of scholars and provides



useful methods for deconstructing ideas, theories, and practices. Foucault said that “truth” can be found in marginalized and repressed discourse (Foucault, 1977).

The researcher has a professional relationship with all the interviewees included in this study. While this may provide more introspective thoughts on issues, it may also contribute to the subjectivity of the study.

### **Organizational Autoethnography**

Autoethnography is a space where memory, history, performance, and meaning intersect – a place where one reflexively writes the self into and through ethnographic text (Denzin, 2014). Autoethnography challenges traditional research methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Ellis et al., 2011). In the 1980s, postmodernism birthed the crisis of confidence in modern/objective research and provided new opportunities for social science, with a deliberate focus on ontology, epistemology, and limitations in research (Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Ellis et al., 2011). Scholars explored ways of producing substantive, evocative, and understandable research that was grounded in personal experience and help society and researchers empathize with people who are different from us (Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Ellis et al., 2011). Autoethnography challenges traditional structures of research to understand context and epistemology (Ellis et al., 2011).

Autoethnography is not simply a study of self, but a study of all those connected to the self and the positionality that can change in a number of ways, such as you are the main character and the others are supporting actors, others are co-participants, or you study others as the primary focus (Chang, 2008). Often, others are explored as auxiliaries to the self, allowing the author to be the narrator, interpreter, and researcher who tells the story of self in relation to others (Chang, 2008). Positionality must be acknowledged in an

autoethnography, as it underscores how a person's position shapes their knowledge of the world; it allows the researcher to be introspective about how our identity and experiences form our thoughts about the world (Takacs, 2003; Chang, 2008). Because we are products of our environments, and institutions perpetuate structures of assimilation, communication is a powerful tool to restore humanity to the oppressed and oppressors (Freire, 2000).

Autoethnographies may be analytic or evocative in nature. The development of evocative and emotional autoethnography has shoved empirical qualitative analysis and theory development from the core and into the margins of ethnographic and participant observation research (Burnier, 2006; Gans, 1999). Autoethnography has the capacity to be personal and scholarly, evocative and analytical, and descriptive and theoretical and it is a more flexible and fluid form of scholarly writing (Burnier, 2006; Ellis, 2004). Anderson (2006) strived to establish analytic autoethnography as an alternative to evocative autoethnography and concluded that the primary value of analytic autoethnography was not the inclusion of self, but the ability to illustrate the social settings of an environment and apply it to a broader setting (Burnier, 2006; Anderson, 2006).

Within analytic autoethnography, the personal story is secondary to the insider access that is communicated; analytic autoethnographies are less personal and more introspective of the professional transformations of self and others over the course of the research (Burnier, 2006; Anderson, 2006). Analytic autoethnography has been criticized for being too constrictive in allowing the researcher's self in research (Burnier, 2006). Anderson (2006) proposes that analytic autoethnography encompass key features,

including analytic reflexivity, narrative visibility of the researcher's self, dialogue with others, and a commitment to theoretical analysis.

Evocative autoethnography is introspective, dialogic, and highlights social science issues (Burnier, 2006; Ellis, 2004). Evocative autoethnographies are more personal in nature, allowing the researcher to write vulnerably about significant and personal turning points; it explores the self, the researcher's lives, and incorporate social, ethical, and moral issues on behalf of social justice (Bochner and Ellis, 2016). Denzin (1997) asserted that evocative autoethnographers lose sight of the issue at hand by invoking an epistemology of emotion, forcing the reader to empathize with the emotions of the other; they continue to be marginalized in mainstream social science venues because of their rejection of traditional academic writing (Anderson, 2006). Ellis and Bochner (2000) claimed that evocative autoethnography is similar to storytelling and blurs the lines that separate social science from literature, but evocative autoethnographers maintain that it is that subjective emotional experience that helps readers connect with their respective research (Anderson, 2006).

Ethnography is an interpretive research method that has roots in anthropology and stresses the importance of researching an issue based on the context of its culture (Bhattacharjee, 2012). The researcher is deeply immersed in an environment for an extended period of time and s/he engages, observes, and documents the daily life of the environment being studied and provides theoretical deductions about the behavior in the environment (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Ellis, 2004).

Denzin initially referred to autoethnography as interpretive biography, but he realized it did not encompass the extended treatment of the interpretive point of view, and

thus reclassified it as interpretive autoethnography (Denzin, 2014). He defines autoethnography as a space where memory, history, performance, and meaning intersect; a place where one reflexively writes the self into and through ethnographic text (Denzin, 2014). Spivak claims there is no fact about your life or a single story that is true about your life (Spivak, 1988). There are multiple narratives you can tell about your life depending on the lens, the point of the story, who you are sharing your story with, and who you are talking to as autoethnography is a systematic sociological introspection that allows one to write their experience as a story (Ellis, 2004; Spivak, 1988). Autoethnography is creating a story about your life.

This methodology is similar to oral history in that the goal of performance narratives is to show rather than to tell, to channel one's personal experiences, feelings, thoughts, and emotions to understand an experience, and the researcher is challenged to be adequately introspective about the feelings, motivations and contradictions they experience (Ellis, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Denzin (2014) wanted to turn the traditional life story into an interpretive autoethnographic project that allowed for critical, performative practice that encompassed culture, discourse, history, and ideology. He stressed that autoethnography allowed a researcher to ground a life in its historical context (Denzin, 2014). He turns to the works of Sartre and Ulmer to explain that there is also a political component to interpretive autoethnography; the commitment to a social justice agenda that touches on inequity and injustice in certain places and at particular times in history (Denzin, 2014).

Autoethnography allows a researcher to ground a life in its historical context, allowing the researcher to be a subject and one who looks outward (Ellis, 2004; Denzin,

2014). Autoethnography is research, writing, observation, interactions, interviews, story, and method that weave together an autobiographical and personal information to context in culture, society, and politics (Ellis, 2004; Bhattacharjee, 2012). Denzin claimed that there was value in critical, interpretive, and qualitative research and that it can help produce a positive impact on the world (Denzin, 2014). Social justice issues lead to human rights violations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Social justice inquiry involves taking a critical stance toward social structures and processes that shape individual and collective life (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

This is a political component to interpretive autoethnography – the commitment to a social justice agenda that touches on inequity and injustice in certain places and at certain times in history (Denzin, 2014). There is value in critical, interpretive, and qualitative research, as it may make a positive impact on the world by helping address social justice issues and human rights violations, which are often connected (Denzin, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Social justice inquiry involves taking a critical stance toward social structures and processes that shape individual and collective life, which embodies individual responsibilities to community and an ethics of participation (Denzin, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Social scientists can examine the macro effects on the micro and how the micro affects larger social entities through a variety of writing styles, including flashbacks, vignettes, short stories, foreshadowing, and more (Hermann et. al, 2017; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Autoethnography relies on the subjective verbal and written expressions of meaning given by the individuals being studied; the expressions observed serve as windows into the inner life of the person, allowing the researcher's story, thoughts, and feelings to also be considered (Denzin, 2014, Ellis et al., 2011).

The value to this type of research is its ability to engage readers in substantive content similar to how readers engage with a novel (Ellis, 2004). Researchers extract patterns of personal cultural experience by gleaning from field notes, interviews, and describing patterns by weaving a story and help reach larger audiences than traditional research methods (Ellis et al., 2011).

Since the Greek value of participation of civic life, Denzin claims that performance is a mechanism for embodying our individual responsibilities to community and an ethics of participation (Denzin, 2014). Autoethnography relies on the subjective verbal and written expressions of meaning given by the individuals being studied; the expressions observed serve as windows into the inner life of the person (Denzin, 2014).

Performative autoethnography is a critically reflexive methodology that results in the researcher's engagement with others in particular social contexts, reflexive ethnographies document ways a researcher changes as a result of their fieldwork, narrative ethnographies include stories that incorporate the researcher's experiences that reflect on patterns and processes, and organizational autoethnographies provide introspective insider-type information into better understanding organizations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Ellis et al., 2011). Autoethnography is an intentional and critically reflexive methodology that allows a researcher to connect a researcher's personal narrative to larger social issues and attempts to transform the inequities of power structures (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Spry notes the power of history with autoethnography, as she sees the process leading the way for the revision of historical memory (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Embodied knowledge encompasses one's social, cultural, temporal location that together embody the way we make meanings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Spry emphasizes an

autoethnography's subjective nature, explaining that it exposes how culture and our claims are constructed "things," and products of hearts and souls, minds and hands (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Throughout my tenure at the city of Dallas, I wrote notes and accumulated an extensive photo chronicling of my journey through several crises, news events, and more. These notes and photos contributed to the organizational autoethnography, which provides an insider's perspective to the political dynamics of operations at the city of Dallas. This involves extensive notes of meetings, who attended meetings, how we responded to crises, obstacles encountered during crises, communication strategies and campaigns that were deployed, and the photos supplement the organizational autoethnography.

Autoethnography makes an important contribution to organizational research as an important method for studying organizational culture through its introspective and retrospective nature (Boyle and Parry, 2007). Organizational autoethnography thus provides a link between the individual and the organization and providing a narrative in the first person helps make an impact by exposing readers to personal thoughts, feelings, and beliefs (Boyle and Parry, 2007). Autoethnography has the ability to account for emotional ambivalence, organizational roadblocks, and other organizational relationships (Boyle and Parry, 2007). Organizational autoethnographies must be engaging and may provide personal accounts that shine a light on objective aspects of an organization that one may otherwise not have access to (Boyle and Parry, 2007).

Autoethnographies can attain a deeper knowledge of organizational life, evaluation of leadership, and identities and it must cite extant theory and contribute to organizational

theory by providing an avenue for the researcher to interrogate their self and their positionality within larger social contexts (Hermann et. al, 2017; Boyle and Parr, 2007). Experiences and objects are unstable, ever-evolving and the result of intersubjective relationships between people interacting and communicating in the world (Hermann et. al, 2017).

The value of organizational autoethnography is attained from the emotive impact one experiences after better understanding organizational processes through the researcher's ability to weave literature with narrative (Boyle and Parr, 2007). All organizational research helps the reader make sense of a phenomenon of interest and some may also provide first-hand accounts of taboo topics such as sexual harassment, bullying, motherhood at work, and other moral dilemmas that contribute to a highly-charged emotional work environment, such as having the ability to expose issues that otherwise remain secret or are untouchable by organizational researchers (Boyle and Parry, 2007). Readers are responsible for deciding the predictive validity of research, but organizational autoethnography has no less predictive validity than any other organizational research (Boyle and Parry, 2007). Historical dimension is the strength of this research method (Boyle and Parry, 2007).

Marcus (2008) and Brannan et al. (2007) found that autoethnography is a valuable tool for understanding the dynamics of internal struggles of employees within an organization, but there are still few studies that are explicitly organizational autoethnography (Doloriert and Sambrook, 2012). Autoethnographies may carry significant consequences for the researcher's workplace, such as bullying in the workplace and the potential harm to researchers who choose to write about such abuse (Vickers,



2007; Doloriert and Sambrook, 2012). There are three primary types of organizational autoethnography: within higher education, from a previous employment, and as an embedded researcher within an organization (Doloriert and Sambrook, 2012). The emphasis is to maintain organizational autoethnography within the realm of analytic realism (Doloriert and Sambrook, 2012; Anderson, 2006).

Stories, like the lives they are about, are always open-ended, inconclusive, ambiguous, and subject to multiple interpretations (Denzin, 2014). Autoethnographic work must always be interventionist, with the mission of telling the story of “others,” or those who are other than self and/or denied a voice to speak (Denzin, 2014; Chang, 2008). Others of similarity share standards and values, whereas others from a different community distinguish under different frames of reference (Chang, 2008). Differences in behaviors, beliefs, or customs can threaten the existence of self and others of similarity, also known as others of opposition, who become enemies of their professional organization, interest group, or school (Chang, 2008). Ironically, self-narratives are not of self alone; others often enter autoethnographies as persons intimately and remotely connected to self so that the stories are interwoven in autoethnographies (Chang, 2008).

Most organizational scholarship examines organizations from an objective perspective, as though we do not work, play, and build relationships within them (Hermann et. al, 2017). Autoethnographies are personal and political, with autoethnographers deliberately including information on their experiences to culture and cultural practices, but the work involves pursuing social justice by interrogating the big picture of culture, narratives, and discourse to allow the readers to think with them (Hermann et. al, 2017). Autoethnography and organizational autoethnography provide an

embedded vantage point as research transform personal stories into critical investigations and examinations to explore power and change within organizations (Hermann et. al, 2017).

Whereas ethnography focuses on going somewhere to study some “thing,” autoethnography provides for the ability to interrogate the culture and have the culture interrogate the autoethnographer, separating itself from autobiographical work; an ethnographer is an outsider looking in, and an autoethnographer is an insider looking about (Hermann et al., 2017). Organizational autoethnographies spread across various disciplinary and interdisciplinary journals (Hermann et al., 2017). They can provide personal narratives that are rich in context and provides rare access inside worlds that are often difficult to understand, but there are also limitations, such as unpleasant connections to readers, and potential ethical conflicts that the researcher does not adequately address, or is not willing to address (Mendez, 2013). Another concern may be that those who are included in the reflexive practice do not know they are a part of the narrative (Wyatt, 2006; Mendez, 2013).

Autoethnographies as a method continue to be challenged, for being self-indulgent, narcissistic, introspective, individualized, and for not being a more respected form of research (Mendez, 2013). Some claim that it is not akin to rigorous social scientific research and it blurs the line between researcher and subject and prevents orthodox research that is neutral and objective (Allen-Collinson and Hockey, 2008). Walford criticizes the opportunity for distortion by the researcher writing the autoethnography (Walford, 2004; Mendez, 2013). Some have criticized the method for being therapeutic and not analytic (Atkinson, 1997; Mendez, 2013) and others argue that it exposes one to

professional risk and fails to meet traditional criteria of validity, reliability, and generalizability (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009; Boyle and Parry, 2007; Allen-Collinson and Hockey, 2008; Bhattacharjee, 2012). The professional risk may be greater for women and minorities – against whom the institutional power structures within the organization can be particularly severe (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009).

There is a covertness about the process of writing an autoethnography as a member of an organization, as they cannot always remind their colleagues that they are conducting research and can lead to painful decisions about how to report personal accounts, narratives, and opinions; autoethnographers must remain courageous and ethical in their reporting, as they may be exposed to reputational and legal obstacles (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009). But in an ever-evolving world drawn together by social media, younger researchers may consider autoethnography a more acceptable form of social inquiry (Boyle and Parry, 2007).

Narrative inquiry is a form of research that focuses on the study of experience, providing the subject of the research with the depth of personal context (Murphy and Fleming, 2010). Narrative inquiry requires personal engagement, collaborative storytelling, the construction of a persona, and social and cultural backgrounds (Murphy and Fleming, 2010). Subjectivity and positionality are key features of narrative inquiry, which is used to study, understand, and reconstruct experiences (Murphy and Fleming, 2010). To create strong narrative language, one must provide concrete detail, describe situations precisely, and avoid generalizations to allow for the subject matter and research to resonate with others as truth (Murphy and Fleming, 2010).

**Research Case and Site.** This study focused on the city of Dallas's communication during Ebola and the July 7 shooting of police officers. Ebola is significant because it served as the catalyst for why an organizational communication network was developed by the city of Dallas. Gaps and opportunities revealed during the Ebola crisis helped the Public Information Office understand the need to provide information, access, and engagement to the public, and helped create a communication network needed in a crisis. The July 7 shooting captures the power of the communication network and examines how it helped shape the national conversation around social justice, policing, and a national political social movement. It also provided an opportunity to reflect on ethics policies that may be employed to account for power dynamics within cities.

For the organizational autoethnography, the researcher included interviews from 12 people who were directly involved with Ebola and the July 7 shooting. Each interview was approximately one hour and was conducted in-person at restaurants and/or offices and recorded via an iPhone. The researcher has a professional relationship with all the interviewees included in this study. Each person was approached via text, phone call, or messaging through social media.

### **Case Study**

The city of Dallas forms the basis for the case study, and the Ebola and July 7 crises help examine communication network, power, and ethics in the city of Dallas in the new age of digital technology. Case studies examine real-life issues through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events and their relationships (Zainal, 2007). Historically, the original concept of the case study originated around 1900 within the discipline of anthropology and then with the social worker's case history (Johansson, 2003; Platt, 1992).

World War II and political events associated with it led to new movements in social research method, and there was a revival of old traditions that closely examined context, but qualitative case studies were criticized for being non-scientific (Johansson, 2003; Platt, 1992). Case study method has been closely associated with the Chicago School, as this was where the first generation of case studies originated (Johansson, 2003; Platt, 1992).

In the second generation of case studies, which emerged in the 1960s, grounded theory combined qualitative study methods with quantitative methods of data analysis and bridged the methodological gap in the social sciences (Johansson, 2003). Case studies either contained multiple data sets on various cases, or individual cases were rich in context; the case is something that functions, and the study involves the observation of operations (Stake, 2008; Platt, 1992). Bogardus argues that case studies may not be conclusive, but they are an important source of interpreting social research (Platt, 1992). Marginal case studies built on previous cases and led to a refinement of definitions, and negative cases created new problems which would be solved through additional research (Platt, 1992).

Case studies are unique in that each factor is analyzed in relation to every other factor in the group (Platt, 1992). Some say that case studies helped collect data and statistical methods analyzed them (Platt, 1992). Stake (2008) identifies three types of study: intrinsic case study, instrumental case study, and collective case study. A researcher conducts intrinsic study when s/he is interested in better understanding a particular case because of sheer curiosity (Stake, 2008). Instrumental case studies examine insight into an issue or refinement of theory and helps us understand an issue or organization better (Stake, 2008). Collective case studies involve the instrumental study of several cases

(Stake, 2008). These cases are selected to better understand a larger collection of cases and allows for generalizations that are based on deductive, inductive, and abductive reasoning (Stake, 2008; Johansson, 2003). The researcher conducted an instrumental study to provide insight into communication in the city of Dallas and to potentially apply this case study to other large cities.

Case study method should be non-quantitative and incorporate the collection of contextual data involving individual cases that may be examined holistically rather than isolated variables (Platt, 1992). It is focused on understanding behavior by providing data about personal experiences, their meaning, and examining the historical and social context of the case being studied (Platt, 1992). Case study method examines what can be learned from a single case or simultaneous case studies in a single case, and is often concerning organizations or policy settings where researchers seek results that apply to their own organizations (Stake 2008; Platt, 1992).

Case studies can be challenging, as they may over-generalize, and over-dramatize events (Stake, 2008). Criteria for selecting content are vast and subjective (Stake, 2008). But knowledge is socially constructed, and constructivists maintain that case study research contributes to the construction of knowledge (Stake, 2008). Triangulation is often used to clarify meaning by including multiple perceptions, and to verify observations or interpretations (Johansson, 2003; Stake, 2008).

Unlike experiments, which isolate a phenomenon from its context, case research allows for the in-depth investigation of an issue within her environment, in a real-life setting over an extended period of time and can provide a holistic and in-depth examination of social issues that is limited in quantitative methods (Zainal, 2007;

Bhattacharjee, 2012). Data may be collected in a variety of ways, including interviews, personal observations, and documentation (Bhattacharjee, 2012). This is a powerful research method due to its ability to discover social, cultural, and political factors that contribute to an issue (Johansson, 2003; Bhattacharjee, 2012). Case study analysis is often qualitative and contextualized, and the ability to generalize from a case study can be improved by replicating and comparing analyses using multiple case studies (Johansson, 2003; Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Case studies as method have been criticized for being cumbersome and time-consuming; having biased case selection; lacking rigor, generalizability, and empirical clout; and producing data that are not managed or organized systematically (Zainal, 2007; Idowu, 2016). Yin (2014) claimed that case study was the preferred method to examine a phenomenon within real-life context and asserted that there was a difference between analytic generalization and statistical generalization (Idowu, 2016). Yin (2014) and Creswell (2014) found that substantive context to issues allows readers to apply case study to broader context, and that case study research is a critical piece to produce new theory, challenge theory, explore, or to describe a phenomenon (Idowu, 2016).

This study will focus on the city of Dallas as an instrumental case study, and examine two incidents within this case study: Ebola and July 7.

## **Interviews**

The research included interviews from city attorneys, police officers, the city manager, the EOC director, city council members, and those involved directly with the city's communication efforts. These were conversational and semi-structured interviews, where I had a list of questions and allowed the respondents to continue the conversations

organically. Interviewees included managers and members of the leadership team who were directly involved with operations and crises.

The open-ended questions allowed for further discussion and exploration based on responses provided. The qualitative interviews was transcribed and coded, per *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Saldaña, 2013). Coding, an interpretive data analysis, allows researchers to symbolically assign an attribute to data collected. The researcher examined transcripts for responses pertaining to communication, ethics, power, and patterns across the various interviews. Patterns can be identified by similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence, or causation; a theme is an outcome of coding (Saldaña, 2013).

In an interviewee-interviewer process, the researcher follows the narrator's story and offers his or her personal cache of experiential knowledge (Gubrium and Holstein, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Rather than treating it as an unstructured interview, narrators are asked for specific stories, to explore memories, and asked about their understandings of their experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Chase explains that narrative inquiry involves a particular set of issues that involve the research relationship, ethics, interpretation, and validity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). In-depth interviews continue to be the most common source of narrative data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Like qualitative research, narrative research often explores cultural discourses, institutions, organizations, and interactions that produce social inequalities with a critical lens (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Gatson said that narrative is a fundamental means of imposing order on otherwise random and disconnected events and experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).



Narratives are embedded within discourse and thus give shape to experience; narratives and storytelling are closely linked (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Bryman and Bell explain that the term “qualitative interview” is often used to encapsulate the different types of interviews one can use within the realm of qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Interviewing and participant observation are the two most common methods in qualitative research because of their flexibility – the researcher is able to capture the ideas and perspectives of the interviewee and uncover information that likely would not be identified using questionnaires or observations (Alshenqeeti, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). According to Bryman and Bell, qualitative methods focus more on the interviewee’s point of view whereas quantitative reflects the researcher’s concerns (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Siedman (2006) emphasizes that interviewers and participants are never equal, as the participant and interviewer want and get different things out of the interview. Researchers can, however, still seek equity by making concerted efforts to gather the stories of people whose voices are usually not heard and being respectful of all being interviewed (Siedman, 2006). The quality of the interview can sometimes be jeopardized by social inequities and what people say in an interview may be shaped by the questions they are asked (Siedman, 2006; Alshenqeeti, 2014).

Bryman and Bell stress that tape recording interviews is critical so that the researcher does not lose the phrases and language used, and to ensure that interviewers take advantage of clarifying questions that may not be understood by interviewees, as this is a component unavailable through many other research methods (Alshenqeeti, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Additional criticisms of interviewing as method include that

interviewee responses are subjective and may change over time, according to circumstance; the method is time-consuming for data collection and transcription; and it requires more than one data collection instrument to validate research findings (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

### **Study Areas and Interviewees**

#### **Ebola**

**Rocky Vaz, Director, Office of Emergency Management.** Rocky was responsible for activating the Emergency Operations Center, which remained active for nearly 40 days straight during Ebola, and was my counterpart who managed the operational side of the crisis. The EOC became the hub for communication, operations, contract management with vendors, and executive policy and decision making.

**Jennifer Staubach Gates, Dallas City Council Member.** Patient Zero was transported from Vickery Meadow, a poor neighborhood comprised mainly of poor immigrants in Dallas. Jennifer Staubach Gates is the council member who represents the district Vickery Meadow resides in. She was actively involved in addressing concerned residents' concerns and conducted interviews with the press.

**Mike Rawlings, Dallas Mayor.** Mayor Rawlings was the face of the city of Dallas and responded to national and international requests for interviews. He was involved in daily briefings and often led press conferences with updates on Ebola.

**Erick McCallum, Owner, Cleaning Guys.** Erick McCallum owns the company that accepted the decontamination contract for Ebola. His company decontaminated the apartment of Patient Zero and the Presbyterian Hospital room in which Patient Zero died.

Erick discussed the political dynamics behind the scenes and the information he believes should have been shared with the public.

**Nina Pham, Ebola Patient.** Nina was a nurse who was diagnosed with Ebola after caring for Patient Zero. She was the first person on U.S. soil to contract the virus. Nina accused Presbyterian Hospital of using her in a PR stunt, and later sued over this and settled. Nina's story is important, as it captures how one's identification going viral through social media changes a person's life, and how regular communication from the city about her dog (which was being monitored for Ebola) was conducted during this time.

### **July 7 Shooting**

**A.C. Gonzalez, former Dallas City Manager.** As Dallas City Manager, A.C. was responsible for city operations and the response after July 7, which included shutting down the central business district for nearly two weeks, as it was a crime scene, and providing resources and support for four funerals.

**Albert Martinez, Dallas Police Department Deputy Chief over Southwest Patrol Bureau.** Albert manages operations for the Southwest Patrol Bureau. Three of the four DPD officers killed worked out of the Southwest Patrol Bureau, and he was responsible for delivering the flags to families and battled with a lack of internal communication.

**Dan Carolla, former DPD Lieutenant over personnel.** Dan was responsible for arranging logistics for the funerals of four DPD officers. He was also responsible for the memorial in front of DPD headquarters. We discussed how to handle the memorial, and he agreed to allow officers take something from the memorial that would give them peace, while the rest was turned over to the Dallas Public Library to retain as an exhibit. Dan also spoke about the breakdown of internal communication after the shooting.

**Ivan Gunter, DPD Sergeant over the Foxtrot unit.** Ivan and his unit were attacked on July 7. He battled with command staff on being able to tell his story, and found ways for his officers to be featured in national publications and lend a voice to the national conversation. He also discussed the challenges of external communication.

**Paul Junger, DPD Major who exchanged fire with the gunman on July 7.** On July 7, Paul took a picture with a peaceful protester. Hours after the shooting and after he exchanged gunfire with the shooter and transported an officer to the hospital, that picture went viral around the world. Paul discussed the national dialogue around his picture and his perspective on the Black Lives Matter social movement.

### **Coding**

The researcher conducted an analytic organizational autoethnography and interviewed a total of nine people closely involved with Ebola and July 7. Each interview was coded 1-6 based on the following themes:

1. Background – providing context behind the two events on which the autoethnography is focused.
2. Networks/channels – evaluating whether the interviewee provided information referencing communication networks or channels; networks are contained systems, while channels are individual platforms that include websites, social media, town hall meetings, etc.
3. Power, negative and positive – identifying whether the interviewee was speaking about power in a positive or negative context

4. Ethics – ethical concerns or questions confronting officials faced during crises of legitimacy
5. Communication as a public good – references the responsibility to the public to provide communication as a public good
6. Crisis of Legitimacy - events that cause the public to question the legitimacy of communication, competency, or efficiency of government officials

The interviews occurred between February and August 2018.

## FINDINGS

Castells's work on the Information Age (van Dijk, 2010) challenges practitioners to more closely examine the power-making capabilities of communication networks, but he falls short in detailing the applicability of his theory, such as who powerholders are within a network and how networks are developed, particularly at a local level (Castells, 2013; van Dijk, 2010). Communication networks have a role in the relationship of power within a society, especially political power making, but this study examines how networks are operationalized, particularly within city governments, using the City of Dallas as an example (Castells, 2013; van Dijk, 2010).

Castells's work advances our understanding of the complexity of relationships that represent power to influence individuals and groups, but understanding these processes in an era of mass self-communication still lacks specifics. Questions remain about the ideal model for organizational communication networks in cities, how to apply this model in practice, and how to address potential ethical conflicts as stakeholders vie for control of networks. Through the use of autoethnography, how the city of Dallas operationalized its organizational communication network is illustrated, as well as the role of power in the creation and manipulation of organizational communication networks. The narrative presented through the autoethnography also produces clear examples of the ethical challenges faced by the city as key players sought to appropriate the communication networks, while the networks were challenged by mass self-communication from a variety of actors. This is significant as social media and websites provide greater, more immediate, and more varied avenues for cities and government entities to communicate with the public while acknowledging that there is the danger of loss of control of the message. The

interview data is presented in a narrative format with different perspectives to preserve the integrity of the story. Autoethnography allows for structuring data in this format so that the reader is provided the story in its entirety (Herrmann et al., 2013).

The analysis will connect thematic sections to the literature to draw conclusions after the narrative is presented fully. Preliminary findings suggest that Dallas's struggle with responding to the first case of Ebola in the U.S. served as a catalyst for the city to develop an "ecosystem" comprised of various channels for communication so that messaging was cohesive and concise. The tragedy of the July 7 killing of five police officers in Dallas exposed the power of the network, and in the months that followed, administrators struggled with ethics policy considerations and how to define and protect communication as a public good. The study focuses primarily on the programmers and switchers that shaped the city's communication, particularly during crises because these are key moments when an issue can cause the public to lose confidence in their institutions and representatives. It is an intimate, introspective look at the organization and its communication.

### **Analytic Organizational Autoethnography**

**Dallas.** It was the job I felt like all my experiences in life had led me to. After three months of interviews, I had arrived at my seventh (and final) interview with the city manager, A.C. Gonzalez. I knew A.C. was torn. I was the youngest candidate by about 10 years, but I would be different.

"Let me just come out and ask you this – can you handle this job? During your mock interview and press release interview, you were very logical and things aren't logical in Dallas; they're political."

I said I understood, but I didn't. I had no idea how political Dallas was until the afternoon of Tuesday, September 28, 2014. But this isn't a regurgitation of what happened during Ebola and July 7 and the politics involved – those stories have been told and retold around the world. This study will provide an analytic organizational autoethnography that provides insight into two incidents that shaped and tested communication in the city of Dallas. Ebola was the instigator for the city forming an organizational communication network, and the city's communication response to the shooting on July 7 showed the power of that network. These are personal accounts of how the city dealt with crises and reevaluated policies and operations to better serve the citizens of Dallas, thus the use of autoethnography to allow for deeper examination and analysis of these experiences and interactions.

### **Ebola: Background**

The afternoon of September 28, 2014, I was running around Dallas City Hall one month and seven days on the job and trying to put out one fire after another. The next meeting on my calendar was about the after-action report involving the death of firefighter Stanley Wilson. The First Assistant City Attorney, Chris Bowers, was discussing with Fire Chief Louie Bright and his right-hand man Lt. Joel Lavender which files and records Dallas Fire-Rescue (DFR) should release to the public. During this meeting, Lt. Lavender pointed to Chief Bright's television and said, "Look at that, Dallas just got the first Ebola case in the United States." I disregarded the news; which records we would release for Stanley Wilson seemed far more important. In that moment, I completely underestimated the impact Ebola would have on the city.



**Rocky Vaz:** That afternoon [September 28] we got a call from Presbyterian Hospital's emergency managers – telling us that they have a patient and they were testing that patient for Ebola and we would get the results within the next hour or so. With that information, I went and briefed what we call the small group [city executives]. That's our management team – and then we started bringing our fire folks in.

At the same time, they [health officials] were starting to track the other paramedics that actively transported patient zero. So we activated, gathered up at our EOC, brought all the people together to talk about what that meant. At that time, we were focusing specifically on the paramedics. What they might have been exposed to and how do we take care of them. We had not gotten the actual official results award from Presbyterian that the patient had tested positive for Ebola.

So that's how it started and later during that evening we got confirmation that the patient was confirmed for Ebola. Really at that time, we did not know what that meant to us, to the city, to the community or how we would respond, and then things started to unfold, as to what we would be doing when the patient actually did pass away, what it meant to our paramedics, what [it] meant to our first responders, what it meant to the nurses that were taking care of him. [It] started unfolding from that point on.

**Researcher:** Within 30 minutes my new work cell phone was ringing non-stop. And it never seemed to stop after that. We were activating the city's Emergency Operation Center (EOC), and a meeting was scheduled. I met Rocky Vaz, Office of Emergency Management director for the first time that day. I called my team from the Public Information Office to meet in the EOC. I had only been in my position as Director of the Public Information Office for a month and still could not remember who all was on my

team, but within an hour anyone who needed to be involved with this effort in City Hall was in the EOC. Dr. Marshal Isaacs with DFR was drawing a map on a whiteboard to show when Thomas Eric Duncan (Patient Zero) came into the country, who all he had come into contact with, and shared that three paramedics who transported Duncan to the emergency room were exposed to the deadly virus.

“What does that mean?” we all asked. “Do we quarantine them?” was our other big question. We proceeded to discuss the difference between quarantine and self-isolation. Dr. Isaacs explained the paramedics would be okay if we just kept tabs on them, but all of us – who were dealing with Ebola for the first time – felt that if the paramedics stayed at home or at the hospital to be monitored for 21 days, that would be best. Dr. Isaacs finally said, “Okay, if that’s what makes you feel comfortable, that’s what we’ll do.”

We proceeded to ask exactly what was Ebola, how do you contract it, what are the chances that Duncan passed the virus on to his family members and others he encountered. At that moment, all we had in our minds were the frightening numbers from West Africa – and we had no idea what to expect.

While the paramedics drove themselves to Parkland Hospital to have bloodwork drawn, the media started pouring in for interviews. Chief Norman Seals with DFR was the key spokesperson the first night, explaining to the media the state of mind of all three paramedics and that he was on his way to the hospital to personally check on them. We eventually arranged for media to watch as the DFR ambulance was decontaminated.

Of all the other media outlets that came and went that night, the most interesting call came from the White House. They wanted to talk to Mayor Mike Rawlings, but he wasn’t in the EOC. When one of our team members explained that City Manager A.C.

Gonzalez was available, they said they didn't want to talk to an intermediary. And so the politics began.

All of us involved slept about two to three hours that first night. There was just so much to do, so many questions unanswered.

**Day 2: The first press conference.** A few hours after day one ended, day two started around 4 a.m. Morning shows from across the country were calling for interviews, wanting updates on the paramedics – and whatever else they could find out from us. After my two-hour nap, I drove to the EOC, filmed a quick video update with my team to post on our website and got to work. We were trying to figure out what to do as we were going because a formal plan was not in use. As a former news anchor and reporter, I knew how important it was for the media and public to have information – and transparency became our primary focus. Inform media and the public as much as possible about what was going on.

But media and the public had too many questions. It was clear that we needed to hold a press conference with all the players to address as much as we could and share all the information we had up until that point. I shared these concerns with A.C. and the mayor. For the next several hours, we proceeded to round up the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Dallas Independent School District (DISD), Dallas County, Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS), and Mayor Rawlings from the city of Dallas. But then we hit a little snag. Governor Rick Perry was on his way to Dallas and he was planning his own press conference with the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) at noon – and no one from the city was invited.

It may not seem to be a big deal to the outside world – but it was a big deal in our world. We would essentially be pulling media apart to two separate locations with the press conference for the governor just five minutes away from our press conference, 30 minutes later. As a former journalist, I knew this could become an issue for some newsrooms. I asked someone to find me a number for the governor’s press office.

At this point, the county was involved, and county officials were the liaisons to our state counterparts, DCHHS, DSHS, the governor’s office, the CDC, and DISD. Governor Perry’s noon press conference would be held at Texas Health Presbyterian Dallas (Presby), the location where Patient Zero was transported to twice. I had asked David Daigle, with the CDC, to take part in our press conference. He was helpful and offered to leave one CDC representative with the governor’s office while he joined ours. When I shared my frustration with a CDC official about splitting the media for two separate press conferences 30 minutes apart, the official agreed, and added that the governor’s office indicated they were not interested in sharing the press conference with us.

Within the hour, I talked to the governor’s chief of staff and a small group from his team. The group was kind and I did my best to explain the magnitude of the city’s press conference. We were going to discuss the latest number of people being monitored and all the children who were being pulled from five different schools. The governor’s office did not know DISD was involved or that parents had been pulling their children out of schools; in fact, local news crews captured panicked parents running with their children in their arms away from the schools, and things were quickly escalating into a national public relations disaster.

Governor Perry's spokesperson asked for some time to convene a meeting with his team. Within another 30 minutes, he contacted me to say he would be happy to have us be a part of the governor's press conference. It was a done deal. We were on our way to the first Ebola press conference in the United States – and media from all over the world were waiting for us.

Prior to the press conference at Presby, we were escorted into a briefing with Governor Perry, Mayor Rawlings, Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins, the state medical authority Dr. David Lakey, and physicians. The group was trying to understand Ebola, how contagious it really was, how much danger we were really in, and how many children were affected. It was during this briefing that Council Member Jennifer Staubach Gates, whose district included Louise Troh's apartment, began asking questions. A former nurse, Gates was concerned about the public's health.

**Jennifer Gates:** Immediately, I'm worried about the safety of my residents. I knew the community well, so I was concerned about how we were going to be able to communicate within that community because of the language barriers. I was wondering what is my role going to be as a council member. I was supposed to leave town that Wednesday, and made the decision to instead go to OEM (Office of Emergency Management). The mayor asked me to attend as a representative of the area.

There was a lot of attention and conversation around the contaminated waste that was at Presbyterian Hospital and how that was going to be handled. I remember asking the question of what was the plan for the contaminated waste that was in the apartment complex and how were we going to be tracking the family members that had been exposed to him during that timeframe that he'd been here... but there wasn't a plan at that time and

we weren't getting answers. I wasn't familiar with the [Ebola] transmission, even with a nursing background. I wanted to know what was the community health threat at that moment. That site was not secured, I didn't know how many people could have been exposed. It was all about the community health threat at that point. We were looking for answers, and there just wasn't a lot available at that point.

**Researcher:** After Gates asked what was going to happen to Louise Troh's apartment – and all the items left in her apartment – the medical experts and government officials looked at one another and could not provide an answer. More disturbingly, no one seemed to think this was a critical issue. The question was glossed over and the conversation continued about Ebola. I mentioned a few questions that I thought the group should be prepared for before walking out to the press. Within 30 minutes, the group headed out toward the lights and cameras.

The governor's office was first up at the podium, alongside DSHS's Dr. David Lakey (the state medical authority), and some other people. The governor talked for about five minutes. At that point, I asked someone from the governor's staff if they would let media know that local officials would be coming up to take questions – and she said no. A few minutes later, the governor's team was done and out the back door and city officials were still in their seats. I approached the mic and asked media to sit tight while local officials made a few statements and took their questions. Mayor Rawlings, Judge Jenkins, Council Member Gates, DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson, DCHHS medical expert Dr. Tim Perkins, DISD Superintendent Mike Miles and David Daigle with the CDC then walked down to the podium and said a few words. The mayor opened it up for questions – and it was intense. Media hurled accusations, angry questions, and wanted answers for why people

were still being allowed to fly into the U.S. from West Africa, why the hospital turned Duncan away the first time he went there.

The questions may have been fair, but the tone was accusatory and angry and we did not have a lot of answers – especially because Presby chose not to join us. Immediately after the press conference ended, Council Member Gates, the mayor’s chief of staff, and I went to ground zero – the Ivy Apartments. The apartment complex manager was in a panic. Media from all over the world had descended upon her apartment and she had no clue what to do. The owner of the apartments and some community group leaders were there – but media were running circles around them. One reporter was caught trying to squeeze through a metal gate on the backside of the apartments to gain access. Another pretended to be a pizza deliveryman to gain access to the property for video and interviews. One reporter outright paid a resident for access to their apartment to film on the property. In local media’s defense, I believe these may have been tabloid reporters, as the reporters I worked directly with maintained integrity in their work. But it was clear that contrary to what county officials said at the press conference that had just concluded, they had not made proper contact with the property owner or management.

**Jennifer Gates:** I knew it was going to be an issue. I wasn’t getting the answers in that meeting. I wasn’t feeling confident that they had a handle on that actual apartment, the people who had been exposed, the belongings... To me, if they were so worried about hazardous material at Presby, why weren’t they worried about the same hazardous material that existed with access from the community. At that point, I didn’t even have an address. The press was giving us an address. You, myself and the chief of staff for the mayor’s office went to the location [Ivy Apartments]... when we got there, it was an

unsecured site, people were coming and going, the owners had not been notified that this was where it happened. Residents remembered the ambulance. We were there several hours and then some CDC workers showed up and they still didn't have any answers for us on what were the next steps. The CDC, I thought, was going to be an agency that would come in and do more, like take control – but they were more advisory [role].

**Researcher:** The Ivy Apartments are in the Vickery Meadows neighborhood – home to an indigent population of kind, hardworking people who spoke dozens of languages and dialects. They had no idea what was going on. The apartment manager had not been contacted by health officials. She did not even know which apartment Duncan had been transported from. We stayed with her as she pulled file after file; we called our resources at City Hall to figure out what location was provided in the 911 call. Finally, she found the file of Louise Troh and located the name of Thomas Eric Duncan on the lease papers and we were able to cross reference the information with the 911 call that had been placed.

**Jennifer Gates:** It became very evident that we needed to communicate what was happening and we needed protect those that were being taken advantage of by the outside press and media. There was a lot of fear.

**Researcher:** After we determined who Patient Zero was, we contacted Paula Blackmon with DISD to help us provide communication to the apartment residents in Vickery Meadow, where the Ivy Apartments were located. Paula immediately emailed us the flyers that went out to parents at schools earlier in the day where children had been pulled and isolated for exposure to Ebola, and DISD gave us access to the school district's translators so we could get through to people of various ethnic backgrounds. Within hours, the flyers had been translated into several languages with DISD's help. Our partnership



with DISD was tremendous in tackling mass communication and language gaps. DISD provided a flyer to students about Ebola to share with their parents in different languages (Appendix B).

**Jennifer Gates:** The district had the most relevant information. And the non-profits in the area. We got an expert to talk to that group – that was a huge help. That was the best way to communicate with that community was through the kids, and it was the best way to gauge what was happening, was what the kids were experiencing. Were they showing up to school, [or] were they not showing up to school. They were communicating with their teachers what was happening in the community. Having DISD at the table was really important.

*OEM and PIO also conducted a reverse 911 call in English and Spanish to nearly 11,000 residents about the Ebola case in the Vickery Meadows neighborhood (Appendix C).*

**Researcher:** Once we left the complex, media were hunting for an interview and Council Member Gates and I agreed that it would be a good opportunity to explain what we had been doing there and that the situation was under control. The reality was that the property manager and hundreds of residents at the complex were panicking, but with the help of Deputy Chief Andy Acord with DPD and community organizers, the communication began to residents to explain the chaos. Despite the fact that a county official told press during the earlier press conference that his team had been to the Ivy Apartments and everything was under control, we were the first ones to make contact with the manager.

*Castells views communication as a public good, but much of his research is focused on communications technology, and the medium through which communication is disseminated; his research primarily focuses on the interaction between information technology and society,*

*leaving open the opportunity for research about the interaction between communication (messaging) and society (Castells, 2001). The efforts made to quell fear and panic within the first 24 hours of Ebola in Dallas illustrates the interaction between communication messaging and society, and how the reliance on partnerships with other institutions, such as DISD, was critical in providing communication en masse.*

**Day 3: When Louise Troh called Anderson Cooper.** The next day, we were monitoring the situation from the EOC when someone said, “Hey, look. Louise Troh is on Anderson Cooper.”

Troh had called into the show and was blasting local officials for not doing anything about the dirty sheets still on the beds in her apartment. There were dirty towels, Thomas Eric Duncan had lived there for 10 days, after all; he had also vomited in the apartment. Immediately, a flurry of angry questions swept over officials in Dallas. How could we not have removed even the sheets from Troh’s apartment? Why was nothing being done to help them after they were confined with a control order and kept in their apartment with a Sheriff’s Deputy sitting out front keeping guard to make sure they didn’t leave?

These were fair questions – many of which had been asked by Gates the day before; the questions that nobody had any answers for were now going to be one of the biggest embarrassments for the city of Dallas. We at the city believed the decontamination of Louise Troh’s apartment was the responsibility of the county, since we have an agreement for the county to be the health authority because the city did not have one. But since the county was not moving fast enough, our EOC immediately started looking for a place for Troh to stay. It was a feat. We had to provide full disclosure on who Troh was and why we

were trying to find her a home. Hotels, apartments, and rental homes all refused to take Troh and her family in; they were becoming known as the “Ebola family.”

But Troh’s family was not the only one facing discrimination at this time. Gates detailed discrimination residents in her district faced, and how the city tried to counter that with communication.

**Jennifer Gates:** We learned about discriminatory practices against people who lived in Vickery Meadows. They weren’t being allowed to go to their jobs, they couldn’t go to school. We started trying to get real information that we could give the public comfort [*sic*] that contact with people who weren’t showing symptoms were safe. They weren’t at a higher risk. At that point, we did have experts also come in [to the Ivy Apartments] such as epidemiologists.

*Erick McCallum owns The Cleaning Guys, a full-service environmental/hazmat cleaning company. His company was hired as a contractor to decontaminate Louise Troh’s apartment. His employees faced similar discriminatory practices.*

**Erick McCallum:** We were shunned from everybody. We couldn’t go to restaurants, we had to bring in porta potties, we had to bring in food. We had to set up our own city there because nobody would serve us, nobody wanted us there. They all knew who we were – they saw the trucks all over the news. I had employees who had their kids removed from schools. They wouldn’t let them in. There were letters sent – there were nasty parents saying ugly things about don’t bring your kids to school... it was terrible.

**Researcher:** That evening, as we were dealing with the panic spreading throughout the city, we experienced a very random storm – one that took out power to thousands,

including those who lived at the Ivy Apartments. Crises tend to happen all at once, and that was our sign that this crisis was far from over.

*The spread of misinformation fueled panic and highlighted the importance for a city to have an organizational communication network that provides information promptly. It is more difficult to correct misinformation after it has traveled through the multiple channels and been shared through mass communication, than provide information immediately that assures transparency and conveys to the public that the situation is under control. We were confronted with ethical issues of members of the press harassing Ivy Apartments residents for access and entering the property illegally, adding to the panic, which we addressed with a strong police presence and support through different languages for residents who lived there, many of whom did not know their rights.*

**Day 4: The cleanup (finally) begins.** Friday. It had been four days since the world learned Duncan had been diagnosed with Ebola, five days since he was transported to the hospital and even more days since he had vomited in the apartment of Louise Troh. I started that day in EOC as I had all week and decided to join Council Member Gates at the Ivy Apartments. The apartment complex manager needed help managing all the media that continued to approach residents there, and Gates wanted to reassure residents the situation was under control.

When we arrived at the complex, the Cleaning Guys Haz-Mat crew had set a perimeter in front of Troh's apartment. A huge trailer blocked most of the view, surrounded by Dallas County Sheriff's Deputies and Dallas Police Officers. I asked someone where the media was, as I expected media to be swarming around the scene – but they were nowhere to be found. Someone finally walked me to the back of the complex, and

there behind a metal gate were media – angry media. They were fuming for being kept hundreds of yards away because the property manager was upset at the way some journalists had tried to sneak onto the property for interviews. Erick McCallum, owner of the Cleaning Guys, said he understood why apartment managers kicked media off the property. He and his team personally witnessed several inappropriate acts by reporters.

**Erick McCallum:** We had press jumping the fence and darting into apartments and throwing money at people in the apartments to not tell anyone they were in there. Luckily, we would see them and the sheriff's deputies would have to remove them.

**Researcher:** Reporters and photographers were furious for being kicked out. They vented to me that no one was telling them what was going on and they could not see anything. I turned around to look at the trailer, and their grievances were warranted. I understood the apartment manager and sheriff's deputies' concerns, but I also understood the press. As a former journalist, it was very clear to me why they were so frustrated. They had a story to tell and camera lenses could hardly catch a glimpse of what the men were doing and I had no idea which reporters were harassing residents; news stations deployed helicopters to try to get a better view of the decontamination efforts from overhead, adding to the drama. It was quite the scene. Residents were coming out of their apartments – watching with interest at the media debacle unfolding before them. I realized that there was no way anyone in the world would know what was happening on the other side of the trailer unless we told them, and someone should know what we were doing to address the situation.

As reporters continued to vent to me, I created a Twitter handle while standing on the other side of the metal gate, told reporters where to follow me for updates, and went to

work. On Facebook, only people who were friends with me would see my content. For Twitter, anyone on the domain could come across the content or they can follow you to stay up to date. It is more of a crowdsourcing platform, and its character limits also made it the ideal platform for quickly providing the public and press with nuggets of information. Twitter is known for being a source of information for journalists, and I knew it would be the best way to get them what they needed to do their jobs.

I then walked to Gates and told her she needed to create a Twitter account immediately. The Cleaning Guys did the same. My broadcast team had come with me because we were going to put together a brief video of Council Member Gates reaching out to residents at the complex – but we switched gears. I asked them to instead get video of the clean-up effort at an angle no one else had – in front of the trailer. The Haz-Mat crew, county health officials, sheriff's department and police trusted us, and we recorded everything that was happening in front of the trailer. The video was later shared as raw files with the press, all we asked was that the city be given courtesy credit when our video was used. We posted it to YouTube, created an Ebola web page on the city website, and posted links and updates there.

**Erick McCallum:** In those situations, when the stakes are high, you know who's on your team, you know who you want to work with, and you know real fast who you don't [want to work with]. You were our go-to – we need this, or here's what's going on, or whatever. That was helpful because we didn't have time to deal with those other things. I had to just get it out and know that you were handling it – you were calling the mayor or you were calling whoever. We need that – there's too many things we're trying to focus on other than the media.

**Researcher:** As the Cleaning Guys started the decon process, I began taking pictures, asking them what they were doing and then tweeting it out to the world. In real time, people were able to see that officials were tackling Ebola – and the public and press were now a part of that process. Media were asking questions for clarification, and many people just seemed to appreciate the fact that they finally getting a glimpse into the cleaning process, not just hearing about what was happening.

During this time, I received a call from my team, which was split between the City of Dallas EOC and the Dallas County EOC. The team working out of the Dallas County EOC told me they were growing increasingly frustrated with the Joint Information Center (JIC). The state and county officials were not communicating with them, and they continued to have closed-door meetings without them. I pulled my team from the county EOC to the city EOC, where they would actually be utilized. It was a lesson that sometimes official plans and structures do not work and require a reallocation of resources.

We had been at the Ivy Apartments for about seven hours when we got a call from the mayor saying that they had found a home for Troh and her family. Initially, the mayor had volunteered his son's home and Rocky Vaz with the Office of Emergency Management had started moving things in. But at the last moment the Catholic Diocese stepped in and welcomed the Trohs to their property. They had a cabin that was used for retreats and the entire area would be empty for some time. The Trohs would have privacy in a secure area surrounded by a fence. It was a gracious offer, but then the fear began to set in that the news helicopters would follow Troh to her new home. She was already getting death threats, and we wanted to protect her.

Within the hour, Judge Jenkins was on the phone with President Obama's office, Council Member Gates was on the phone with Governor Perry's office, and I was on the phone with someone from the White House who reported directly to the president. We were all begging for officials to create a no-fly zone over the complex while Troh was being removed so that she would not be followed by media helicopters. All said they would try, but gave no guarantees.

We concocted a plan. I would go out and hold a brief press conference on the other side of the gate while Judge Jenkins escorted the family to a car. He wanted to personally drive them to the cabin. I drove to the other side of the gate with Lt. Juan Garcia from DPD. We patiently waited in the car until we heard from Judge Jenkins. It was go time, but they told me too late. Media were able to capture the Troh family walking out with Jenkins – and the tarp that covered the walkway in front of their home fell as they were walking out, allowing media to plaster their images around the world. I nonetheless began the press conference, as planned, and was immediately surrounded by mics, cameras, and journalists. As Judge Jenkins drove Troh and her family to the cabin, there were no helicopters in the air to follow them. Something worked, and Troh and her family went into hiding for a month.

*As the city began the decontamination process, it was clear that the media and public needed more transparency. Creating Twitter handles allowed for additional channels of communication transparency for access, information, and engagement and addressed the need for urgency in communication. Providing videos on the city's website provided another channel for the media and public. Creating and activating these channels allowed the city to push information on global platforms, and social media provided an opportunity to engage*



*with people of all socioeconomic backgrounds, which is what Habermas (1987) and Castells (2013) stressed in their work. The CDC, Dallas County Health and Human Services, and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) were also communicating publicly, but not to the extent of the City of Dallas.*

**Day 9: Duncan dies.**

*Nina Pham was a nurse at Presbyterian Hospital and cared for Duncan when he was admitted as Patient Zero. She contracted the virus soon after caring for him, becoming the first person in history to contract the Ebola virus on U.S. soil.*

**Nina Pham:** I believed he [Duncan] had been in the ER for around 48 hours and then they decided to bring him up to the ICU. I took care of him the first three days. After the third day, I had my days off that I'd been normally scheduled. I came back, he was on the ventilator at that point. And then I think, maybe had two or three more shifts with him. He could speak basic English. I do remember him, on the last day before I left, he wanted to talk to his family. So I helped him call his wife, I think, on the phone. Before I left, I said, "I'm off for a couple of days Mr. Duncan. It's been nice taking care of you. I hope you get better," something along those lines. And he reached down and grabbed my hand through the protective suit, and we held hands for a little bit. He was very nice and seemed like a very nice and kind person.

He died on the Wednesday... I think I was grabbing medications for one of the nurses and I looked up at the monitor and his heart rate had started to come down. We had walkie-talkies to communicate with each other. So I walkie-talkied into the room and was like, "You guys, his blood pressure is dropping." And pretty much immediately, I think I grabbed the crash cart and threw the medication in there, and they did some rounds of epi

[Epinephrine]. We were contacting the doctor at the same time, but honestly, it went in a matter of minutes. I think he was DNR at that point.

**Researcher:** We had known the end was near for Duncan. His health was deteriorating; his family was keeping Troh from seeing him in his final hours. We were arguing internally about how someone should just let her see him one last time. That morning, the PIO for DSHS was in Dallas for the first time since Duncan was diagnosed. Reporters were calling and asking for confirmation that Duncan was dead, but she would not allow anyone to release that information until later. While I did not report to her, as a courtesy, I respected the state's wishes.

Per the CDC, Duncan's body was cremated. Later that day, during a briefing that we attended at Dallas County EOC, Judge Jenkins said he visited Troh and her nephews. He described a tormented fiancée who was heartbroken and nephews who were sad and felt all alone. One of the boys asked Judge Jenkins if he was going to die. I had to give the judge credit. The way Judge Jenkins treated that family when no one would come near them made them feel human. They clearly appreciated that.

Meanwhile, the Cleaning Guys were also hired to clean Presby after Duncan died. They described a war zone in the room and said it was one of the toughest jobs they had taken on.

**Day 12: The first case of Ebola contracted on U.S. soil.** We had a brief reprieve after Duncan died, but around 10:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 11, Mayor Rawlings called to say we might have a second confirmed case of Ebola in Dallas. Thus began again another series of overnight conference calls with the mayor, Dr. Lakey, Judge Jenkins, the mayor's chief of staff, and EOC Director Rocky Vaz. We discussed how we would handle the

situation, what this meant, and if there could be more people in danger. This was the first time someone had contracted Ebola in the U.S.

**Nina Pham:** Honestly, before I got the diagnosis, I was in total denial. I knew I had taken care of Duncan, and could have been a potential risk. But I really thought I had a bad flu or something. I really didn't let my mind go to me having Ebola. And I started to worry when the nurse told me specifically, after she had drawn my blood and everything, that by 11:00 at night, I would know the results. And midnight came around, 1:00 came around, and they still had no results.

And finally, the doctor came in the room – no, sorry, it was Cole. He was the Chief Nursing Officer of the hospital and I could tell immediately because his eyes were bloodshot-red. I don't remember exactly what he said to me but basically he said I tested positive. And I just lost it and started crying. They had Dr. Weinstein come in; he was the ICU doctor that I worked with in the ICU and he came in and reconfirmed that I did have Ebola.

After then, it was a blur, and I had to make very quick decisions about do I want to stay here, do I want to be transferred somewhere else? At that point in my mind, I think I was just like, get me treatment as soon as possible. So just rush me upstairs and get whatever treatment you have started. I was just worried for myself obviously, and obviously worried about Bentley because I had left him there all night. He was boarded at the time, so I was just like, "Can someone please check on my dog?" They had to call my family and that was heartbreaking to know that they were contacting my family. And my mom, I knew that she would have lost it, too.

I thought it was a death sentence because I literally had just witnessed Duncan die a few days earlier. And for him, there was no cure or no miracle drug. That definitely flashed through my mind, the progression of his disease. I was like, they're going to ship me to the ICU in a couple days. I'm going to tire out and be put on a ventilator. I knew that in that type of situation, you really can't perform lifesaving, I guess ACLS or resuscitation on someone. I really didn't know what was going to happen.

**Researcher:** By 3 a.m. I was at Presbyterian Hospital, working with the mayor, the judge and the judge's staff to prepare for a 7 a.m. press conference. By 4 a.m. I was at Nina Pham's apartment complex, armed with hundreds of copies of information on Ebola, what it was and how it was contracted. A team of Dallas firefighters and police officers joined me in knocking on every door in the immediate vicinity of this complex, to let residents know someone in their neighborhood had been diagnosed with Ebola, that they would see Haz-Mat crews and media for the next several days and not to panic. Most residents seemed thankful for the heads up, but some were confused and apathetic. By 6:30 a.m., I was back at Presbyterian Hospital, preparing for the 7 a.m. press conference and updating the mayor on how everything went at the complex. At this press conference, the mayor revealed Nina Pham's address without telling us he would do that. Within the hour, media were stationed in front of her complex. Meanwhile, the Dallas Fire-Rescue Haz-Mat team was at the apartment complex to decon the common areas: doors, door knobs, hallway, railings, etc. A reverse 911 call was conducted in English and Spanish to an area around the complex.

After the press conference, I returned to the neighborhood to address questions and concerns from neighbors. There was nothing to talk to the media about, as we had already provided them with interviews at the 7 a.m. press conference. Providing an on-site

presence from city officials was critical. It helped ease the panic of residents and provided them an immediate resource for information. I also provided the apartment complex managers with my cell phone number and email address so that the other people in the apartment complex could call me with questions – and they did, to the point of exhaustion. I concede it was not wise to give my cell phone number, but I learned from that experience by the time Amber Vinson was diagnosed. The most common question was from residents wanting to know if their dog was okay, because Nina had a dog who often came into contact with other dogs in the neighborhood.

At some point, we learned about Nina's dog. We all had a good laugh when we learned that his name was Bentley. On that following Monday, I received a call from the Cleaning Guys. Someone from the county had called to let them know that they were relieved of their duties and were no longer involved with the decontamination process at Nina's apartment. I arrived on scene and found a plethora of reporters at the end of the street as the Cleaning Guys were packing up their trailer to leave. I called my executive team at the EOC, which was operating out of the county EOC. Rocky and Assistance City Manager Eric Campbell answered the phone – and I told them about the potential firestorm that was waiting for us if we had the Cleaning Guys ship out with a dog still stuck inside an apartment. Rocky and Eric agreed and worked it out with the county so that the Cleaning Guys could at least give the dog some food and water.

It was quite the production, the Cleaning Guys got completely suited up to enter the "hot zone." They successfully entered the apartment, and fed Bentley. They said he was very anxious, but at least he now had food until the new contractors could go in and remove him.

By the time Amber Vinson was diagnosed, we were still learning how to handle Ebola and each diagnosis, but we had a system in place and knew which channels would be used to communicate. We again met at Presby. I met a team of firefighters and police at her complex, and this time full command presence was there. DFR Haz-Mat did a pre-decontamination of public spaces. Presby was in a state of crisis and hired a PR firm, and was eventually sued by Nina Pham for improperly equipping employees who were in danger of contracting Ebola and for exploiting her illness to gain public support for the hospital.

Once Vinson was diagnosed, we were told that she irresponsibly went on a plane and created a path of exposure to Ebola on the way to a wedding in Ohio. Everywhere she had traveled to became a scene of chaos, quarantine, and decontamination. After we had provided a number of national interviews criticizing her for being irresponsible, we were told that she had indeed talked to the CDC before her trip, and they cleared her. We had to publicly apologize – I don't think she ever forgave the public officials who incorrectly criticized her, but we were working off the information provided by the CDC and did our best to keep the public informed with the most current information we had, as we were getting it.

**Jennifer Gates:** We didn't have a roadmap to deal with Ebola. But we were trusted by the public. Residents turned to us for the information and whatever we were privileged to – we were communicating it to the best of our ability.

*The city did not have a roadmap on how to address Ebola, but there was compassion for the patients and concern for the virus spreading. Administrators and elected officials felt they had an ethical responsibility to the patients to protect their privacy while also providing*

*communication as a public good to the community. The family of Louise Troh and Nina Pham were treated with care and the city went above and beyond to protect their interests and those of the public. Officials felt that they needed to be consistently transparent and accountable for the information they released, being the clear lead for information in times of crisis. This approach required careful management among various public entities as the global media networks demanded frequent and new angles to share with their networks, and sometimes sought to bypass the official communication by contacting multiple unofficial sources, paying people for access, and more. The key to managing information is knowing what the source of your information is, and maintaining a contained group of programmers who are responsible for the information that is shared so that it is not contradictory and conveys the important points. A critical point was avoiding the crisis of legitimacy that Habermas (1987) suggests occurs as a natural consequence of society's productive advancement, as the social system struggles to adapt to the changing dynamics on relations of production – in this case, the rise of mass self-communication and the global demands for immediate updates challenged the city's communication network. Mass self-communication allowed anyone to become a reporter or to disseminate information without checks and balances. By responding promptly to the media's needs through a variety of technology tools, the city was able to manage the organizational communication network.*

### **Communication Challenges and Opportunities**

#### **Too many cooks in the kitchen.**

**Jennifer Gates:** There was a pre-meeting [September 1, 2014] that involved the governor [Perry] and the CDC, myself, some other elected officials. The mayor was invited to go and then asked me to attend as the representative from the area. That was at noon, I

think, on Wednesday. There was a lot of attention and conversation around the contaminated waste that was at Presbyterian Hospital and how that was going to be handled. I remember asking the question, "What was the plan for the contaminated waste that was in the apartment complex?" At that point there wasn't a plan and we weren't getting answers. I wasn't familiar with the transmission. Even with my nurse background I wasn't that informed or educated on the transmission of Ebola, that disease. I was trying to identify and try to get some information on transmission and disease transmission. What really was the community health threat at that point?

And then there was my concern immediately... because that site was not secured. I didn't know if the people had been exposed... how many people they could have exposed [sic]. It was all about the community health threat at that point. We were looking for answers and there still wasn't a lot available at that point. I knew it was gonna be an issue. I'm sure you recall this because you went with me. I wasn't getting the answers. I wasn't feeling confident they had a handle on that actual apartment, on the comings and goings of the people that had been exposed or the belongings. They said CDC was aware or whatever, but as you knew when we got there it was an unsecured site. People were coming and going. The [apartment] owners had not been notified that it actually confirmed that this was there [sic].

### **Finding a home for Louise.**

**Rocky Vaz:** Our challenges were finding a home for this family, for Louise, and her two nephews. That was a nightmare. There was not a single apartment in this whole metroplex area that would rent to them... and nobody would sell us anything. Finally got the Catholic diocese to pretty much shut down [a] 20-acre retreat facility that had 15, 20



homes to just house one family. Having the Catholic Diocese step up was a win. We were able to protect that family to an extent where the general public or the media were not aware of where they were, so they could live in peace for at least those 20 days.

**Jennifer Gates:** We were trying logistically to protect the privacy of the family. We thought it was gonna happen quicker than it did. I was talking to Louise periodically throughout that day and telling her what was going on. She didn't want to leave and we're like, "No, you're gonna have to leave." And then Clay didn't want to leave without the epidemiologist being present. Remember that? Then we had to wait for the doctor to get there. So it was just one thing after another until we finally got everything, all the checks to be able to move her.

**Bentley.**

**Rocky Vaz:** The other big challenge was with the dog, where we had an issue and that was again an unknown [variable].

**Nina Pham:** When I was in the ER, I just remember thinking that I was sad that I had just ran off to the ER at like midnight, and I didn't even say bye to Bentley. At that point when I was quarantined in the ER, I was texting some other nurse that I worked with in the ICU, and the PA, and she had actually offered to run by my apartment and check on Bentley, but then I think maybe an hour later she sent me like through text an article about [how] they don't know, dogs can be a carrier for Ebola. She didn't think it would be the best idea, so at that point, I really didn't know what was going to happen to Bentley or who was going to check on him.

**Rocky Vaz:** We didn't know how a dog would react, who was associated with the first nurse, and finding a place for a dog – that was a challenge. And we went to great

lengths in quarantining the dog for 21 days in another isolated area. And there was a lot of public discourse about how we did it or how we did not do that. So, the win was, we felt good that we were able to save that dog.

**Nina Pham:** That was great to have you just to run things by me, and get my permission to use his pictures, and it also gave me an update of him, and it was nice to see. It was because of you guys that I got to see the vets in their hazmat suits playing with him, so that was good. It was so just overwhelming, the outpouring, and people were setting up, like, Amazon wish lists for him. All the people that would send me texts, and saying, "Oh, my God. They saw Bentley on the news," or whatever. It was awesome, and it was awesome to see that he was doing good in that situation but also heartbreaking that he was in this little house by himself.

**Researcher to Nina:** When we were planning the reunion, you got to have that private reception, and we asked you if you wanted that to be – the reunion part – to be public or if you wanted to have that private moment with your family, and the people who took care of him, and you opted for the private part. Why did you opt to have that private reception before the press conference?

**Nina Pham:** I think it had been so long since I had seen him. He gets distracted very easily, too, but I just wanted to have that genuine first hug, and running up to him, and I'm just like a private person, in general, so I didn't want to have to be on for the cameras or anything like that. I think it was really nice because, obviously, you saw me break down and cry. I don't think anyone else needed to see that.

**The waste.**

**Rocky Vaz:** There was a challenge on how we would dispose of the waste. That became more of a national [media] issue and none of the normal hazardous material waste collection agencies [wanted] to be a part of it or [wanted] to dispose that and we had to get engaged all the way up to the national level, to the transportation secretary, to get some of these things done. That was another learning experience for us.

**Nina Pham:** He [Duncan] had so much waste, so we had to change his rectal tube... honestly, maybe twice an hour or an hour. We have to have two nurses in the room at all times because we couldn't let things overflow, and he had a tower of IV medications, and we had to keep up with that, and change the bags whenever they would be almost running out. He had a ton. Every time we had to dispose of waste, we had to triple bag, then we pour bleach on them. It was a whole process. Anything we brought in the room we couldn't take out, so things accumulated over the two weeks. So we had a lot of equipment, and supplies, syringes, all of that.

### **Managing the message.**

**Researcher to Rocky:** When Hensley Field was selected to quarantine the dog, we realized that there was another group that we had not communicated with; our own employees. We got some really angry emails and we held several internal town hall meetings. I was out in the field usually, but you helped with those meetings. Can you talk about what the turnout was like in those meetings and what was communicated to the employees?

**Rocky Vaz:** Hensley Field is a large, several-thousand-acre, old, shut-down naval airbase. And we took our little part of it, but there are a lot of different operations, a lot of private businesses there. And you know, what we failed to do is let everybody know that

you're going to have an Ebola dog quarantined over there. And that created a lot of uneasiness and we quickly realized that we needed to provide that same one-on-one education, reassurance to our employees and to people in that area.

We did several [internal town hall meetings] and then we recorded those, and then we played them. It was Dr. Isaacs who was a medical director. Then we had some other doctors, then we had the state health agencies. We had Dallas Fire Rescue and the chief for EMS and he would talk about his personal experience and how he interacted with the paramedics that were actually transporting Patient Zero. So a lot of that helped. I think people started feeling good about people who were directly involved in this coming and talking to them. We put that [town hall recording] on our intranet so employees could go and look at that video and get information. It went well.

*The city eventually came together with regional and state health experts and stakeholders, including school districts, universities, colleges, hospitals, and the convention and visitors bureau to create the KnowEbola campaign to educate people about Ebola.*

**Rocky Vaz:** Dallas is a big sports market. We had NFL teams coming in, we had challenges about them not wanting to come and play in Dallas, even though the stadium was 60 miles away and we had a lot of events at the convention center. People wanting to cancel conferences, people canceling airline tickets to Dallas. And so our convention and visitors bureau was very concerned... I mean, the whole establishment [was concerned] because there's a big hit to our revenue source.

We brought a team together, city PIOs and experts from around the region, the Dallas convention and visitors bureau and talked through all the negatives that we're being hit with and how do we come up with a positive message... why we were safe and why

people should reconsider their plans that they had put on hold and things like that. They [the team] came up with the campaign. We blasted it out.

*The city also created a Dallas PETS campaign to raise money to offset the cost of putting Bentley the dog in quarantine. The campaign raised thousands of dollars.*

**Researcher to Rocky:** Looking back, do you think that we should have done that [Dallas PETS] earlier?

**Rocky Vaz:** Yeah. Looking back, there are a lot of things we would have done differently, could have done earlier. But no, those were things that were in sequence and how important it was and what the priorities were that we had to deal with. In hindsight, we should have tackled that earlier on. You know at that time, you're really not worried about who was coming or not coming to town. We were worried about taking care of what we had on hand.

We [eventually] had a good handle on how to manage our messaging and we had a good handle on how we cleaned up apartments for these nurses who tested positive and how we were able to communicate with the immediate neighborhood. Those were things that we learned as we went through the first episode and we got better the second and third [cases]. So in general, 30, 40 days of taxing time, every day was a new challenge with a new nuance coming up on some piece of the whole Ebola [*sic*] and what it meant to different people. Communication and education was a major challenge.

**Disposing and decontaminating.**

**Rocky Vaz:** Issue number one was; How do you dispose of a body that was infected with Ebola? The medical community had to get involved in that and had a lot of discussion and consultation with each other. And they finally did that, having great concern to the

needs of the family and how they disposed of Patient Zero and took care of that. So [the] other big challenge we had was cleaning up the apartment, where we ended up stripping down the apartment to the floor, all the way to the extent of ripping off the toilets and the wash basins and bathtubs in that apartment and [learned] how to get rid of that contaminated Ebola waste. The challenge was nobody was willing to accept it, nobody was willing to transport it. We had to order special bins and double and triple seal that and then transport that [waste] under police escort, across state lines.

We spent several hundred thousand dollars disposing of all material belonging to one-, two-bedroom apartments. Which, if we look back now, was not an issue. We could have gone to any regular dumpster and it wouldn't have mattered. There was no playbook and that was the big thing. That never happened before, nobody had experienced it, even though it happened in Liberia and other places. How they've dealt with it was completely different than how we would deal with it over here. The expectations that people had of how it would be dealt with or their thoughts on how we should have dealt with it. We had to manage expectations of the general public.

*Almost every one of these issues was covered by media around the world. It was not just the city of Dallas that had major problems and needed to find solutions quickly, but every move was being watched and reported. City communication staff attempted to continue to be stewards of the public and provide as much information as became available on existing channels, but it became clear that new channels and strategies were needed to provide timely information to the press and the public, with different language barriers.*

### **Communication as a Public Good**

**Jennifer Gates:** In the past, we dealt with emergencies that kinda had a protocol, but we didn't have any of that [in this case]. So the city and the county were kinda creating it as we were going. I can understand they were saying, "We're on top of this." But when I got to the apartment complex, the owner was in a sheer panic and had really no idea. If they [officials] were so worried about the hazardous materials at Presby, why were they not worried about these same hazardous materials that existed with access from the community?

**Mike Rawlings:** Everyone was scared. And when people are scared they get mean. And I think the media felt the fear in the community and in America. And so, their job is to call out people when they're not doing the right thing. And the fact that there were so many mistakes at the hospital, and then at the apartment complex, and how slow it took us – it was plenty for the media to jump on. But... we did what we said we were going to do, which was every day we had a press conference. Every day, we communicated what we knew. And then, [when] we started putting information out, they realized they were not dealing with ineptitude. It was easier for them to go hunt another issue down after that. And they realized that we, as a community, had to pull together. And now there's a different role that they play, which is getting information out versus judging whether we were doing things right or not. It was a serious issue. We took this very seriously and I think that that's what helped. Whether it's a client or whether it's a citizen, if they feel like you are more passionate about the issue than they are it chills them out. And I think they felt that we were on top of it, pushing that information.

**Jennifer Gates:** At that point we did have some experts come in, epidemiologists and such, and got cooperation. Our role was to work with DISD about getting the

information translated. And then we had to work through how to get the family out of that apartment, and have their belongings moved... belongings taken care of, and them in a secure site. And then we were following the whole pattern of who had been exposed. And that number, that was concerning 'cause during that time period is [when] we would hear they were tracking this many people, then they were tracking this many people. I remember the mayor being really forceful about trying to figure out what that number was. How many people had been exposed? Who are we tracking? How are we doing it? We had people that worried themselves.

**Rocky Vaz:** Initially, we were a little overwhelmed with all the attention, but as we got into the event, and started understanding what Ebola meant and what people knew about it, and the fear factor associated with what they had seen happen in the countries that had been very infected by Ebola – I think rightfully so, the media and the people are interested in learning more about it.

**Jennifer Gates:** I think the social media, I think the way the Office of Emergency Management made changes, I think it was [a] big learning experience. But it has its own nuances so it's hard to have some kind of format. Having in place different avenues for people to look at for the information, be it directly to your council members, the city website, whatever social media sites that we've built up. But I still think we have to use the traditional sources. There's a lot of people that are not savvy or don't trust social media sites so they're not gonna go look for it there. They want to kinda hear it in the more traditional fashion of a press conference or written in the paper or something issued, an email that's issued from us. I think you have to make sure you include all types of communication.



**Rocky Vaz:** Social media is brutal if you don't stay up with it. Messaging is very important and responding to false messages or incorrect or inaccurate information is equally important than just having your message out. Your message can be drowned out very quickly by some other headline that is more catchy and more sexy and something that people want to hear and that gets disseminated faster than facts and figures that you're trying to put out. And as a government agency, we always think about facts and figures and not trying to put a spin on it, but I think sometimes you [have] got to look at how do you put forth information that's easier for people to read in the social media age, not necessarily just facts and figures that a typical development agency used.

**Erick McCallum:** I think that there's also a fine balance between a major public scare and the full Monty of information to somebody... It reminds me of a movie quote that said, "You want the truth, you can't handle the truth." Honestly, that's a fact. There are things that happen that most [people] cannot handle, they can't. I mean, my guys that I have here are a special breed because we run in when others are running out. I don't believe everybody could handle that. If you did divulge all the information, sometimes it might not be good, it will be a public scare and nobody needs that either.

**Jennifer Gates:** We didn't have a road map to deal with Ebola, but... I think we were trusted by the public as the entity, the city. The residents looked to us for the information. Whatever we were privileged to, we were communicating it to the best of our ability. We were organizing the press conferences. The city didn't have a lot of authority in this matter at all. I think the only time it was discussed that the city could've had any real authority is if the mayor had declared a state of emergency, which had a lot of other implications. He

didn't have that authority but yet the public looks to the city leadership to guide us through these emergencies.

The transparency... for me it's always about the public. Just be honest. Be truthful. That's how I always operate. Everything we know we need to go out there and share because it leads to a distrust if they feel like we're not sharing information. That's what the public deserves and it's necessary for that trust to be established. Honesty and transparency. But then having a social media platform, the PIO being out in the community... to be effective and trusted it needs to be independent of council agendas. We should put it out there. Now, if it gets traction, if news want to cover it, that's their choice. But I think we have a responsibility. We put out the good and the bad. Put [information] out when something's gone wrong and when we've done well.

**Nina Pham:** I think just being transparent with the information that they're going to put out into the media, and make sure the patient actually understands that if it were to get out to the media what to expect, and what they can do to protect their privacy as much as possible, if that's what they want. I think it was helpful to have maybe just like a few contact points instead of having so many people texting you because you don't know who was texting you or communicating with you, and in my situation it was all mainly through text messages because I couldn't really talk to anyone face to face because I was in isolation, so it made another layer of difficulty. Ask [those impacted] if there's anything that they need or what can you do for them. Just ask if they have any questions or just really make sure that they understand everything that's going on because it's obviously a very stressful, chaotic time. If you have a phone conversation, maybe write down what you discuss, and in written communication so that everyone is on the same page. So that could

be helpful. It was definitely nice to have your support, and your advice on what to say. Just kind of like walk me through what was going to happen. That was really nice.

**Rocky Vaz:** Communication... you can do a great job, an effective job and if people don't know about it and are not assured of it every step of the way, then you've lost half the battle right there. I think we did a great job and we can look at all the crises that we have dealt with. The core of all of that was communicating and letting our citizens know, our clients know, that this is what happened, this is why it happened, this is how we're going to fix it. And so that's what we did with Ebola in a different level. We did that for the sirens; we did that during the July 7th shooting. Getting the message out effectively and telling people what we're doing and why we're doing it.

At the end of the day, not knowing what we were dealing with, we came out very well. We were able to communicate effectively, very quickly to people, what Ebola meant, what it could do, could not do, what you need to be aware of. Our communication plan at the end of the day – we improvised on it as we went along, as we learned more about it, and we did a good job. I think social media was very effective; we held multiple press conferences, made the leadership and the experts available to talk to people about what they knew, what we did not know.

And one thing was, we were very clear at the very beginning that since we didn't know as much, we would tell the public everything we know. We would not hide; we did not script any of this. We just told them what we knew and we told them that we don't know what this means or does not mean, but this is what we know and this is how we are proceeding. I think that was a good message at the end of the day. People were appreciative that we were not holding back and trying to feed them something they wanted to hear.

*Those engaged in communicating about the Ebola crisis learned quickly about the value of transparency and that the public was relying on official channels to understand the situation. Elected officials and city staff felt a responsibility to maintain transparency, and provide immediate and accurate communication to the public, autonomous of political agendas. City leaders viewed their communication approach as a public good, focused on public safety and sought to be a legitimate and trusted source of information. The city's communication approach allowed its staff to publicly correct misinformation, which the media and social media users then amplified through mass communication. Officials spoke of the need to maintain independence of city communication from political agendas, as this may taint the credibility of the information presented and cause the public to question whether information was promoting a particular political agenda, as this event occurred in October 2014, one month before midterm elections. The city was careful to maintain messaging that was factual in nature and gave credit to community partners and law enforcement, and most of the elected officials involved continued to push the messaging the city communication staff was providing.*

### **Crisis of Legitimacy**

**Mike Rawlings:** It was definitely the scariest thing that has happened in my tenure. When I ask a lot of questions about tracking people [during Ebola]... It was obvious that we did not have a system in place. So, I was very very fearful. But I felt from a tone standpoint, people needed to know that I was taking this very seriously... And if I did that in the right way when I said, "We'll get through this," they took that as legitimate prediction. That, "Well, you're closer than anybody else, so we'll give you the benefit of the doubt." But it was

pretty crazy. Especially [because] you had a lot of different people telling what you can say and not say.

**Rocky Vaz:** Media coverage was huge. Everything that we did was a focus of different media for different reasons. Whether it was the medical community focusing on what we did, or it was the general media, trying to [fill] the appetite of what people wanted to see and what they wanted to hear. Not so much as trying to find fault, but you know, trying to nit-pick on every single decision that we made. When we made those decisions, we were thinking about how this would be perceived. That was one of the considerations but not always the only consideration on why we would do it.

But media did play [a big role] and we knew that anything that we did would be put under a microscope, to scrutinize whether we did it right, wrong or otherwise. So we had to think about every decision that we made. Politics did play a part again, because number one, it had never happened before. So the leaders wanted to assure the public that they were doing the right thing. And there were challenges with that on what message one leader wanted to portray, versus another leader, and what the national leadership was looking at and what they wanted to see Dallas doing and doing it right. So there are challenges every step of the way.

When we started off, obviously we did not have all the answers and the media was pushy and we could only give them as much as what we knew and they felt that we were holding back. But as they got more involved, we gave them easy access, you [Researcher] were always available to them, and once they realized that we were pushing as much information as we knew and as fast as we could get it to them, I think they were more on

our side and trying to push out our message at the same time and trying to kill some of those negative messages that were out there.

**Mike Rawlings:** You mentioned communication though, and you think about mass media, but I think what we've done a good job [on] is really neighborhood communication. The boots on the ground sort of thing. To me, that's really strong because so much bad information can be started by somebody down the block. Or they've got an aunt that lived in the neighborhood, and they've heard what the aunt said, and then all of a sudden there's bad news [misinformation]. So, I think realizing that it has to be very localized communication as well as the national stuff.

**A.C. Gonzalez:** It's only now coming to light about some of the impacts. And one can argue whether or not those are good things or bad things. What could not be argued is the fact that we were in control of a message and were out there in a way that was clearly being managed. It had tremendous impacts. Some people would argue one way or the other, but it was having an impact. That in and of itself is something to be, I would say applauded, some would say maybe rethought or whatever, maybe even castigated. But the fact of the matter is that we were out there in a way that was... very noticeable to a large audience. And for the very most part, I would have to say that, during those times, in a positive way of reflecting on the city, for the kinds of reactions that we were getting from literally all over the world, it was them applauding us for the things that we were doing as we were going through a number of challenges. There's all sorts of private sector companies that provide that [PR service], that can only dream of having that kind of reach and that kind of "favorables" given back to them.

**Rocky Vaz:** The first 48 hours were absolute chaos – trying to figure out, trying to get the right players on board, but we [got] a good handle on that and how we managed that. I think we should all step back and [see] that we created a playbook for the rest of the country – for the rest of the nation. It happened in New York and some other places that they could look back at Dallas and say “This is how they did that” and improvise on that, because we were learning as we went and they were able to better that product. And so, again, if it happens tomorrow, it happens somewhere else, people have a playbook. We got the health community nationwide to start focusing on infectious disease and what it means.

Communication is the core of everything, whether you're communicating internally, communicating within your team or community, to a larger worldwide audience, or in this sense a citywide, metro-wide audience. I think communication was critical during Ebola, especially dealing with the unknown that we had. I think we did a great job as a city with communication. Our communication team and the media partners, and the KnowEbola Dallas [campaign], and messaging where we got the other experts to craft our message working with the school districts and convention and visitors bureau... that's always critical.

### **Continuing concerns.**

**Rocky Vaz:** We have real episodes, real things happening, real solutions and how we took care of it. Now it's time for communities to start expanding on that and put together some real plans. Challenges still exist... like housing. We had so much trouble with trying to accommodate one family. What if we had 15 families to worry about, or 100 or 200 or 300, and that's not uncommon in a big metroplex when you have 7 million people. I don't think any other community has addressed that.

*Erick McCallum added that during Ebola, hospitals called his company to schedule proactive audits and trainings, which were canceled after the threat ended. He is concerned that hospitals in Dallas–Fort Worth and the United States are still not properly prepared for class-A infectious diseases.*

*During the Ebola scare in Dallas, politicians were the primary spokespersons for the day to day updates. City officials formulated the messaging that they pushed to the masses and the city pushed through various channels. This is what makes it difficult to maintain autonomy from political agendas. The city’s communication strategy was to have the mayor, emergency management director, and public information officer as the main spokespersons for the city. Individual council members were only brought in to share that stage if their respective district was impacted. Otherwise, the mayor spoke for all of Dallas’s elected officials. Having one primary elected official speak helped administrators maintain cohesiveness in messaging that was being shared on various channels. The programmers were vast, and there were not yet protocols in place as to how to mediate the message during a crisis.*

### **The Communication Plan**

I had planned to spend six months learning more about the city before putting together a communications plan for the city manager, but it became very clear during Ebola that we needed a plan in place immediately. I developed a communication “ecosystem” and plan and put together a presentation for council just weeks after Dallas was declared Ebola-free (Appendix D).

In the plan, I detailed a new approach to communication that included an “ecosystem” comprised of various channels we would use to get information to the public



and to develop two-way channels of communication and engage the public to improve the perception of the city. This plan included heavier utilization of digital platforms, including web and social, but also to work harder to place positive stories with traditional media outlets.

*The Dallas Observer* credited my team's efforts for filtering and distributing the vast amount of information during Ebola and the Nina and Bentley reunion, but cautioned against message control (Young, 2014). The writer pointed out the city's effort to increase reach on social media, views of videos, and a certain number of positive story placements about the city each month (Young, 2014). The *Dallas Morning News* also wrote an article about the communication plan and shared the PowerPoint presentation, expressing curiosity over how the city would use its forgotten cable channels and develop a Communication and Policy Institute (Wilonsky, 2014).

By most accounts, we considered the whole Ebola operation a success. Nina and Bentley were reunited, and the world was right again. We had a clear communication strategy and direction. Then, not long after my presentation to the mayor and council, A.C. received a letter from a local news director (Appendix E). The news director was upset about my presentation and felt that I, specifically, had tried to control information during Ebola. A.C. agreed to the meeting and asked me to join. He was aware of all my efforts to inform the public and the press, and believed there had been a misunderstanding.

On Monday, January 6, 2015, the *Dallas Morning News* and every TV news station in North Texas were represented. The news director for NBC 5, Susan Tully, immediately came out of the gates accusing me of trying to be the media. She lambasted me for keeping media out of the Ivy Apartments while I provided pictures and tweets about what was

going on. It all made sense in that moment – these news directors wanted their stations and their reporters to produce the information – they did not want to have to credit the city for information or have the city filter what they could or could not use. She accused me of creating a system where the media was forced to share government communication. She was also upset that my plan made only a small mention of media outlets and a heavy emphasis on city content generation (also known as content marketing, which by that time many organizations had been doing, including DISD). I asked A.C. to let me respond to her accusation.

I explained that the city was also responsible for providing information to the public. I told her that the decision to remove media from the location was the decision made by apartment managers because of how unethically and inappropriately some reporters had behaved, and because the largely immigrant population that lived there was in a pure state of panic because they did not understand what was happening or why there were so many cameras around their homes.

I explained that when I saw that reporters were not getting any information on site, I had my broadcast team shoot video so we could provide it as raw footage and I was tweeting pictures and information so that reporters had information to go with for their newscasts and for their articles. I told her and the group that reporters in the field were grateful for the information, and I noticed an immediate change in how reporters interacted with us and covered the story, always with appreciation for how we were trying to help them do their jobs. At any point during Ebola, whenever I saw reporters were not getting the information they needed, I provided that to them. Internally, I was accused of

being a leak by state officials because of how much information I shared, and here I was being accused by the media of trying to do their job.

Susan asked, “Well, how were we supposed to know that?” I calmly responded that if she was worried, all she had to do was pick up the phone and call me. She didn’t like that answer very much. I remember thinking to myself that the last thing I’m thinking about during a crisis is that I should call to make sure I am not hurting any TV station’s feelings and to remind them that I wasn’t trying to do their job. Another news director said to not trust field crews with conveying a message to management, which was equally disappointing to hear.

I went on to explain that the Nina and Bentley reunion was all planned with Nina’s guidance. Nina is a very private person, and she wanted to privately thank those who took care of Bentley while she was recovering from Ebola. She also wanted to have a private reunion with Bentley, but agreed to a press conference afterwards, which is what we helped plan. The room was quiet, and it seemed as though everyone understood I was not trying to do their job, but rather trying to help them do theirs. The tone quickly softened, and the news directors asked for ways that they could build a relationship with the city, to which A.C. responded that they needed to work with me.

We wrapped up the meeting shortly after. Every news director and managing editor met with me afterwards to say thank you for taking the time to meet with them – everyone except for Susan.

My team and I did everything outlined in the two-year plan shared with council in November 2014 – and more. A.C. and the city council were supportive of the plan. As we built our communication network, we outlined ways to enhance information, access, and

engagement. With the continued support of majority council in the following two budget cycles, within two years we had established a communication ecosystem, strengthened relations with traditional media outlets, overhauled our website and the open records platform, started archiving social media, provided unprecedented public access through our cable channels to public meetings, began working on the Communication and Policy Institute, and executed a strategic communication plan.

Nearly two years later, our city faced one of its greatest tragedies.

*Castells (2013) claims that networks have programmers and switchers who serve as gatekeepers who define the goals of the network and have the capacity to reprogram it. During Ebola, there were multiple people who were managing the message: the city, the city's animal shelter, the county, the state, and the CDC. But with so many entities involved, the messaging quickly became fractured, which is why the city focused on its own operations. Administrators wanted to ensure that they knew the source of all the information they were sharing and that the information was shared with a sense of urgency.*

*But even while the city was consistently communicating internally amongst executives, the understanding of who was a programmer and who was a switcher was not understood. Programmers can also be switchers, but switchers are not always programmers. For example, the mayor is a programmer, but he has staff who are switching between channels and adjusting the message as appropriate. Often times, switchers are the ones actually pushing the message on various channels, based on its respective audience demographics and reach. There was no proper structure to manage social media channels or hold switchers accountable or have the power to remove them from the network. Messages that were being pushed on one channel were not necessarily pushed on other official channels, because the connection*

*between all the channels (through a plan) had not yet been defined. Because of these gaps and not having a clear definition of goals, the city was operating off of channels, not a network, to reach audiences around the world. The messaging was fractured and not consistently being shared across multiple channels, as channels were being developed along the way.*

### **July 7: Background**

I had come to a peaceful place after the recent death of my ex-husband, who had lost his life to brain cancer just a week and a half earlier, and had started checking email again the afternoon of July 7. I had not been keeping up with the news as I usually did, but saw mentions of a man shot by police in his own car and protests happening in different parts of the country. Little did I know that I would be thrown into a national debate on race later that day.

David Brown was chief of the Dallas Police Department. On July 7, he had sent an email at 3:30 that afternoon to me, A.C., Assistant City Manager Eric Campbell, and Mayor Rawlings's team:

*Subject: Rally tonite [sic] at Belo Gardens*

*Message: According to social media sources protestors will hold a rally tonite [sic] at 7pm at Belo gardens to protest the recent police involved shootings in Baton Rouge and Minnesota....we are anticipating up to 600 people or more*

*On tomorrow, Friday, July 7th, at 8p Pastor Rick Rush of IBOC church will have an open discussion on recent shootings....I am planning on being at this meeting...Pastor Rush expects up to 500 men*

*The Black community all over the country is on edge, very angry about recent shootings...we have worked to have great relationships but this is a very sensitive time for police/community relations*

*Sent from my iPhone*

I responded to Chief Brown and A.C. at 3:36 p.m.:

*Message: Hi Chief. I plan to be back at the office tomorrow, but if there's anything I can do to help tonight or moving forward, please let me know.*

Chief Brown didn't respond to my email. His next email at 3:40 p.m. provided additional information about a march on Friday:

*Message: New info just in about a march tomorrow from Victory are [sic] to police headquarters....may be thousands...*

*Sent from my iPhone*

We had protests several times up until this point, and we did not have any altercations between police and protestors. Sgt. Ivan Gunter worked out of DPD's Southwest Patrol Station and started that day like any other day.

**Ivan Gunter:** It was a normal day. Everyone arrived early, per my instructions. We picked up our gear from upstairs. We loaded our cars and went to our meeting area – downtown headquarters. Once we received our directions from there, we went to the staging area on the street. Nothing out of the ordinary happened.

*Major Paul Junger of DPD was also working the protest. He recalled the moments before the shooting.*

**Paul Junger:** So... it was peaceful. It was peaceful to the point where it was civil. But I remember there being a negative energy in the air and I remember... this white female of

all things. I took her picture because her reaction to me really set me back... she looked me over, looked me up and down and it was like disgust. I remember thinking, wow, yeah that's kind of discrimination. But she doesn't know me, it's not personal.

But I remember texting my daughter that I can't believe how it feels. It just had a weird feeling to it. But I will say yeah, it was peaceful up until the point that this happened. For the most part people were emotional, but they weren't out of control.

**Researcher to Paul:** How were they emotional?

**Paul Junger:** Sterling Martin was shot by a police officer, [a] white police officer shot an African-American unarmed so there was a lot of emotion about police violence. Excessive force. And people were passionate about their message, meaning they believe in what they were saying. They wanted to get a message out. Might have been filled with a little bit of rhetoric but they wanted to get their message out nonetheless.

We kept all of our uniforms away from the protest. At the very beginning of this event, Major Anderson and I went up to the event coordinator, introduced ourselves. We were the only two uniforms there. And back to the point where the female walked by, she kinda gave me a look and then I noticed a guy with a sign taking pictures of us and it was an African-American. And he had a sign in his hand that said... God, what did that sign that he took with the guy [say]? "No justice, no peace" or something about equal rights.

I motioned to the guy to come over. I said, "Come on, take a picture with us." Major Anderson was on one side of this protester; he held up his sign. He was kind of pointing to his message, but he was smiling. That's how protests should be. I don't have to agree with your message, I don't have to like your message, but it's your message and I don't have a

right legally to stop it. Nor do I want to. But I think the point of that is to say you can have a message that's different than mine and we can still get along civilly. That's what we do.

*Major Junger posted the picture on Twitter. After the shooting, the picture of him with the peaceful protestor was shared around the world and mentioned by President Barack Obama in a speech he made in Dallas at the memorial honoring the fallen officers.*

**Ivan Gunter:** It was a small minority that said something off-color. For the most part, they were greeting us, thanking us for being there, thanking us for our service. We were there to protect their rights, and they have the right to assembly, the right to voice their opinion, whether we agree with it or not. We understood it and that was that. They were going to their final staging area. We were waiting to get a call to be released. It was the end of the day, everything was normal. We were just waiting to go home.

**Researcher:** But Sgt. Gunter and his unit were never relieved of duty. I received a text from a friend who lived in downtown Dallas saying he was hearing gunshots. That was when Sgt. Gunter, his unit Foxtrot, and officers from DPD, DART, and El Centro Community College were under attack.

**Ivan Gunter:** I hear this loud crack, multiple pops. Didn't know what it was. We initially thought it was fireworks. As the sounds got louder and more deafening, I looked around and said "It's not fireworks." I realized we were taking fire. I get on the radio, announced, "Shots been fired, shots been fired. We're in the kill zone. Stay out of the kill zone." I turn around and see Officer Patrick Zamarripa collapse, apparently from the gunshot. Another two officers were standing behind the squad cars. I didn't hear when they went down. That was Officer Lorne Ahrens and Mikey [Krol].

*Sgt. Gunter ran to Officer Zamarripa.*



**Ivan Gunter:** I knew they [Ahrens and Krol] were behind me. I didn't realize they were down. As my car was taking shots, I was trying to get to Pat. As I'm pulling him closer to the car for cover, Leo Barrientos was standing not too far away from me. I said "Get to the back of my car, that's where my med bag is." We tried to get to the car, but we were taking fire, couldn't get to the car. My front tire had been blown out. The guy was shooting into the windshield – inches from where I was. I was talking to Pat, trying to calm him down, let him know everything was going to be okay.

*Around the same time, Major Paul Junger ran to Lorne Ahrens.*

**Paul Junger:** I remember the guy that was in position next to me. I asked him to help me jump a fence. He wouldn't move. So I run in the intersection and I run up to Ahrens... and I see Sergeant Browning and I remember looking at Browning and he looked up at me, he was in a kneeling position. The fog of war they talk about, that's real. And I remember looking at him and he looked at me and it was like he wasn't there. So I told him "Let's go. Ambulances aren't coming. The fire department won't come in here. Unload those two squad cars. That officer goes in one; I didn't know their names at the time. We'll put one in one and one in the other."

They [the officers] started unloading the back of the squad cars and next to Ahrens was a tourniquet. So I put the tourniquet on Ahrens, they load both officers in the squad car, and an officer comes up to me. His name's Zach Helm. Puts his hand on my back and he goes, he picks up something, and he goes, "Put that on." It was a bulletproof vest. I was like, yeah, I might need that. They get the officers out of there and we go back behind a flower planter on the other side of the street.

**Researcher to Paul:** So you're the one who helped put Ahrens and Krol into the squad cars.

**Paul Junger:** Yes, I'm the one who organized getting them out of there. Again, you always wonder how you'd react under stress and from what I remember about the car to my right, one of the four tires was shot out and it's just weird what you remember under stress. That car made it to Baylor. It made it to Baylor.

**Ivan Gunter:** I did a body rake to see where the shot was, didn't see any immediate bleeding. I heard him struggling to breathe. I'm asking Barrientos, "Give me something," but all he had was some cigarettes. Took that out, used the plastic foil – covered the hole, grabbed his hand, said it was going to be okay. I didn't see the exit wound. "It hurts," said Pat. "I know, man, but it's going to be okay." Then myself and Barrientos got him into the squad car and got the squad car out of there.

*Sgt. Gunter did not leave the scene with his injured officer. He stayed behind to track down the suspect.*

**Ivan Gunter:** I don't know when the fire stopped. I was pissed off. I had a new level of anger – I don't recall ever being that angry in my life. I went to the back of my car, grabbed my heavy vest, gave the order to everyone within earshot, "Grab your vest, grab your gear now."

*Gunter explained that the heavy tactical gear was intentionally not worn by officers because of the perception this gave to protestors who viewed it as a sign of militarization of police and because of how heavy tactical gear was perceived by the general public and mass media.*

**Ivan Gunter:** I feel that they [tactical gear] would have helped, tremendously, and it would have made at least some of the injuries survivable. But the bottom line is they [command staff] were using their best judgment at that time and the crowd – their actions did not warrant an assertive front. That’s the thing most people don’t realize. The crowd may have attracted the marginalized fringed individuals, but the core of the crowd was not the problem that night.





*At the same time, Major Paul Junger was exchanging fire with the gunman and trying to get to Ahrens and Krol, who had been shot.*

**Paul Junger:** After the shooting, we chased Micah Johnson into the building. I helped set a perimeter with that. Chief [Bill] Humphrey showed up, SWAT showed up. We had Micah cornered in the back of the – in the back hallway and Chief Humphrey was at the command post. I said, “I’m leaving.” At that point I was mentally drained. I needed to get away, and I knew Humphrey was there. I knew Avery Moore at the time was the Lieutenant over SWAT. I said, “Y’all got him. He’s cornered. I’m out.” And I went.

That’s when I learned that five people died. I didn’t know five people died. That’s when I started learning names.

**Researcher:** The director of the Office of Emergency Management, Rocky Vaz, called me that evening. All he said was that officers were down and he was headed into work to activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). I was in EOC within 30 minutes. Within the first hour, we learned that three of our officers had died. Chief Brown said, “Sana, I need you to put out a statement for me.” We immediately sat down as he told me what his message would be. The press release is shown in Figure 1.

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**CITY OF DALLAS**  
— PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE —

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 7, 2016  
**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

Sana Syed  
[sana.syed@dallascityhall.com](mailto:sana.syed@dallascityhall.com)  
214-846-0519

**Chief Brown statement**

Tonight it appears that two snipers shot ten police officers from elevated positions during the protest/rally. Three officers are deceased, two are in surgery and three are in critical condition. An intensive search for suspects is currently underway. No suspects are in custody at this time. We ask that any citizen with information regarding the shootings tonight call 214-671-3482.

We will provide more information once it is available. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers tonight.

Figure 1. Chief Brown Statement

The EOC was bustling with activity. The FBI, ATF, state police, Sheriff Lupe Valdez, County Commissioner Judge Clay Jenkins, Mayor Mike Rawlings, City Manager A.C. Gonzalez, Chief Brown and dozens more from the city and various agencies were there.

Email, social media, and phones – all two-way communication channels – were out of control with an influx of messages and requests. The second we would hang up the phone, it would start ringing again. We could not keep up with the emails. Good Morning America, *New York Times*, the Associated Press all wanted information in addition to all local media. The White House wanted the mayor's phone number.

Here are some of the inquiries we received immediately after the shooting:

ABC News:

*Can you send me statement on shooting tonight please*

NBC News:

*Hello,*

*I work for the NBC News network desk. Reaching out to request that any updated information regarding the shooting at Thursday night's protest be sent to newsdesk@nbcuni.com*

MSNBC, "The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell":

Hello:

Can someone from the City do a phone interview with MSNBC right now? We're in rolling coverage following the police shooting. Possible?

CBS National News:

*Hi there,*

*My name is Joshua Peagler. I am a Producer for CBS This Morning with Charlie Rose, Gayle King, and Norah O'Donnell.*

*I am very sorry to hear about the violence and unrest in the city of Dallas this evening.*

*CBS This Morning is sending a full team to fully and accurately report the facts of this story in a respectful manner.*

*I am reaching out on behalf of CBS National News to see if Chief Brown may be available to join us LIVE for our broadcast tomorrow morning, which begins at 6:00 AM CST (7:00 AM EST).*

*Most likely, we would like to do a PRETAPE with the Chief around 5:35 AM CST, but we can be flexible with his schedule.*

*This interview would air on CBS This Morning, CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley, and our digital streaming network, CBSN.*

*Please let me know if this is at all possible and if you have any questions.*

*Our continued prayers are with your community.*

*Thank you for your help.*

NBC News:

*Hi Sana,*

*This is Jacob Rascon with NBC news, will you forward me the statement from the Cheif [sic] that you sent Ken Kaltoff?*

*Thank you, and we're so sorry to hear about your officers.*

Global News in Toronto, Canada:

*Hi there,*

*Laura from Global News in Toronto, Canada here. Wondering if you could please add me to a list for any updates you may have through the night. We are following this story closely.*

*Can you confirm this is the latest update you have:*

*Tonight it appears that two snipers shot ten police officers from elevated positions during the protest/rally. Three officers are deceased, two are in surgery and three are in critical condition. An intensive search for suspects is currently underway. No suspects are in custody at this time. We ask that any citizen with information regarding the shootings tonight call 214-671-3482.*

*We will provide more information once it is available. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers tonight.*

*Thank you, and so sorry for the devastation.*

Good Morning America:

*Hi Sana,*

*My name is Henderson Hewes and I work for Good Morning America on ABC News. I'm reaching out regarding the statement recently released by Chief David Brown. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and everyone involved in this horrific tragedy.*

*I know you are busy, but is there any chance you could give me a call? We are trying to get as much information as possible and I also wanted to protectively [sic] see if Chief Brown or anyone might be available to be live tomorrow morning for our show. I know it's early still but I just wanted to touch base with the best person for this.*

*You can reach me at (646) 661-0018.*

*Thanks so much and again, our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.*

Buzzfeed:

*Sana,*

*Trying to clear some of the details from Brown's statement.*

*DART officials confirmed 4 DART officers were shot, including 1 deceased. Is this in addition to the 10 injured, 3 dead reported by Chief Brown, or is this in addition [sic]? Any clarification on this would be greatly appreciated.*

*Tokyo Shimbun, Japanese newspaper:*

*Good evening,*

*I'm writing from the Tokyo Shimbun, a Japanese newspaper.*

*We'd first like to extend our condolences on the situation in Dallas.*

*Would you please send us the latest statement on the status of the Dallas police officers?*

*Also, would you please include us on any further updates you have regarding this situation?*

*Fox News:*

*Hi Sana-*

*We are hoping someone from the Dallas PD can join us on Hannity tomorrow. Please let me know if we can make something work.*

*ABC Radio Australia:*

*Hi Sana,*

*Christine here from ABC radio in Australia.*

*I know you're swamped right now. We're looking to chat to someone in one hour's time to get an update on what's happening in Dallas. Are you available? Can we please give you [a] call?*

*3AW Drive with Tom Elliott, Australia:*

*Good evening Sana,*



*I understand you're extremely busy right now but I'm just putting in a request for a representative from Dallas City Hall to talk to my radio host on 3AW Drive in Melbourne, Australia.*

*It'd be great to get an update of the news shooting and inform Australian listeners.*

*Please let me know if anyone is available for five minutes this evening.*

*We are on air for the next three hours.*

*New York Times:*

*Sana: Greetings. It's Manny at the New York Times.*

*Are there any new details about the possible bomb?*

Most local media were meeting us in the lobby of Dallas City Hall for press conferences we held as information became available. Meanwhile, at the crime scene, Sgt. Gunter, his Foxtrot unit, and members of different police departments were on a mission.

**Ivan Gunter:** Once we had him [Zamarripa] secured, we had a respite on fire. During that time period, I grabbed my heavy vest, I ordered people around me to do the same, then I ordered those around me to follow me into the building where I believed the suspect had ran into. Officers were pointing, saying, "He's here, he's here." I see shattered glass, I see blood. Then I'm told he's on one side so my best bet is to cut him off on the other side of the building. But because we did not know where he was, I had to do multiple room checks on the southern side of the building before making it to the stairwell where I wound up – and he was just above me.

Everything happened within seconds. What slowed him [the suspect] down was the encounter he had from Brett Thompson from DART. Brett, for all intents and purposes, saved my life. As [the suspect] was zeroing on me and my people, Brett Thompson

encounters him and they go through a volley of fire with each other. He snuck around and eventually murdered Brett. But Brett bought me time. That's what gave us time to get Pat and Mike and Lorne into the cars. That's what gave me time to grab my heavy vest and go after that SOB. As the circle was closing in on him, he ran into the buildings after shooting at the guards. He went to the north side, I took the south side, cleared out the areas best I could. To the outside walkway, near the second floor, where they are trading volleys with him. They [officers] went to my squad car to retrieve my shield and used my shield throughout.

The suspect was on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor. When the gunman went to the second floor, he already had a small volley with tactical. He saw an officer near the 7-11, he sniped him [DPD Sgt. Mike Smith].

We were in an outside stairwell with officers from campus. That's when I started listening to some of the conversations that were being held on that 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Between volleys, I could hear the volleys and hear the banter. I find out later that Larry Gordon was holding my shield and talking to the shooter as this was going on. Everyone involved, I've known for years. These are my friends, my partners, and they're having to step up for me. I know it's the job, but to have a friend that will cover you says something to the quality of people you work with.

Tactical guys had him [suspect] cornered. We got the word to stay down there, do not advance. My goal was to maintain hard cover where the gunman was and to maintain our position. All I heard was muffling sounds and gunfire. The specifics of the exchange I could not hear. Tactical did a great job of containing. None of this was planned.

**Researcher:** As officers tried to contain the suspect, around 10:30 p.m., Chief Brown told me and Monica Cordova (DPD PIO) that the Fusion Center had a picture of a potential suspect. We were waiting for it to be emailed to us, but then the entire city and DPD servers crashed. We weren't getting emails. Everything you can imagine going wrong goes wrong during a crisis, a reminder that you can't plan for everything. By 10:48 p.m., the Fusion Center's email came through. We printed a copy of the picture, and Monica and I took pictures of the potential suspect and immediately pushed it on our personal social media accounts and the DPD account. It was shared by thousands instantly. We had another press conference to run to. As we ran out of EOC to the Dallas City Hall lobby to meet media, I sent out the next statement from Chief Brown at 10:49 p.m., shown in Figure 3:

The image is a graphic for a press release from the City of Dallas. At the top, there is a dark blue header with a green bar on the left containing the text 'PRESS RELEASE' and a logo. To the right of the green bar, the website 'DALLASCITYNEWS.NET' is displayed along with icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Below the header, the text 'CITY OF DALLAS' is written in large white letters, with 'PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE' in smaller white letters underneath. The main body of the graphic is white and contains the following text: 'FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE', 'July 7, 2016', 'FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT', 'Sana Syed', '[sana.syed@dallascityhall.com](mailto:sana.syed@dallascityhall.com)', '214-846-0519', and '\*I'm getting swamped right now. Please text or email only.'. Below this is a large black heading 'Update from Chief Brown'. The main text of the update follows: 'An 11th officer was shot during an exchange of gunfire with one of the suspects. The officer is being transported to the hospital. We have a person of interest - please share this picture and help us identify this person. Citizens are asked not to approach, as you can see from the picture this suspect is armed and dangerous.' The final line of text is 'If you have any information on the shootings, please call 214-671-3485.'

Figure 2. Update from Chief Brown





By this point, I had to tell media that they could only email or text me because my phone would not stop ringing. Not long after the press conference, we learned that the suspect whose picture was shared turned himself into police at the scene, was questioned, and released. Chief Brown, still suspecting multiple suspects, was not ready to announce that the man in picture was not a suspect. He was not alone in this deduction – DPD officers on scene also believed they were dealing with multiple gunmen. Twitter was on fire –

people, particularly those who sympathized with the Black Lives Matter movement, accused the city and DPD of putting the man's life in danger and for being irresponsible. But people at home did not understand the gravity of the chaos we were embroiled in, and that we had multiple suspects and persons of interest who were questioned and released. It was a situation unlike anything law enforcement agencies had experienced in recent history and we were doing the best we could with the information that was available to us.

**Ivan Gunter:** I assumed that there were multiple gunmen because of the type of fire we had undertaken, not realizing he was using basic military tactics by moving from position to position and resuming fire. Not realizing that the tactics that were used to protect this nation were being used to annihilate us.

**Researcher:** DPD PIO Monica Cordova walked into the EOC. Her eyes were red, she had clearly been crying. When we had a moment to ourselves she told me she knew some of the officers who died. I just held her and told her how sorry I was. Monica was a trooper. Despite her loss, we sat side by side as the chief learned more officers were dying. I helped her compose social media messaging as she bravely announced a fourth officer had died, and then a fifth.

At 12:46 a.m., I helped Chief Brown with the next statement, shown in Figure 3:

 **PRESS RELEASE** | DALLASCITYNEWS.NET |   

# CITY OF DALLAS

— PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE —

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 7, 2016

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**  
Sana Syed  
[sana.syed@dallascityhall.com](mailto:sana.syed@dallascityhall.com)  
214-846-0519  
\*please email or text only

## Persons of interest in custody

Additional update from Chief Brown:  
With heavy hearts, we are devastated to report a fourth officer has died.

The person of interest whose picture has been circulated just turned himself in.

Another alleged suspect was in a shootout with Dallas SWAT officers. That suspect is also in custody. A suspicious package was discovered near this suspect's location. The package is being secured by DPD bomb squad.

Other persons of interest being questioned:  
A DPD officer observed an individual carrying a camouflaged bag, walking quickly down Lamar St. The individual threw the bag in the back of a black Mercedes and the Mercedes sped off at a high rate of speed.

Officers followed the vehicle southbound on I-35E and performed a traffic stop at I-35E and Kiest. Police are questioning both occupants of the vehicle.

Next press conference will be in the City Hall lobby at 12:30.

Figure 3. Person of Interest in Custody

At 2:01 a.m., DART issued the following statement:

*The Dallas Area Rapid Transit family is grieving the loss of police officer Brent Thompson, 43, who was killed during Thursday night's protest in Downtown Dallas. Officer Thompson is the first officer killed in the line of duty since DART formed a police department in 1989. He joined the DART Police Department in 2009.*

*As you can imagine, our hearts are broken. This is something that touches every part of our organization. We have received countless expressions of support and sympathy from around the world through the evening. We are grateful for every message. Thank you.*

*We are grateful to report the three other DART police officers shot during the protest are expected to recover from their injuries. No other DART employees working in Downtown during the protest or shooting were injured.*

*We also extend our sympathies to our colleagues at the Dallas Police Department in the loss of their five officers.*

*DART services in downtown Dallas were suspended following the shooting. We are evaluating our operating plans for Friday morning. Updates will be posted to DART.org and made available via Twitter @dartmedia or by our email update service at [www.DART.org/rideralerts](http://www.DART.org/rideralerts).*

A.C. kept his eyes on operations, Chief Brown had a hold on his officers, and the mayor took the media by storm. After another press conference, Chief Brown was on the far side of the EOC, working with his team back at police headquarters in the Fusion Center.

His team told him that officers had a suspect surrounded, but there was no way to get to him without putting officers' lives in danger. But officers had an idea. Chief Brown emerged at the front of the EOC and said, "This guy is mother fucking us. He keeps saying he's got bombs placed throughout the city and more officers will die. My officers have told me a way of getting to him without losing more officers. I'm about to make a call soon and end this if he doesn't surrender."

The suspect would not surrender. DPD's tactical team was communicating with Chief Brown about a plan to handle the threat while not risking more officers' lives.

With the plan of attack clear in his mind, we walked to the next press conference with A.C., the mayor, and the rest of our leadership group. The mayor and Chief Brown talked to the press about the latest that could be discussed, and then Chief Brown made clear there was something he had to do, as the suspect was still barricaded in a parking garage, surrounded by DPD officers. We walked back into the EOC, and Chief Brown immediately walked again to the corner of the room, where police communications and dispatch were stationed. He came out a short while later and told us that the robot was successful and the shooter was dead. The room erupted in applause. The room full of officials immediately went back to work. As the rest of the world debated the ethics of a police chief authorizing a suspect to be killed using a bomb, we were proud of Chief Brown. He did what he had to do – he made a decision that saved officers' lives.

Back at the scene, Sgt. Gunter described the mood of officers once the suspect had been killed.

**Ivan Gunter:** No one was high-fiving. This isn't the stuff you see on TV. You don't realize what's going on, we just knew something happened. By the time you find out, it's



anticlimactic. Because during that whole exchange, I'm talking to other supervisors, my partner was calling me and telling me bad news [that officers had died] while I'm in the middle of this exchange. This joker is dead... but so are my people. I was worried I couldn't be with them in their last hours or be with my guys – that's what was going through my mind. I couldn't be with my guys in the last hours. And I'm just angry. That raw anger hasn't left.

**Paul Junger:** I was actually at headquarters right around the time the bomb was detonated. There is no cop that I know of that wakes up going, "I'm gonna kill somebody today" – whether the guy's armed or not. They don't want that stuff. And I truly believe in my heart that every cop thinks that's morally wrong, that's ethically wrong. It's illegal for crying out loud. There were, I want to say, nine of us that actually shot or were involved in deadly force against Micah Johnson. That stuff just went to the grand jury.

*In 2018, a grand jury cleared the officers who killed the gunman of any wrongdoing (Rajwani, 2018).*

So the charge is in front of the robot and it's detonated by a little blasting cap; there's a little cap inside of a plunger that detonates the blasting cap that initiates the charge. The guy that actually did that to the plunger, technically he's not charged with murder but charges are filed, they go to the grand jury, the grand jury says that's self-defense. But that's stressful. And people don't realize that... just because it's a robot that did it, there's still a human attached to it that actually has to face murder [charges].

Boy, if we would have sent an officer into there or a SWAT team to go get him, he was ready. I'm sorry Micah Johnson lost his life. That was his choice. He could have given up. I guarantee had he given up in the middle of that school, nobody would have hurt that

guy. He would have stood trial. He'd be... the judicial process would have played out. He chose not to give up. He made his decision that night.

By 3:09 a.m., we had a map of the area of downtown that law enforcement considered a crime scene and was closed to the public. We held a press conference with Lt. Dale Barnard at 4:30 a.m., and he had strict instructions to not discuss the shootings or investigation with media. The center of downtown was closed to the public and businesses because we had a crime scene that stretched for blocks, with federal and local law enforcement involved with the investigation and aftermath, as shown in Figure 4.

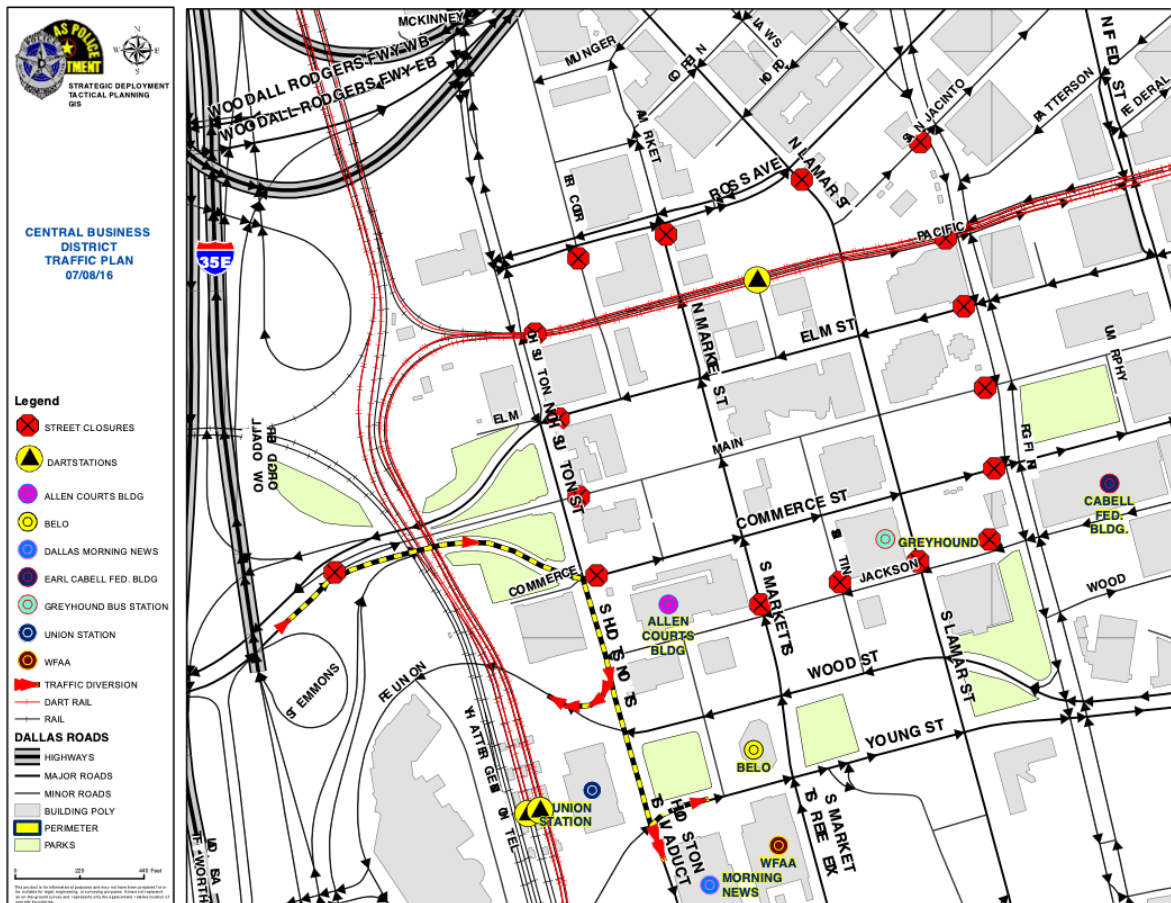


Figure 4. Map of CBD closed for investigation following July 7 shooting

*The July 7 shooting forced the city to strategically use channels that had the greatest reach to communicate with the press and the public. By this time, the various channels were connected, there were clear programmers and switchers (city manager, mayor, Public Information Officers, administrators, elected officials, police officers) and the city utilized social media with real-time posts, live social media broadcasts, press conferences, and press releases. The city knew which channels in the network were most effective, and it stuck to those channels, maintained concise messaging across all channels, and presented a narrative to the world about one of the greatest losses the city of Dallas had ever faced. Some members of the public questioned the ethics of the city sharing the picture of a suspect, even after he had turned himself into police, and then using a bomb to kill the actual gunman. Those who were critical of the city's response aired their grievances through their social media channels, as that was the most accessible way to challenge the city as an institution.*

**One presidential memorial and five officers' funerals.** The day after the shooting, thousands of people and police officers came together in Dallas's Thanksgiving Square to hold hands and pray for those who died and those who were injured. As faith leaders said encouraging words and Chief Brown managed to finally acknowledge his own grief, it seemed as if for those few moments the city stood still, as one.

Later that same day, we were informed that President Barack Obama wanted to come to Dallas for a memorial to honor the fallen the following Monday. Oddly enough, when the president decides he wants to come, the mayor must invite him, which Mayor Rawlings did. Chief Brown said none of his officers would support the event, they needed time to grieve and bury their fallen – and Arlington PD agreed to be the lead so that our officers could focus on the funerals. We were all exhausted from the shootings, but we

worked through the weekend for the presidential memorial. It would be held at the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas. I met the mayor's team and a White House team at the Meyerson two days after the shooting to map out the agenda for the event and to plan logistics.

At some point during this planning, a member of the White House team explained that the program would include former President Bush and Mayor Rawlings, followed by President Obama. In addition, a member of BLM/protestor from that night would introduce Chief Brown. I expressed my concern. A member of the mayor's team interjected, explaining to me that we could not act like that side of things didn't exist. "Sure it can," I said. "You don't include a member of BLM in a memorial where the first few rows are full of family of the fallen and an audience full of officers. That's inappropriate." The White House team tried to interrupt this time, and said that we had to acknowledge the national conversation about race. I was opposed to this and made it clear that no event would be about anything but our officers – this was their time, not for politics, and we still had to bury our fallen. I asked the mayor's team to call Chief Brown. He did not answer. I said that I would call Chief Brown when I got home – and I would acquiesce to his decision.

When I finally reached Chief Brown later that Saturday, he paused for a moment and said, "If they have a member of any group that protested that night, that's fine. Just let them know I will walk off that stage."

Two days later, at the memorial, no one from BLM was a part of the presidential memorial. This is important from a communication network standpoint. The Pew Research Center (2016) found that a shift occurred in the national discussion of the BLM movement on social media in the immediate aftermath of July 7. We did not realize it at the time, as we

were focused solely on telling our story, but how we framed our messaging and who was allowed to be a part of our communication network adversely effected the BLM movement. We managed our message effectively, but later saw how efforts to communicate the city's narrative through our network was a powerful force that gained virality through social media and bolstered the growing public sentiment against BLM.

**A.C. Gonzalez:** I think we protected our story. [But] there were a lot of people who got shut out of the network. The NRA got shut out. You could make a list of how many organizations would have wanted to be a part of that. We were protective of the story of not only the tragedy but the context of the interaction with protestors, a crazy man, and a community that has been suffering economic disparities similar to other countries and yet was dealt with in a very different way here in Dallas. That was the story we wanted to make sure was unblemished by other things.

When we did that, I think it just told a really nice story about what enlightened [community] policing work can buy. Quite frankly, you talk about Black Lives Matter, there was also a message there about crime prevention, which counters NRA [narrative]. What were the good things officers did to befriend people who were protesting against them that day. Those relationships... in the spirit of being open in a democracy to be heard without being oppressed. There's a lot of great messages that were there. We told our truth about what we did. We were finding in some ways that it had the impact. [The impact on BLM] was certainly not our intent, we were just protective of our story.

*The memorial was the president's event and the White House sought to take control of the communication channels, but the event was also part of the city's communication network. City leadership were still the switchers and the programmers and sought to*

*maintain control of the network and message as the events continued to unfold. The BLM protesters were not allowed on the city's network. In retrospect, one could deduce that the city helped delegitimize the movement in the aftermath of the July 7 shooting.*

**The funerals.** July 12 – the church pews were full and it was eerily quiet. There was a long line of police officers and law enforcement from all over the world. Canada. Colorado. Boston. Every few feet we walked, we noticed a new police patch.

It was the visitation for Senior Corporal Lorne Ahrens. He was one of five officers killed on the day Dallas will forever know as July 7. I attended the visitation with Deputy Chief Albert Martinez, Major Thomas Castro, and Officer Adrian Chavez. Chief Martinez managed the southwest patrol station for DPD. Three of the four DPD officers killed were from his station, and I wanted to be there to support him.

As we inched forward in line to view Ahrens's body, people stopped to say hello; there were lots of hugs. When we finally made it to the casket, Ahrens looked like he was at peace, dressed in something he would wear to the beach. "He didn't want to be buried in the uniform," said Chief Martinez with a soft grin.

According to everyone there, Ahrens was the ultimate goofball. A big, tall guy with a noticeable gap in his front two teeth. As we greeted his family, we walked to the back to sit in the pews for a bit. Ahrens's wife was not there, and who could blame her. The screen at the church was going through photos of him with his family. They were a young family and looked so happy. Suddenly, I noticed Chief Martinez shake next to me. He was sobbing. When I tried to console him he said, "No, let me get it out. I have to present the flag to the family tomorrow and I want to make sure when I get on my knee to present to his son that I won't lose it."

I promised Deputy Chief Albert Martinez that I would attend every funeral of his fallen officers with him. The day of the first funeral, I was driving to the southwest patrol station, thinking it would just be a few officers who would leave together. This was a valuable lesson in policing culture. Because southwest was the affected station, officers from different stations, different agencies were lined up for the procession. I couldn't figure out where the line of cars ended. I talked to several officers at the southwest patrol station. The officers guarding southwest were armed with assault rifles, defiantly standing in the summer heat, ready to protect their brothers and sisters.

I waited in Albert's office as he was trying to get his things together before the procession began. It was finally time. He was the lead car, and I had goosebumps as I looked out the back window and saw sirens as far as my eyes could see. These men would not go alone. They had an army that would take the fallen to their final resting place. During the procession, officers from other police departments blocked off streets and shut down highways, saluting as the procession drove by. Albert returned the salute every single time. As we walked into the church, an officer started sobbing as he saw Lorne's picture. It was difficult to watch him. We paused for a moment, grabbed a program and continued to the auditorium – it was a sea of blue and tan, officers in uniforms from all over the world.

After the funeral, for almost the entire route of the 30-mile long procession, drivers had pulled over out of respect for the procession, and person after person, family after family, braved the intense Texas summer heat to hold up signs that let police officers know they were valued and that their lives mattered. We acknowledged every person we could along the way to let them know their message was received and appreciated.

Reporters and photographers were kept at a respectable distance during the funerals. Albert presented the flags to Ahrens's parents and his two children. His wife did not want one. I remember watching him on his knee, flag in hand, talking to Ahrens's children as he presented them with the flag. He did it – he kept his composure. I later asked what he said in that moment.

**Albert Martinez:** I would rather die than to have one of my own killed. And so to have three taken away like that was difficult. With Lorne it was very personal, very difficult because I knew him. So I was able to honestly tell them about their dad. Bragged about him. [Said he] was proud of them, and how he lived for the moments to be with them. And that was really... the overall message, really.

**Researcher:** And that was the message many of us did our best to convey in the aftermath of the shooting. Day after day, as we continued to bury our fallen, media from around the world were at our doorstep, as they were with Ebola and other crises we faced. We were no strangers to crisis communication; earthquakes, flooding, a previous attack on DPD headquarters, illegal dumping, loose dogs, and a woman eaten alive by a pack of dogs were just some of the issues we tackled publicly. But for this crisis, we were so tired. We just wanted to grieve, but we had to grieve while working, because we had jobs to do and stories to tell of our fallen officers and years of community policing that kept our city strong long before the attack.

*Each story was a part of the city's network, a synergistic push of information, and these were primarily the only stories the city was sharing at this time. This again speaks to the importance of communication messaging, which is lacking in Castells's (2011; 2013) literature.*



**Community Support**

**Researcher:** The day after the first funeral, the group of us that rode together to Ahrens's funeral stopped at a Mexican restaurant in Oak Cliff for lunch. We tried to make a few jokes to lighten the mood, but it was a quiet and somber moment. When we asked for our check, the waitress told us the bill had been taken care of. I looked around. There were only three other tables occupied in our area – one was a white group, another table had a Mexican group, and the third had a black group. As we stood to leave, each one of the people at the surrounding tables also stood. They each walked over to the officers to thank them for their service. I teared up and walked away so they could have that moment with community members. Dan Carolla, then a lieutenant with DPD, was wiping tears from his eyes as we left the restaurant.

**Dan Carolla:** I can't speak for the country, but in Dallas the public sentiment has been on our side ever since for sure. I get thanked sitting in traffic now.

**Ivan Gunter:** Well, it really was more so to the police department but when you have citizens who are your neighbors open up their hearts, open up their doors and start earnest dialogue, that's amazing. And that's the point. The majority of our problems are because of a lack of listening. A lack of learning about whatever's going on. This opened up that dialogue to where they [the public] realized, "You know what? These are our officers, these are our people. We need to do what we can for them, and vice versa," and it fostered community. All of a sudden, half the stuff they're talking about that's going on around the nation, we didn't have an issue.

Various members of the community came to the station firsthand and they wanted to meet and greet any officer. So for months, our doors were made open. We were all accessible whether we wanted to be or not. Again, that's part of the healing process.

The community at large, not just the big dogs, I'm talking everyone, came here, they voiced concern, came here to show support. [They] talked to officers on and off duty throughout the whole city, letting them know that you're loved, you're appreciated, and we are praying for you. And some of the community members you wouldn't think would be supporters – but at that point in time everyone was a supporter. And that's what opens up a lot of dialogue. Since then, I've been to some of the hardened, economically challenged areas in the city and I'm still shown a lot of love and support by people you would think wouldn't like officers. To my surprise, there they are saying, "I'm thankful you're here. I'm grateful you're being honest, you're being here. I'm grateful you're here to make sure we are all safe."

**Paul Junger:** I haven't felt this much patriotism since 9/11 and I couldn't tell you how many people actually said, "Hey, thanks for your service. Let me buy you lunch." It was just a whole 180-degree turn. It was really cool to see how much support that the cops truly have because you don't see that all the time. That was the neatest thing about it. But night and day after [July 7].

**Albert Martinez:** Basically, they [the world] saw an attack on the community. That somebody would actually do this in downtown Dallas, and just start killing officers for whatever ideological reason. It's almost like that piercing, if you will, hurt us as a community, but it also strengthened us. You saw the amount of support we had. And

agencies coming in, citizens, whether rich or poor, bringing in flowers, just trying to express in one way or another how sad they were.

And I've talked to some reporters who were out there that night, and I saw it in them, that they were still dealing with the effects six months later. I think the one agency who really understood it better than anybody was United Way. Because they got this grant to do counseling for the entire Dallas community. I think they really understood that this really impacts everybody, in one way or another.

*The Dallas Police Department and the City of Dallas received an unprecedented outpouring of support as the communication networks pushed the messages generated by the city about the officers, their families, the funerals, and the community support. This engagement amplified the city's communication efforts and people shared the city's stories around the world through their own mass communication tools. Their support legitimized DPD and the city. BLM entered a crisis of legitimacy as it struggled to find channels of communication but also a message that was powerful enough to counter the barrage of information that focused on the fallen officers as heroes and as some African-Americans in the community also sought to distance themselves from BLM as a radical group.*

## **Communication**

**Albert Martinez:** I think part of the problem with July 7th is, or before July 7th, is officers outside of Dallas, for the most part, made some very dumb decisions. And took citizens' lives, right? But, it was also very public, because of the [social media] videos. So, of course, again, media and social media really focused on those acts. Which I don't know what you call it in media, but that started to frame... it started framing a national dialogue about police brutality, and only around those instances, and not about the fact that millions

upon millions of police and citizen contacts happen every day. And for the most part, it's a good encounter, even if at times it requires an arrest, or the use of force.

This was a national protest, like I said, I think some of the media had four cities that were filming at the time, and this happened during one of those protests. And so, again, the negativity being brought forth in that movement was diminished by the majority saying "We strongly disagree with you, and on top of that, we're not going to support officers being gunned down like they were here, and in Baton Rouge" – a week later, I think it was? And that fact is, even us in law enforcement, we know we have to always improve in our relationships with every race, color, and creed. But there's also a way that it has to happen. And I would argue to you that no one has done more to reform policing than policing itself.

**Researcher to Ivan Gunter:** Do you think that July 7th changed the momentum of the Black Lives Matter movement?

**Ivan Gunter:** Yes and no. I think it brought attention to the movement but it also showed the problems of how the movement was going at that point in time. Because I'm not saying the movement's not important, but I am saying, again, you can't invite everyone to your party. Not everyone's gonna see what you see or fight for what you wanna fight for.

Social media's changed the dynamic of communication. Social media, as we are seeing with the current issues that are going on now with psychological profiling, has changed how that's done, how information is exchanged and shared. The real information, or false, and misleading information. You have individuals who are on the fringe operating with that mentality, taking information from the field, and reading more into it than what was actually put out. And then acting upon it – that is the danger.

In the way the chief [Brown] dealt with and talked to the media, it made a big difference because for the first time in a lot of years, instead of being a media-driven department, they had to stop and listen to the individual who was in charge. And they may not have agreed with them but at that point in time it didn't matter. If you agree with him or not, this was the case and this was why. And considering he and other members of the department had become lay experts on the subject matter, and the fact they were successfully getting through this, proved the point even further.

The communication with our members of the community definitely opened up and improved. The internal [DPD] communications should have been better but from an investigator standpoint, I understand why. But as the officer on scene having to go through it, I just wish it was better.

In this case, this was a shared experience. It wasn't just officers. It was the entire city that was hit hard. And by opening up the lines of communication, I was sharing earnest feelings. By aligning yourself publicly and not so publicly and by taking off uniform and genuinely being concerned about [a] fellow human being [who] is going through a hard time: That can make a big difference.

I can honestly say that as the city is growing, our communications are greatly improving internally and externally. We're not where we need to be but we're on a positive track.

*The officers here speak to the power of the network and the danger of those who enter this domain with their own unstructured channels. BLM is a social movement; anyone who sympathizes with their platform is welcome to join and share their views via their mass communication platforms. BLM organizers had no way of controlling who became a part of*

*these channels and what they posted, shared, or broadcast. Anyone who joined could become a programmer or switcher. The media and the city have clear switchers and programmers for their networks – and established networks with policies and procedures, and checks and balances for disseminating information. Programmers and switchers within media networks include news directors, producers, and reporters who have been vetted and are employees of the organization. If someone begins to disseminate radical information, newsrooms have policies in place to incapacitate a journalist's ability to use the media network as a platform, or to terminate the employee. If information they receive is inaccurate, they have a method of issuing retractions. But within social movements, that structure is not there, and it can jeopardize the legitimacy of grassroots channels and networks.*

### **Emotional Toll**

**Ivan Gunter:** I had to go to the hospitals to say my goodbyes. First to Baylor where I encountered Chief [Brown] and other command staff people. I went to where Lorne was being treated, but unfortunately his injuries were too severe for him to overcome. Went to his room, grabbed his hand, said my prayers and my goodbyes. Brian Kalind was driving me because my car had been shot up and shot out. Three tires were gone. The car had been shot up like Swiss cheese. Went to the other hospitals but I didn't make it there [in time]. They had already transferred the bodies but a good friend of mine – he was another sergeant – was there for Mike and helped with the clean-up and the prayers, and the goodbyes.

**Researcher to Ivan:** You were only able to say goodbye to Patrick and Lorne?

**Ivan Gunter:** No. I was only able to [say goodbye] to Lorne. Patrick and Mikey were already transported from Parkland Hospital to the holding facility by the time I got to the Parkland Hospital. So I didn't say an official goodbye until the days of the funerals.

They [BLM] are used to this negative narrative without considering the officers behind the badge. People want to cast this negative light because it's easier to throw that shadow on everybody without looking at the particulars of the truth. And maybe for some people, for the first time, they realized everything is not black and white and this wasn't someone giving up his life as a martyr, this was someone committing a heinous act against innocent people. When you're rattling your saber to gather up your forces, be careful of what you say because someone on the outside who may be mentally or emotionally unstable may read a negative message and act on that negative message. And what you saw throughout the city and really throughout the U.S., I say Dallas specifically, is that neighbors and communities started communicating openly. Collectively. And genuinely.

They [BLM protestors] have a right to voice their opinion. I'm not saying it's not justified because there are obviously some injustices throughout the country. My only problem is when you paint the negative broad strokes on everybody, you tend to forget there are a lot of good people out there who don't deserve that casting. I applaud efforts to right wrongs. I applaud efforts to create methods of justice and improving on the system. What I don't approve of is the hateful speech from either side because again, you're gonna get this fringe member who's gonna take... and read into that and maybe act on that. And unfortunately, that's a hard lesson that they are learning. You can't invite everyone into your party.

**Paul Junger:** A year later I went to Southwest and I, up until that point I really hadn't talked to Gunter about this. Not only did I see Gunter that day but I also saw Mr. Zamarripa [Patrick's father] which really put me in a weird mood. But I remember talking to Gunter, saying, "Hey, tell me about that night. What went through your mind? What did you do?" And he started telling me a lot of stuff and I do remember his comment about being angry and it struck a nerve with me because I remember being angry.

And I asked, "Do you feel guilty? Do you ever wonder why them? Why not you?" And he looked at me, and it was just a weird look, I could tell he felt the same way. But when I listened to Gunter talk, a lot of his emotions that he felt that day and even a year later, I felt the same way. But yet... I remember when it first happened I was pissed. I mean, pissed. And then as you start to kind of decompress you start to wonder, alright, why me? You start to go through every phase of guilt, fear, every phase of grief.

*The emotions of the police officers who witnessed what happened on July 7 are still raw, years later. The messaging that the city and police department pushed through its channels during July 7 were real accounts of real people. The continued grief that officers experience keeps this story as a part of the organizational communication network. This communication countered the BLM narrative and had an impact on public perception. The city focused on a few key channels in the network that had the most reach, and did a synergistic push of information – each channel was programmed with the same message, which is the power of the network. This power references the ability for an organization to have extensive reach by pushing a message through its channels to saturate the public domain with a specific message.*

### **Communication Power**



**Albert Martinez:** I think you all, especially in PIO [Public Information Office], having the experience and the knowledge to really put this out of strategic messaging... I think that helps to galvanize the community. And really part of it, I think, Chief Brown and the mayor did a good job – no, let's say great job – on really putting out timely information to the media in all forms with what we had, what we had been going through, and what we were doing. Very good media communications management. And even in the aftermath, to continue to provide messaging. Because I think that was very critical for the community to know. Because I think many wondered what the hell's going on. And I think maybe even a bigger question is, what does this mean for our city?

*Mayor Rawlings stressed that Dallas could have made July 7 a national issue while all eyes were on the city, but leadership tried to address it at a local level.*

**Mike Rawlings:** This is what I've learned – I can't worry about the things I can't control. I think the biggest mistake we could make in Ebola or 7/7 was to blow it out of proportion. It didn't need to be blown out of proportion. It was pretty significant... but we could have made this into the JFK assassination. And so, what happens is now you do have a crisis of legitimacy. Let [people] take it to the next level, not you. Be clear but yet be concise as well. No big long speeches. After 7/7 there were times for speeches but those were set up as times of mourning not communication to [general public].

It is a balance. Just report the facts. The facts are powerful enough. And [acknowledge the] concern – but the minute you start to make it out to be in a much broader, deeper, big universal issue and you go on about it, people are gonna go, "Next."

*A.C. and the mayor believe strongly that the city being accessible and providing information during Ebola and July 7 was critical to maintaining legitimacy and for*

*combatting other narratives. During Ebola, the city was activating various channels as information was conveyed, as city staff created the channels. During July 7, it became clear that the programmers were the city manager, the mayor, the PIO, the EOC director, and the police chief; the switchers were communicators and police officers who were actually tasked with pushing the city's message out. The effective channels that were utilized included press conferences, media advisories, interviews with the press, Facebook, Twitter, and the city's website. The city's Public Information Office did not deviate from that path. This allowed the city's programmers to establish legitimacy, combat false narratives, and the media and the public helped this messaging supersede any other discourse on police brutality and protests during that time. The city's raw emotions, pain, and transparency allowed the country to grieve with it in the public arena, to understand the city's story, and to share its message. The power of the network was evident.*

### **Ethical Conflict**

After the Ebola crisis subsided, I met with each council member to formally introduce myself, to debrief on communication during Ebola, and to discuss the communication plan that would be presented to them in December 2014. In one meeting with a council member, I was told that the city should not be in the business of communication and he wanted confirmation that every press release would be reviewed by council members. There was an awkward pause, followed by silence, and he coldly said he understood that I would not deliver on that.

As we were developing the communication network in Dallas, this issue grew. It had become clear that the city had a communication network that had an extensive reach, and some elected officials wanted to take advantage of that. Some council members had

threatened my job unless I allowed them to take advantage of the services my department provided. But I was concerned, as some of this support included providing a photographer at holiday parties, fulfilling billboard requests with a council member's face on it leading up to elections, providing one council member with a public access TV show, helping write press releases for political events. The city had no policy delineating what was communication regarding city business and what was considered campaigning and political advertisement.

Because there was no policy in place, I had to concede on some requests. One involved a council member who thanked her political sponsors in a public access TV show that my staff helped produce. To this day I don't know who told the city attorney's office, but I eventually received a call from an assistant city attorney requesting copies of the shows that had been taped thus far. City administrators were also growing concerned over some of the requests, particularly close to elections. The city attorney asked me if I had concerns. I said that I had been voicing my concerns, but we had been unsuccessful in drafting a policy to address this. Her office filed a formal request with the Texas Ethics Commission. In December 2016, the commission released a draft opinion and it was scheduled to be discussed at an upcoming meeting (Appendix F and G).

Even though the commission acknowledged in its draft opinion that including any type of campaign endorsement during televised council meetings or public access TV shows could be considered political advertising by council members, the commission did not make a recommendation or issue a sanction and the case was considered closed.

**A.C. Gonzalez:** I don't think we – I – handled all of that well. And I say that only from the standpoint that I was part of the organization even before I was city manager, and

so there was some opportunity that theoretically I had there, but also the council was there, and the city attorney's office was there, and everybody kinda knew what things were going on. I think collectively there has been a kind of group failure in really setting some clear guidelines on that behavior from everybody. And I say that because it was not unknown to everybody that you had some district events that were, I mean, they were just little pep rallies for the individuals involved. There were several council members that were getting several different levels of support and things that were going on.

Certainly there was the opportunity for people to at least ask the question, how should we be doing this that makes sense and is fair? And I think collectively we all just kinda let things go along, and so long as it wasn't too outrageous, everybody was okay.

And so, quite frankly when you came around and you were starting to press the point, that brought it to kind of a bit of a head, and it should've been brought to a head. Maybe the way we went about it was not the way it should've been or could've been, but I don't know that there would've ever been a way that was not going to be awkward or difficult, because for some folks this was a big, major deal. And anything that was going to lessen what they saw as being supportive of their efforts to become more visible in their district was gonna be a takeaway, and a very important takeaway.

We were going to have a bad time whatever it was gonna be, but I don't... And I think those kinds of things are made less of a bad time if you have a more congenial council, because it's a tough question. It's one that would require some give and take and some communication, and a willingness to learn about stuff.

*Former City Attorney Warren Ernst and First Assistant City Attorney Chris Bowers were involved in trying to get clarification on this matter through the Texas Ethics Commission.*

**Chris Bowers:** Since you were basically the client, and assuming you are waiving that, this is the reason I'm speaking on that. You sought advice on how to deal with a situation where a council member wanted to use city resources in putting together a TV show and you had concerns about whether that might constitute political advertising. Ultimately, it is a matter of public record, that I wrote a letter to the Texas Ethics Commission asking a series of questions about use of city resources, when it might be appropriate for a show involving a council member, a TV show, and there may be even some questions about political literature, or literature, involving that council member. There were roughly seven questions, some of them may have been sub-parts, but we eventually got a draft answer back and the draft answer was presented to the commission.

The commission, after some discussion, I believe tabled the matter, so the draft opinion was never approved, but I do believe the draft opinion provide useful guidance on how those situations should be approached because certainly, there are situations where council members can have a show on the city's cable access channel talking about matters involving their district without it crossing the line of political advertising. Our goal was just to try to figure out where that line is.

**Researcher:** We [the city] never clearly defined that.

**Chris Bowers:** No, not in a sense that we had a formal opinion from the Texas Ethics Commission. I do believe that the draft opinion we received from staff provides a lot of guidance though, and it's something that I think public officials could rely on even if it

doesn't have the official blessing of the commissioners as helpful guidance. I certainly was disappointed that the commissioners did not render an opinion on at least some of the issues that we had presented because I do think that it would be helpful to elected officials, as well as city staff and probably staff for other local governments throughout the state. I believe at least some of the reasons given that day, during the public debate at the commission, were legitimate reasons for at least delay. I think they wanted to think about a couple of issues, but there was also enough said to where I think some members of the commission's staff believed that the commissioners just simply did not want to address some of these issues at any time. Of course, we can only speculate as to why some of the commissioners may have felt uncomfortable, may have felt that some of the guidance that was given may be unduly restrictive to elected officials.

I thought the guidance was, in the draft opinion, was pretty standard and fair and a reasonable approach that would allow elected officials to educate constituents about matters without crossing the line into political advertising and I still believe that that draft opinion could be useful for many. Yes, I was disappointed not to get definitive guidance with the commission's blessing.

**A.C. Gonzalez:** ... disappointed, yeah. When we were in the middle of all this, I thought we were gonna get, "Okay, here are the rules, and so let's just follow the rules." And there ain't no [rules]... It was, "Well, if it looks like this, it looks like that, and on Tuesday and Thursday, maybe so... [*sic*]"

And so it really put us [administrators] in a really awkward situation, and again, able to be accused of being arbitrary on our own parts. It just made for a real bad situation.

It puts everybody in the state of... in the lack of clarity, you or anybody being accused of playing favorites or being too hard-nosed or too loose. A lot of it was subjective.

**Warren Ernst:** Communication was not a mandated charter-driven function, but by attacking that, it was like the weak link for the city manager and the mayor for them [council members] to attack. I think that was a lot of it.

**Chris Bowers:** From a couple of issues that I worked with you on early on to try to make sure that the city could control its public access channel – and that's how I first met you – the city had a contract with another organization [iMedia] that had been managing a cable access channel for the city for quite a few years. The contract had expired and they were not in compliance with it, so I helped you shortly after you came on with the city, to make sure that that contract ended and that the city was able to once again directly control its public access channels. It did appear to me from a distance that you expanded the number of channels and the number of opportunities for the city staff and as well as its officials who broadcast on the city's channels information about the city and its officials. From a distance, it's my understanding that some of the city's elected officials saw opportunities to increase public awareness of the roles that they play.

**A.C. Gonzalez:** I think there was certainly more awareness; there were some things that were addressed, in part. I think just getting [the issue] put on the table made it... less able to just ignore or pretend it wasn't going on, or it was making people have to own up that it's not appropriate to have staff at all hours of the day and night, and this that and the other.

I'm not sure it was [addressed], 'cause some of it still went on, I think still goes on today, but for the time being, it got looked at a little more carefully. I don't see things

getting fixed very easily. I don't think it gets fixed until there's some major flap that occurs and somebody, some city, some individual gets zinged really badly. And then everybody's gonna claim they didn't know, but we've gotta [do something].

*To this day, the City of Dallas does not have a communication policy addressing ethics regarding the use of public resources for communication and what is considered campaigning/political advertisement.*



## ANALYSIS

### **Crises of Legitimacy and Network Communication in Dallas**

In October 2014, the Pew Research Center found that 41 percent of Americans were concerned about Ebola spreading in the U.S. and 49 percent of Americans were following news about Ebola, making it one of the most-followed news events since 2010 (Pew, 2014; Motel, 2014). This is relevant because it speaks to the fervor with which reporters were trying to get information to the public – and the city’s need for the media to “feed the beast” and distribute accurate information, particularly in crises. In 2014, Pew also found that 98 percent of Americans had come across news of Ebola. This also speaks to the importance of the city’s Public Information Office in providing reporters with the information they needed to do their jobs.

The Pew Research Center also found that nearly 60 percent of the public trusted information about Ebola provided by local hospitals, health authorities, the CDC, and the media; 54 percent had confidence in the federal government to prevent an Ebola outbreak in the U.S (Pew, 2014). Future research may examine public trust in government after a crisis at the local level and how to respond to crisis of legitimacy as technology and society’s production advances at a faster pace than the relations of production (Habermas, 1987).

*The Atlantic* (Thompson, 2014) addressed the fact that during this time in 2014, Ebola seemed to be on every TV channel, the radio, newspapers, and across the internet, even though the crisis was nothing like what people in parts of Africa had experienced. In interviews, those involved with the Ebola response in Dallas did feel that the city overreacted at times, but it was in response to the fear in the community. Not only were

people shunned, but a Dallas college rejected a Nigerian applicant out of fear of Ebola, a woman who vomited in a Pentagon parking lot was temporarily quarantined, and Dallas decontamination crews were dressed in full haz-mat suits (Thompson, 2014). The fear was real, and it was perpetuating misinformation. This is a big part of why the city of Dallas clamped down on various channels – initially it was to gain control of misinformation, seeking to become the key source of information for media and the public. Once the city began operating as a lead source, we had to continue with a superfluous amount of transparency and information so that we could mitigate panic and misinformation.

It took several tries during Ebola, but the city made every effort to communicate with people of all major socioeconomic, racial and cultural backgrounds; the city was accessible and transparent, and provided pathways into government and organizations (Habermas, 1987; Arnstein, 1969). Communicative action encompasses empathy, communicative competence, and justice (Habermas, 1987; Murphy and Fleming, 2010). Power in knowledge means recognizing power dynamics and working toward practice that is equitable (Foucault, 1977).

During Ebola, the city's communication staff was overwhelmed as the public and media sought updated information, data, facts, figures, numbers, and statistics. We worked to engage residents, not overwhelm them with information, and helped interpret the information generated to more fully focus residents on the issues that impacted them. Governments, particularly cities, are challenged to share information in a digestible format as it describes complex operations and services. How to communicate specific information in the right amount using the proper channels to ensure that the message is understood is a major challenge for cities (Olson, 2015). Some steps to help develop a clear, concise,

consistent, and effective message are: identify your audience, define the problem, identify the solution, and identify potential questions and arguments (Olson, 2015). As a city, we did this through various channels during Ebola.

City communication staff considered themselves successful in managing the message because they used various channels of communication, worked to inform English-speaking residents and those who spoke different languages and were from traditionally underserved populations. The city sought to maintain transparency in its efforts as a select group of people communicated with the media and public. The programmers and switchers worked to provide as much information as possible through all of the city's channels. They were able to blanket the city with communication and information that was shared around the world.

### **Operationalizing the Network**

Every form of communication during Ebola and July 7 fell into one of four categories: providing information, access, engagement, and crisis communication. In this study, crisis communication is referencing an organization's capacity for addressing what Castells (2013) defined as crises of legitimacy. An analysis of the autoethnography is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Analysis of Autoethnography		
	Ebola	July 7
<b>Information</b> Information that is processed	Press conferences Press releases City news website Flyers in multiple languages through schools Reverse 911 calls	Press conferences Press releases City news website DPD news website
<b>Access</b> Information that needs to be processed	Open records City website Public access TV	Open records City website
<b>Engagement</b> Two-way communication	Day by day detail of operations on social media Town hall meetings Boots-on-the-ground notifications in affected neighborhoods KnowEbola educational campaign	Day by day detail of operations on social media Interfaith prayers DPD memorial, funerals #DallasStrong campaign Police recruitment campaign
<b>Crisis Communication</b> Addressing a potential crisis of legitimacy	Livestreamed events and press conferences Interviews with national media Mass release of open records, provided online Raw video Living blog Living social	Livestreamed events and press conferences on social media Interviews with national media Living blog Living social
<b>Programmers</b> Set the network agenda and the message	CDC, DSHS, DCHHS, Presby, Dallas city manager, PIO, mayor, EOC director, director of Dallas Animal Services (shelter)	Dallas city manager, PIO, mayor, EOC director, police chief
<b>Switchers</b> Push approved communication on channels	Public Information Office, mayor's office, council members, Office of Emergency Management, Dallas Animal Services	Public Information Office, mayor's office, council members, Office of Emergency Management, Dallas Police Department

What changed in the two years between Ebola and July 7? In that time, the city had executed an overhaul of its open records system and implemented a \$2.5-million transparency project with the installation of cameras throughout city hall to cover public meetings (which people used to submit open records requests for), allowing more transparency and ease in submitting an open records request. The city also began social media archiving, allowing the city to store meta data on each official city post on all official city accounts so that the city and public had access to this information. For example, if a social media post was deleted or edited, the meta data would document this, and essentially provide fingerprints for each post to the public. The city had a network that was operational in time for the crisis – it was not being built as we went along.

The oversight for social media also allowed the Public Information Office to maintain a record of all administrators of official city social media accounts (switchers) so that if rogue messages were posted or if the accounts were not being used properly, the Public Information Office had the credentials to shut down an account or remove an account administrator. The city did not have this capacity during Ebola. The new oversight provided programmers with more control over the message and ensured switchers who disseminated information and switched between channels within the city's communication network were continuing to push approved messaging. Castells would have defined this as networking power.

Castells (2013, p. 42) identified four forms of power within networks:

1. Networking power: the power over who and what is included in the network.
2. Network power: the power of the protocols of network communication.

3. Networked power: the power of certain nodes over other nodes within the network.
4. Network-making power: the capacity to operationalize and program a network.

Castells was criticized for his four forms of power being confusing and difficult to comprehend (Smart, 2000; Fuchs, 2009). Based on the findings of this study, we can reexamine Castells's four forms of power, but within the context of organizational communication networks to develop a blueprint for practitioners. Based on the findings, I offer that there are three forms of power within organizational communication networks:

1. Gatekeeping power: the power to set the agenda and manage the messaging that the network disseminates.
2. Communication power: the power of the message itself to inform the public, contain a situation, and assuage fears that could lead to a crisis of legitimacy.
3. Network power: the strategic and synergistic push of information to reach and engage the masses.

Castells (2013) argues that the programs of the dominant networks (such as media and government) need to set compatible goals and must communicate with each other to limit contradiction. Another major source of power is the networks' programming capacity, which depends on the ability to generate, diffuse, and affect the discourses that form human action (Castells, 2013). The organizational network of the city of Dallas included politicians, media, health officials, and decontamination experts. They were included – and their contribution to communication messaging shaped discourse on Ebola.

Castells (2013) explains that programmers and switchers are gatekeepers, and they have a single-purpose domination power; gatekeepers enforce collective power over others or a disconnected network. Whoever controls the message is whoever controls the agenda, and because mass self-communication has tilted the scales of power, the agendas of both the rich and the poor are being consumed by millions connected through social media (Castells, 2007; Castells, 2013; McCombs, 2006).

Castells suggests that social actors are capable of developing their own networks by garnering resources to communicate and then exercising their gatekeeping power to provide access or limit access to others, based on their interests and values (Castells, 2011). He claims that standards or protocols of communication outline the rules of network operations and sustain the network, but he does not provide detailed examples of what those standards or protocols could be (Castells, 2011). July 7 provides an example of how standards for communication can be established in a network and how that is sustained.

This study provided an example of how discourse and strategy for inclusion and exclusion are connected to organizational communication networks, but also illustrates how communication as a public good may be threatened by an abuse of power (Habermas, 1987; Foucault, 1980; Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002; Sassen, 2015).

The new era of hybrid communication includes various modes of communication that constantly refer to each other. The Digital Age has extended and deepened the role communication plays in shaping the power-making processes in institutions and in the public domain (Castells, 2013). Castells (2013) claims that the diffusion of horizontal communication networks and multiple entry points into the communication system have

increased the influence of the average citizen (Castells, 2013), but this approach fails to recognize the multiple entry points into the communication system as a result of mass self-communication. This research suggests that a circular model is more appropriate for organizational communication networks, which exhibit multiple opportunities to impact the message.

While overseeing communication for the City of Dallas, I proposed the city develop an ecosystem. After analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of that strategy for this research, I propose the following for cities like Dallas that want to operationalize organizational communication networks for their respective organizations. Using the City of Dallas as an example, I propose a network that is comprised of three components:

1. A strategic and crisis communication plan that defines focus areas, channels, and key performance indicators that measure success.
2. Focus areas – priorities for the organization that allow communicators to segment their audience and produce measurable goals.
3. Channels – depict the channels, or various pathways for distributing information that are used to communicate, such as cable television, website, mass media, magazines, etc.

Plans address how all the pieces of the network are connected, must be utilized, and how success will be measured. The focus areas of access, information, engagement, and crisis emphasize the four areas in which channels may be grouped. The channels are nodes within the network and utilized by administrators to ensure cohesiveness in messaging throughout the organization, consistency in how messages are communicated, and



opportunities for benchmarks and measuring success. The power of the network is to reach the masses with one overarching message.

Castells's (2013) work depicts diagrams of how media outlets are connected to one another, but does not offer concrete examples of how to operationalize a communication network or what an operational network looks like. I shared with the mayor and council a proposed organizational ecosystem in December 2014, shown in Figures 5 and 6:

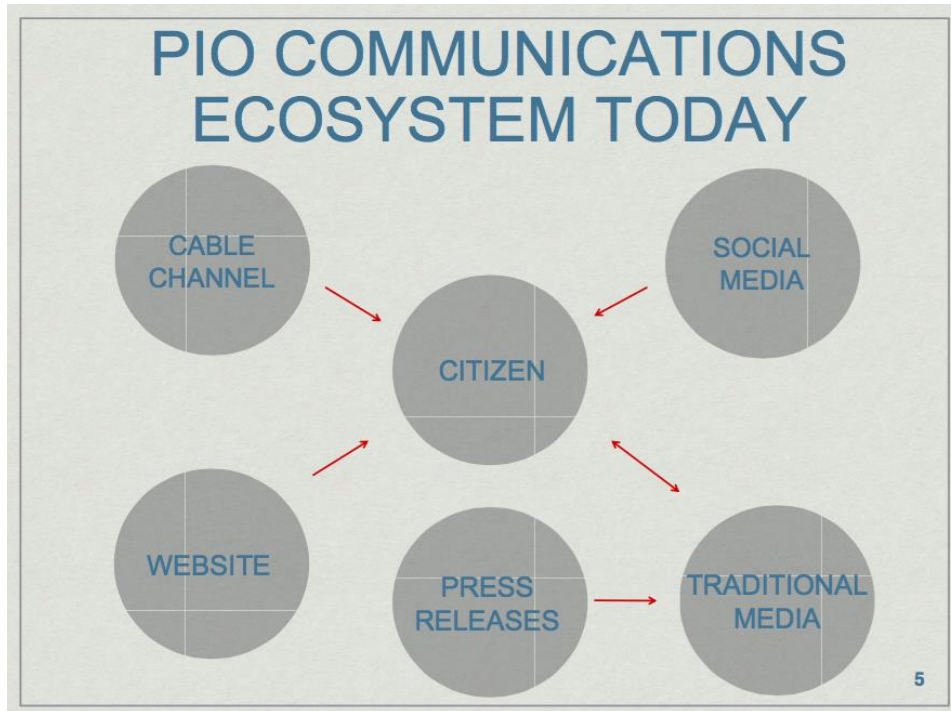


Figure 5. PIO Communications Ecosystem Today, Dec. 2014

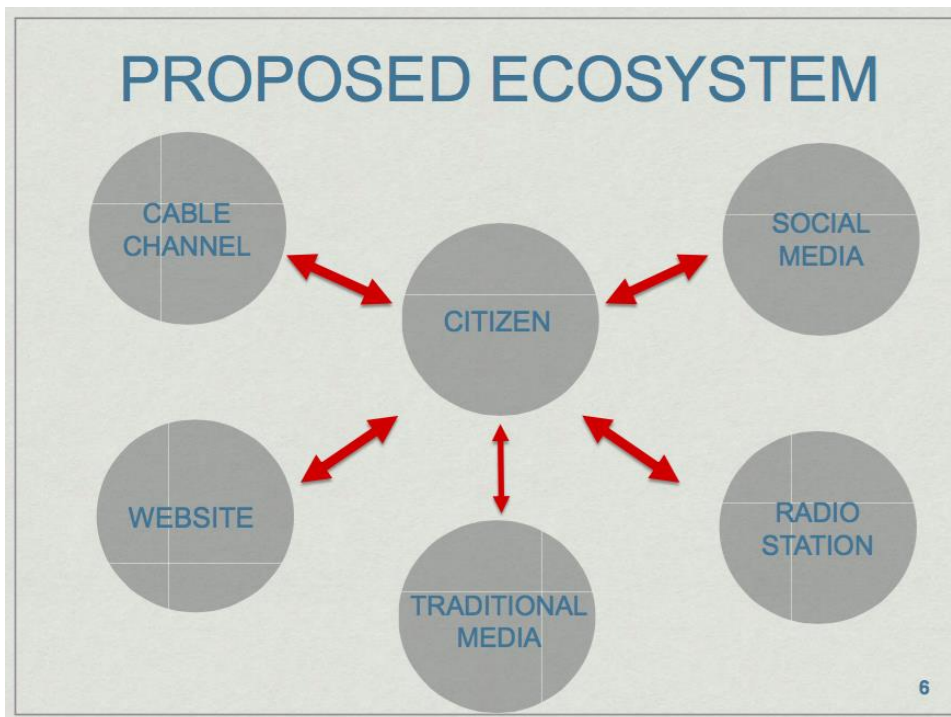


Figure 6. Proposed Ecosystem, Dec. 2014

After studying our response and to convey an organizational communication network, I propose the following as a model for cities to follow and build upon:

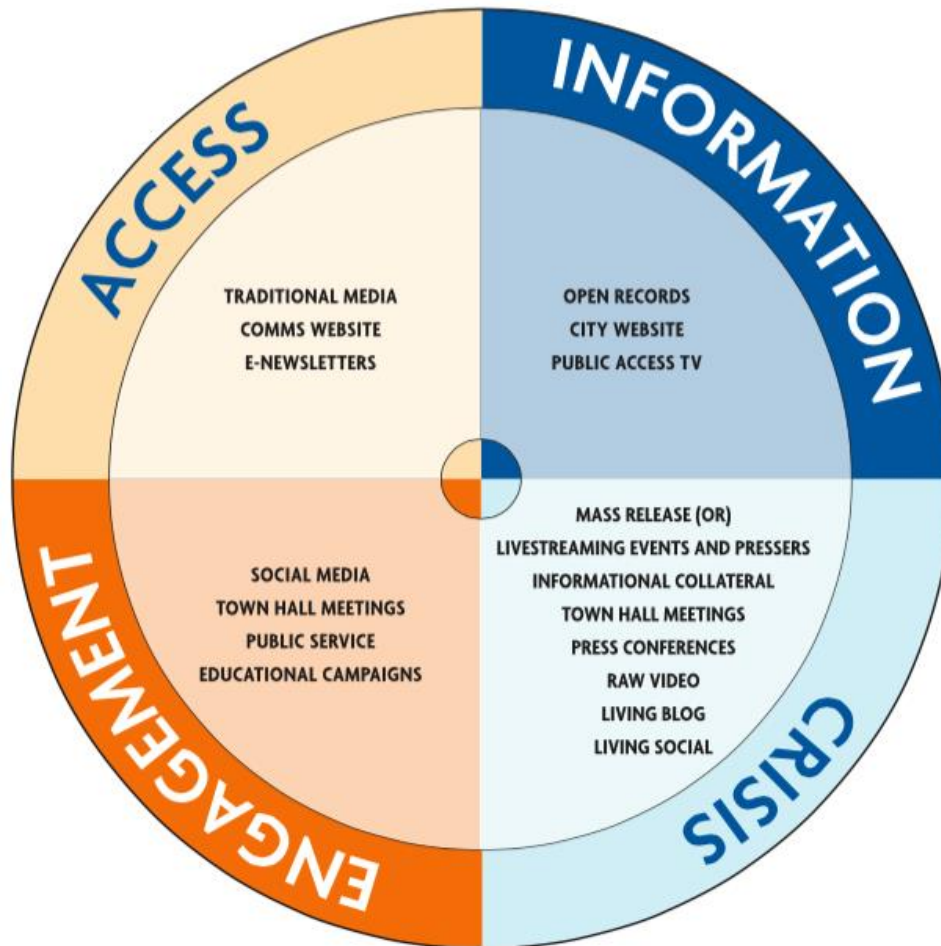


Figure 7. Model Organizational Communication Network

To operationalize an organizational communication network, the city must:

1. Develop a strategic and crisis communication plan that clearly outlines protocols for communication
2. Identify key focus areas (e.g., information, access, engagement, and crisis communication) and channels for each of the areas

3. Define how success will be measured (key performance indicators) (See Appendix J for example of report examining KPIs)
4. Identify the gatekeepers (programmers) who will shape the message and make decisions and the employees (switchers) who will push the message
5. Develop an ethics policy that clearly delineates between communication as a public good and political advertisement

### **Power of the Network**

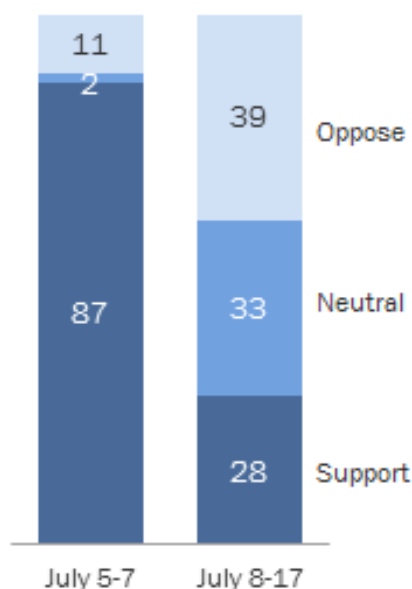
Communication technology does not determine the process and outcome of the power-making process, but it does maximize the chances for expression and mobilization, particularly when it garners momentum from grassroots-level efforts; it is not a neutral mechanism (Castells, 2013). The city of Dallas used its network to push communication messaging and regain a hold on information after the July 7 shooting. The efforts to focus the world's attention on the action of the men and women who put their lives on the line – the stories of heroes, the men and women who ran toward gunfire, not from it, was shared around the world.

According to officers on scene that night, as marchers were leaving the scene, some protestors asked officers, “How does it feel to be the ones hunted now?” In Dallas, the national Black Lives Matter movement became synonymous with anti-policing. The national anger over the officer shootings of black men in Minnesota and Louisiana was dampened by the voices of detractors who blamed BLM and its rhetoric for the Dallas shooting (Barbaro and Alcindo, 2016). Based on evidence at the scene, Chief Brown also made clear that the shooter was sympathetic to the BLM movement (Barbaro and Alcindo,

2016); the suspect also made that clear as officers were trying to negotiate with him while he was barricaded. BLM was seen by some as pushing anti-police rhetoric and as a terrorist

### Tone of Twitter around #BlackLivesMatter shifts after Dallas shooting

% of Twitter posts: July 5, 2016, to July 17, 2016



Note: Data were collected using Crimson Hexagon's machine learning algorithm and all tweets that included "#BlackLivesMatter" or "BlackLivesMatter" from July 5, 2016, to July 17, 2016. Source: Pew Research Center analysis using Crimson Hexagon. "Social Media Conversations About Race"

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Figure 8. Pew Research Center: Tone of Twitter after Dallas Shooting

group committing hate crimes (Barbaro and Alcindo, 2016). By pushing its message through an established organizational communication network, the city of Dallas was able to manage the narrative after that night.

The BLM movement, particularly in North Texas, faced a major setback immediately after July 7 (Anderson and Hitlin, 2016) and the evidence from this research suggests that the city of Dallas's communication network helped lead the social conversation away from supporting BLM – and because the movement had also become associated with the murders of police officers.

Analysis by the Pew Research Center in 2016 also suggested that the Dallas police shooting dramatically shifted the nation's conversation about race, with some blaming the #BlackLivesMatter

movement (Anderson and Hitlin, 2016). Pew found that social media served as a virtual town hall, allowing people to catapult race issues onto a national platform (Mervosh,

2016). Figure 8<sup>1</sup> shows that in the days prior to July 7, Pew found that 87 percent of tweets mentioning #BlackLivesMatter were supportive of the grassroots effort, but in the weeks after July 7, that number shrank to 28 percent of tweets, and many negative tweets blamed BLM for the attacks on police and in some cases referred to it as a terrorist organization (Mervosh, 2016).

The officers, representatives, and employees of the city of Dallas pushed a specific message framing the men and women in blue as heroes because the city wanted to tell the story of what Dallas officers had done to build the community for years before July 7, what set Dallas apart from other cities across the country in the summer of 2016, how Dallas officers died protecting the rights of people who were protesting against them the night of July 7, the grace and resilience with which they conducted themselves in the days after the attack, and the way the community and the nation wrapped its arms around them. That was the story the city of Dallas wanted to tell – and only those who supported the city’s narrative were allowed in the network and its channels.

The events, coverage of the funerals, stories of the fallen officers, stories of the injured officers, news coverage of Chief Brown’s years of work leading DPD under a community policing model, the presidential memorial, the memorial in front of DPD headquarters, the blue ribbons, and the constant presence in the press and social media through #DallasStrong, presented Dallas officers as heroes. The city overwhelmed the network with this information and the public supported it, liked it, shared it, and engaged with it.

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<sup>1</sup> *Figure 8.* Tone of Twitter around #BlackLivesMatter shifts after Dallas shooting. Reprinted from Pew Research Center, Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/08/15/major-recent-events-bring-blacklivesmatter-back-to-the-forefront-as-the-tone-shifts-overnight/>. Copyright 2016 by Pew Research Center (Anderson and Hitlin, 2016). Reprinted with permission.

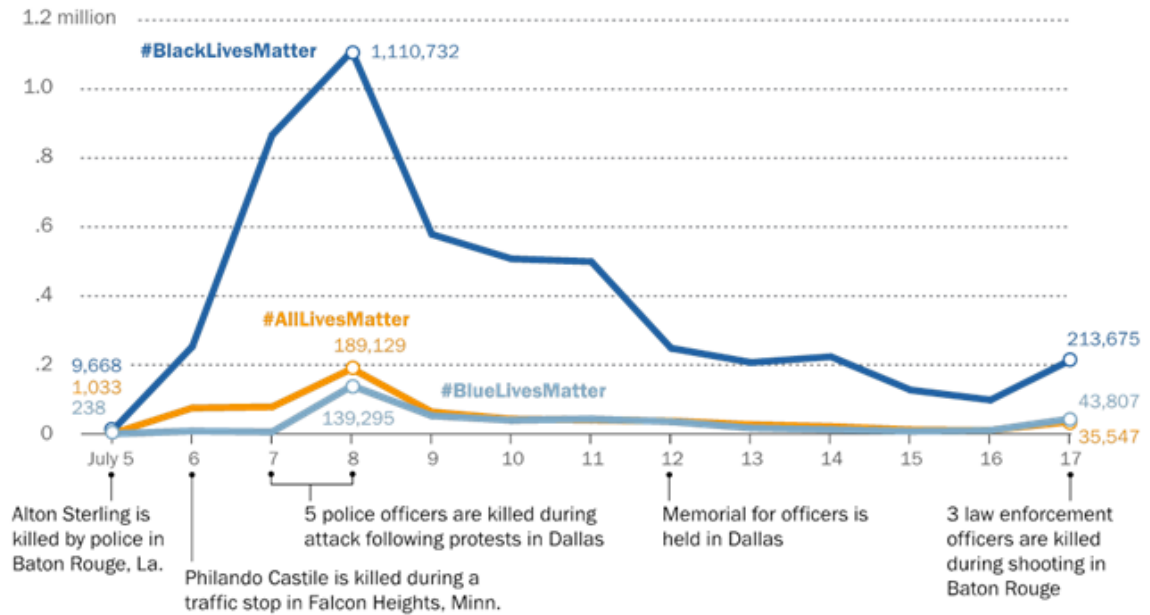
The Dallas shooting inspired the popular use of two new hashtags by the public, #AllLivesMatter and #BlueLivesMatter (Mervosh, 2016). As we later learned, thousands of pro-police tweets, many of which were built on the city's narrative, superseded #BlackLivesMatter and contributed to the national discourse that made the movement sacrilegious and politically incorrect. Figure 9 shows the rapid rise and fall of #BlackLivesMatter before and after July 7, 2016 (Anderson and Hitlin, 2016). The specific dates when the movement had its largest setback were the days of the officers' funerals, through July 16 (Anderson and Hitlin, 2016).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Figure 9. Succession of events recasts spotlight on Twitter hashtags. Reprinted from Pew Research Center, Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/08/15/major-recent-events-bring-blacklivesmatter-back-to-the-forefront-as-the-tone-shifts-overnight/>. Copyright 2016 by Pew Research Center (Anderson and Hitlin, 2016). Reprinted with permission.

**Succession of events recasts spotlight on Twitter hashtags**

# of Twitter posts mentioning each hashtag: July 5, 2015, to July 17, 2016



Note: Data were collected using Crimson Hexagon’s search algorithm to identify all tweets that included “#BlackLivesMatter,” “BlackLivesMatter,” “#AllLivesMatter,” “AllLivesMatter,” “#BlueLivesMatter” or “BlueLivesMatter” from July 5, 2016, to July 17, 2016.  
 Source: Pew Research Center analysis using Crimson Hexagon.  
 “Social Media Conversations About Race”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 9. Pew Research Center: Succession of Events Recasts Spotlight on Twitter Hashtags

While it cannot be said with certainty that the city’s communication network permanently delegitimized the Black Lives Matter movement, this research suggests that it did have an immediate impact by countering BLM support and instead harnessing support for police officers across the United States. Members of the movement were not allowed on any of the city’s communication channels in the days and weeks following the attack and BLM’s channels were not strong enough to compete with the city’s network.



Network gatekeeping examines which nodes are included or excluded from the network, highlighting the key role of gatekeepers in enforcing collective power of some networks over others or of a network's relation with disconnected social units (Castells, 2013). These gatekeepers include switchers and programmers. The programmers define the goals of the network (and have the capacity to reprogram it) and the switchers have single-purpose domination power, affecting multiple levels of social structure (Castells, 2013). This research makes clear that programmers and switchers are critical to identify when operationalizing an organizational communication network, because programmers are the ones who decide what information is appropriate to push on official channels and can remove/change a switcher, create a new channel, or disable a channel. Programmers also set the agenda and craft the messaging that is disseminated through the organizational communication network. Castells (2011) claimed that switchers hold the source power within networks, but this research shows that programmers are the true gatekeepers of the organizational communication network.

Castells argues that the programs of the dominant networks of society need to set compatible goals between networks and they must communicate with each other and limit contradiction (Castells, 2013). Another major source of power is the networks' programming capacity, which depends on the ability to generate, diffuse, and affect the discourses that form human action (Castells, 2013). July 7 amplified the city's programming capacity after the shooting, helping programmers and switchers generate, diffuse, and affect the national discourse on race and police relations in America.

### **Policy Considerations**

The city of Dallas tried to formulate an ethics policy to define campaigning and political advertisement, but was unsuccessful. The Texas Ethics Commission provided guidelines in its draft opinion, but did not provide an official ruling on the matter. Bowman (1997; 1990) stressed that ethical concerns may affect the relationship between city staff, managers, elected officials, and private stakeholders. Enforceable ethics policies create a strong and ethical environment and a moral code for others (Bowman, 1990). Equally important is to involve employees in the goals and process of developing an ethics policy that provides consensus of documents with clear guidelines and application to all employees and managers, without exception, and with oversight from an ethics board (Bowman, 1990). When either party does not understand its role or respect boundaries, the relationship is damaged (Perego, 2010).

Power also grows from the decision-making process, and those who have power over such processes can coerce others by adhering to or ignoring procedures and political routines (Gomes, 2006). Organizations have distinct ethical work climates and these climates may affect organizational performance (Menzel, 1993). Strong ethical climates of local government organizations have a positive impact on efficiency, effectiveness, quality, excellence, and teamwork (Menzel, 1993). Bureaucratic environments are rife with an emphasis on hierarchy and rule following, and thus are often found to lack a strong commitment to organizational ethics (Menzel, 1993). Ethics policies to delineate between official city business and campaigning can reinforce ethics in public organizations (Menzel, 1993). Ethical concerns that are not addressed can affect performance in an organization (Menzel, 1993).

Cities will continue to struggle with performance and service if administrators and elected officials do not address ethical concerns about what is considered communication as a public good, what is campaigning, what is political advertisements. Defining these types of communication will contribute to a stronger ethical climate within local government, and force cities to continue to strategize how to engage with more citizens and provide communication as a public good.

## CONCLUSION

This study builds on Castells's work on the Information Age by examining the power making capabilities of communication networks and detailing the applicability of his theory, such as who powerholders are within a network and how networks are developed, particularly at a local level (Castells, 2013; van Dijk, 2010). Communication networks have a role in the relationship of power within a society, especially political power making (Castells, 2013; van Dijk, 2010). This study illustrates how the city of Dallas operationalized a network, examines the power of the network, and explores policy implications.

Castells stresses that the programming of networks and switching of different networks are the fundamental sources of power (Castells, 2013). The autoethnography illustrates that the programming of networks and switching channels within the network is also a form of power within city government.

Although Castells's work advances our understanding of the complexity of relationships that represent power to influence individuals and groups, understanding these processes in an era of mass self-communication still lacks specifics. Questions remain about the ideal model for organizational communication networks in cities, how to apply this model in practice, and how to address potential ethical conflicts if stakeholders vie for control of networks. Crises test you and nothing will ever go according to plan. For Ebola, Dallas was vilified the first few days for how officials handled the crisis, but once the city took charge of its communication channels and began providing access, information, engagement, and crisis communication through various channels, the tide turned and the city of Dallas was no longer perceived as the villain. The public appeared to become more understanding and forgiving of the city as evidenced by press coverage and engagement

with the public in person or through social media. Media were also gracious and patient with the city for the duration of that crisis, with the exception of the news directors who were concerned the city was trying to control the media and reporters' content.

In the time after Ebola, the city's communication network was utilized for a variety of issues, from loose dogs, to Zika, litigation involving the city police and fire pension fund, illegal dumping, ice storms, flooding, and more. By July 7, we had a plan and a network that had been in effect, but DPD had a tug-of-war with the city to manage communication, and it became a gridlock of approvals, chains of command, and egos that prevented information from reaching media from around the world.

The city was unable to do a mass release for open records for July 7 because the attorney general allowed information to be withheld for a grand jury investigation, damaging the city's ability to be transparent. During Ebola, this tug of war occurred between the city, the county, and state officials. These were internal battles that were not captured by the press. However, the city still came together on a focused message during Ebola and stood behind the men and women of DPD and owned the narrative for both crises. While a network was not yet in place for Ebola, the focused messaging and use of channels was possible because the city had programmers that had power over the channels that were being created and utilized. By July 7, the programmers had agreed that the network would push a concise and cohesive message across all channels that were appropriate to use and they were in close contact for the duration of the crises to ensure messaging was on point.

Internally, if operational issues are not addressed by the city, these issues could become fodder for crises in the future. Once the city's communication office and leadership

realized that anger was evident from employees about where the dog was being quarantined during Ebola, the city immediately arranged for internal town hall meetings and provided access to experts on the best care practices for the dog. After July 7, the city had an overabundance of cards, mementos, art and items that were left at memorials, which became a burden upon the city. I was among a group that advocated for many of those items to be shared with officers and preserved in the library as a part of history.

Crises are the ultimate test for cities because they can call into question the legitimacy of government as an institution; they are situations that could potentially cause a vote of no confidence by the public. By operationalizing their own communication networks prior to crises, city administrators can exercise power through the network the moment a crisis arises. This allows the city to manage the message and provide a strong flow of consistent information and tackle misinformation in an organized and transparent manner. The synergistic push of information all at once utilizing various channels also forces organizations to examine gaps and opportunities. Organizational communication must be in place prior to a crisis, or the foundation is not in place for large-scale crisis communication, because crisis communication is often the utilization of existing channels in an exaggerated form. If a network and plan are not in effect, channels become compromised during a crisis, organizations lose control of the message (because people do not recognize official sources of information), and officials lose the trust of their community and potentially lose their jobs as the public questions the legitimacy of these institutions.

Dan Carolla, now chief of police at Lake Dallas, shared his experience on building relationships before crises happen:

Without having a good communication platform with a good reach... this is what I tell my people in Lake Dallas... You don't need it till [you need it]. You don't want a crisis and start forming relationships, you want to have them in place before you need them. Between city PIO, the public library and the police department, the key relationships were already in place to get that message out and to have it supported. (D. Carolla, personal communication, March 30, 2018)

Theory only takes us so far, and Castells (2011) himself acknowledged this limitation. Without a deliberate effort toward explaining application of an organizational network, key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure communication reach and engagement, and strong policy to protect communication as a public good, communication becomes a subjective vehicle driven by bureaucracy and without public input. This analytic organizational autoethnography provides access to switchers and programmers within the city of Dallas as an example for other cities interested in developing a process for operationalizing an organizational communication network. This type of network provides information, access, engagement, and crisis communication so that the public is equipped to make informed decisions and is empowered to improve their quality of life. At the same time, cities must be cognizant of the power these networks may provide. Efforts must be made to balance the power and offer opportunities for recourse and dialogue, as government officials, hired and elected, must remain stewards of the public.

The way to balance power is to begin internally and draft policy that provides checks and balance to powers within a city structure. Public funds, particularly for communication, should be allocated to continue to provide communication as a public good, and policy can protect that approach. It is the responsibility of government

organizations to provide this service without prejudice, and without political agendas attached. Castells (2013) offers that the exclusion of people from networks could have an adverse effect on society; efforts to build more inclusive networks and providing communication as a public good contribute to a balanced community where everyone has value and the power to improve their quality of life.



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**APPENDIX A: Cease and Desist Letter to iMedia**

September 19, 2014

David Dunnigan  
1027 Evergreen Hill  
Dallas, TX 75208

*Sent via first class U.S. mail and via email to david@theharrellgroup.com*

Re: Demand that Dallas iMedia Network f/k/a Dallas Community Television, Inc. ("iMedia") and the persons formerly associated with iMedia remove their personal property from the premises formerly leased by iMedia by September 30, 2014

Dear Mr. Dunnigan:

As you know, in December 2005 the City of Dallas and iMedia entered into a 60-month service contract ending on December 31, 2010, with one 60-month renewal option. The City and iMedia amended the contract by executing Supplemental Agreement No. 1 in 2007. The contract required Dallas iMedia to provide public access cable television services that allowed the general public to use public access cable television channels designated for that purpose by the City and provided by current cable franchise holders.

The contract required iMedia to, among other things, procure, pay for, and maintain workers' compensation insurance, employers liability insurance, business automobile liability insurance, commercial general liability insurance, and broadcasters liability insurance, and name the City and its officers and employees as additional insureds. The contract further required iMedia to maintain a performance bond of \$300,000 throughout the contract. The contract provided that iMedia's failure to provide the bond was grounds for immediate termination of the contract.

In addition, the City and iMedia entered into a month-to-month lease whereby iMedia paid the City \$1,435.29 per month to lease approximately 7,438 square feet in the basement of the Dallas Public Library at 1515 Young Street. The lease provided that iMedia's failure to pay the rent or its violation of any other covenant would forfeit iMedia's right to occupy the premises and that the City would be entitled to possess the premises immediately without the necessity of legal proceedings. The lease also provided that the City has the absolute right to terminate the lease at any time it determines necessary and that upon making such a determination the City would become immediately entitled to possess the premises without giving any notice and without the necessity of legal proceedings. The lease further provided that iMedia would remove any improvements and encroachments from the premises at its expense upon termination or cancellation of the lease.

Around October 1, 2009, iMedia issued a press release announcing that it was ceasing operations. Since that time iMedia has not complied with most, if not all, of its obligations under the contract and the lease. Furthermore, the contract expired as of December 31, 2010 and iMedia did not renew it. On June 20, 2013, the Texas Secretary of State sent a letter to iMedia notifying it that its right to conduct affairs was forfeited for failing to file the nonprofit periodic report. On October 25, 2013, the

Secretary of State ordered the involuntary termination of iMedia's corporate status for failing to file the report.

Notwithstanding these events, some persons apparently claiming to be officers, employees, or representatives of iMedia have persisted in occupying and using and/or attempting to occupy and use the premises formerly leased to iMedia.

However, the contract and lease expired years ago. In addition, iMedia's failure to comply with its obligations under the contract and lease, including its failures to provide the performance bond and rent, resulted in the termination of the contract and lease years ago.

The City hereby notifies iMedia and the persons associated or formerly associated with iMedia that it has taken possession of the premises. When the City did so, it found various items of personal property strewn about the premises, including equipment, files, diskettes, checks, and other paper and electronic records. The City is concerned that some of the paper and electronic records may contain confidential information.

The City hereby demands that iMedia and the persons associated or formerly associated with iMedia remove their personal property from the premises by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 30, 2014. If any personal property remains on the premises after that time, the City will consider that property to be abandoned and will dispose of it or use it. If iMedia or any of the persons associated or formerly associated with iMedia want to remove their personal property from the premises, they must contact Clinton Lawrence at 214-670-7835 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at least 24 hours in advance of the time they want to remove their property. The premises will be locked at all other times.

Sincerely,

Christopher D. Bowers

First Assistant City Attorney

c: Sana Syed, Director, Public Information Office  
Clinton Lawrence, Dallas Public Library

## Appendix B – DISD Ebola Letter

Below is an example of the flyer that DISD provided to students in different languages:

October 1, 2014

Dear Parents:

The health and safety of our students is always our top priority at Jack Lowe Sr. Elementary School. When issues of concern are brought to our attention, we feel it is important to share them with you so that appropriate steps can be taken.

This morning, we were made aware that a student at Sam Tasby Middle School may have had contact with an individual who was recently diagnosed with the Ebola virus. This student is currently not showing any symptoms and is under close observation by the Dallas County Health and Human Services Department. As a precautionary measure, the student has been advised to stay home from school. Since this student is not presenting any symptoms, there is nothing to suggest that the disease was spread to others, including students and staff.

It is also important to know that individuals are not contagious until symptoms appear. Because of this, there is no imminent danger to your child.

Please know that Dallas ISD is in regular communication with the Centers for Disease Control, the Dallas Mayor's Office, and Dallas County Health and Human Services and will provide updates as they are received.

In addition, the district is taking the following actions:

- Additional nurses are being deployed to Tasby for precautionary purposes, to keep a close watch on any student who comes to the nurse's office with fever or flu-like symptoms, etc.
- Additional custodial services have been arranged to thoroughly clean the building each evening, also a precautionary measure.

A recorded hotline is being established to provide any updates on this situation. The number for this hotline is (972) 925-5810.

For more information about the Ebola virus, please visit this link from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/ebola-factsheet.pdf>

Thank you for your continued support of Jack Lowe Sr. Elementary School.

Sincerely,

Yesenia Ramirez

Principal

Jack Lowe Sr. Elementary School

**Appendix C – Ebola Reverse 911 Script**

OEM and PIO also conducted a reverse 911 call in English and Spanish to nearly 11,000 residents about the Ebola case in the Vickery Meadows neighborhood:

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT AN EBOLA CASE WAS CONFIRMED ON TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 30 IN THE CITY OF DALLAS. WHILE THIS MAY BE CAUSE FOR CONCERN, THERE IS NO ONGOING DANGER TO YOUR HEALTH. THE EBOLA VIRUS CAN NOT BE SPREAD THROUGH CASUAL CONTACT.

THE CITY OF DALLAS IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC), DALLAS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH.

FOR INFORMATION AND FACTS ON EBOLA PLEASE CALL 3-1-1 OR DALLAS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AT 214-819-2004. FOR ADDITIONAL UPDATES FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @1500 MARILLA AND ON FACEBOOK @DALLACITYHALL OR VISIT [WWW.DALLASCITYNEWSROOM.COM](http://WWW.DALLASCITYNEWSROOM.COM).

**Appendix D – PIO Presentation to Dallas City Council December 2014**

**Memorandum**



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE November 26, 2014

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **PIO Communications Plan**

On Wednesday, December 3, 2014, the City Council will be briefed on the PIO Communications Plan by Sana Syed, Public Information Officer. The materials are attached for your review.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A.C. Gonzalez'.

A.C. Gonzalez  
City Manager

c: Warren M.S. Ernst, City Attorney  
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor  
Rosa A. Rios, City Secretary  
Daniel F. Soils, Administrative Judge  
Ryan S. Evans, First Assistant City Manager  
Eric D. Campbell, Assistant City Manager

Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager  
Mark McDaniel, Assistant City Manager  
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager  
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer  
Sana Syed, Public Information Officer  
Elsa Cantu, Assistant to the City Manager – Mayor & Council

**Appendix E – Email from News Director to A.C. Gonzalez**

---

**From:** Tully, Susan (NBCUniversal, KXAS) [<mailto:susan.tully@nbcuni.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 17, 2014 12:31 PM  
**To:** Gonzalez, AC  
**Cc:** Saabedra, Margie  
**Subject:** City of Dallas Media Plan

Mr. Gonzalez:

The Dallas/Ft. Worth Television News Directors have communicated with each other about the proposed PIO Communications Plan. We would like an opportunity to meet with you before this plan is implemented. The Ebola Crisis brought to light several situations where newsrooms were kept from independent newsgathering and we do have concerns that the proposed plan would continue some of the trends we observed. While we understand there are times a pool camera or pool reporter from the local media is necessary, having a city employee be the person who filters and covers news event to hand out is something we would like to discuss.

The following stations, KXAS, WFAA, KTVT and KDFW, are all ready to have news management in a meeting to raise our concerns with the plan. If your office could let us know a date and time we will all have someone there.

Thank you for your attention to this request.



**Susan Tully**

Vice President of News  
NBC 5 | Dallas-Fort Worth  
Office: 817.654.6458  
24 Hour Desk: 817.654.6300





**Appendix F – Bowers email, TEC opinion**

**Chris Bowers**  

To: Sana Syed

FW: Texas Ethics Commission: Draft of Advisory Opinion

---

Sana,

I am forwarding the draft opinion. When you get a chance, please let me know your thoughts. Thanks!

Chris

---

**From:** Patti Shannon [<mailto:Patti.Shannon@ethics.state.tx.us>]

**Sent:** Friday, December 02, 2016 4:08 PM

**To:** Bowers, Chris

**Cc:** Ian Steusloff

**Subject:** Texas Ethics Commission: Draft of Advisory Opinion

Mr. Bowers,

Please see the attached draft opinion which is on the agenda for the Commission meeting on December 8, 2016.

Sincerely,

**Patti**

Patti Shannon, Legal Assistant IV  
Texas Ethics Commission  
P.O. Box 12070 (78711-2070) or  
201 E. 14th Street  
Sam Houston Bldg - 10th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701  
Tel: 512-463-5809  
Fax: 512-463-5777  
Email: [patti.shannon@ethics.state.tx.us](mailto:patti.shannon@ethics.state.tx.us)

## Appendix G – Draft TEC Opinion

AGENDA ITEM 13,  
 EXHIBIT 3

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### ETHICS ADVISORY OPINION NO. \_\_\_\_

---

December 8, 2016

e

*Whether a television show hosted by a city council member is political advertising for purposes of section 255.003 of the Election Code and other related questions. (AOR-617)*

The Texas Ethics Commission (commission) has been asked whether a television show hosted by a city council member is political advertising for purposes of section 255.003 of the Election Code and other related questions.

#### **Background**

The requestor of this opinion is a city council member who states that the prospective television show would be developed and produced by the member along with city staff. The member would host the show and interview guest speakers on a variety of topics, such as the city's budget process, information about upcoming events in the member's district, thanking those who have volunteered or donated goods or services to the city for city events, thanking those who have volunteered or donated goods or services to the member for events in the member's district, and other issues of interest to city residents or the member's constituents. The member would introduce himself or herself by name and district, and the member's name and district would appear as a caption when the member is on-screen. Guests on the show would include city staff, other council members, and city residents or business owners. The television show would be broadcast on the city's public access cable channels and would be made available on the city's Internet website. The cable channels are provided to the city by the cable operator in exchange for being allowed to install and maintain cable in city right-of-ways.


#### **Relevant Law**

Section 255.003 of the Election Code provides, in relevant part, as follows:

(a) An officer or employee of a political subdivision may not knowingly spend or authorize the spending of public funds for political advertising.

...

(c) A person who violates Subsection (a) . . . commits an offense. An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

**Appendix H – Bowers email, TEC Ruling****Chris Bowers** 

December 12, 2016 at 5:10 PM

CB

To: Sana Syed

FW: Texas Ethics Commission: Advisory Opinion Request

---

Sana,

I was shocked and disappointed to see the attached letter when I returned to the office a short time ago. I called Ian, but he was not available, so I left a message. I will try to find out why the Commission was unable to reach a decision and whether the Commission will continue to consider the opinion at its next meeting or whether the lack of a decision is the final decision. Sorry!

Chris

---

**From:** Patti Shannon [<mailto:Patti.Shannon@ethics.state.tx.us>]

**Sent:** Monday, December 12, 2016 4:04 PM

**To:** Bowers, Chris

**Subject:** Texas Ethics Commission: Advisory Opinion Request

Mr. Bowers,

Please see the attached letter. Thank you!

Sincerely,

**Patti**

Patti Shannon, Legal Assistant IV  
Texas Ethics Commission  
P.O. Box 12070 (78711-2070) or  
201 E. 14th Street  
Sam Houston Bldg - 10th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701  
Tel: 512-463-5809  
Fax: 512-463-5777  
Email: [patti.shannon@ethics.state.tx.us](mailto:patti.shannon@ethics.state.tx.us)

**Appendix I - TEC Ruling****TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION**

P.O. Box 12070, Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas 78711-2070

Chase Untermeyer  
Chair

Steven D. Wolens  
Vice Chair

Natalia Lara Ashley  
Executive Director



Commissioners

Hugh C. Akin  
Clad M. Craycraft  
Jim Clancy  
Wilhelmina Delco  
Mary K. "Katie" Kennedy  
Tom Ramsey

December 12, 2016

Mr. Christopher D. Bowers  
Interim City Attorney  
Office of the City Attorney  
City Hall  
Dallas, TX 75201

*By email: [chris.bowers@dallascityhall.com](mailto:chris.bowers@dallascityhall.com)*

**RE: Request for Advisory Opinion**

Dear Mr. Bowers:

At its December 2016 meeting, the Texas Ethics Commission considered your request for an advisory opinion, designated AOR No. 617. The Commission was not able to reach a decision on your request. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ian M. Steusloff".

Ian M. Steusloff  
General Counsel

IMS:pes

Ref: ID# 33887

**Appendix J – Monthly Report for City of Dallas, July 1, 2016 – Aug. 1, 2016**

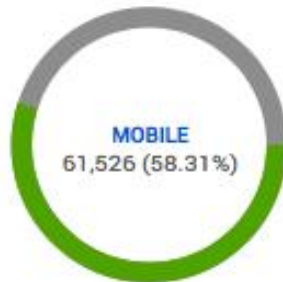


## Website Analysis

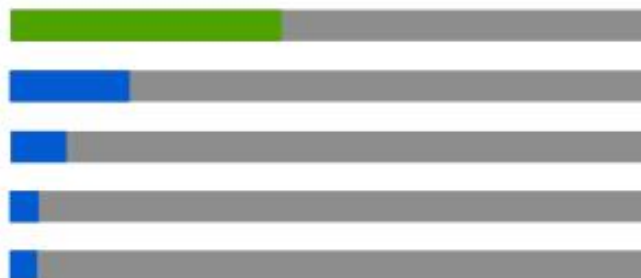
**PAGEVIEWS**  
206,777  
**SESSIONS**  
105,516  
**USERS**  
84,087

DPD Shooting Update  
 Downtown Traffic Update 1  
 Downtown Traffic Update 2  
 Open Carry  
 Street Closure Update

70,308 views (34%)  
 6,088 views (2.94%)  
 4,658 views (2.25%)  
 2,755 views (1.33%)  
 1,450 views (0.70%)



**DIRECT ENTRY**  
(42.37%) 44,703 views  
**GOOGLE**  
(18.79%) 19,823 views  
**FACEBOOK: MOBILE**  
(8.69%) 9,169 views  
**TWITTER**  
(4.55%) 4,799 views  
**DALLASCITYHALL.COM**  
(4.31%) 4,548 views



# In the News

## TOP STORIES

DPD Ambush  
Timeline of events during DPD ambush  
DPD memorial  
Chief Brown updates  
DPD sees surge in applications

TOTAL MENTIONS: 38 MILLION | TOTAL REACH: 40 BILLION

## TOP SOURCES

Dallas Morning News  
KRLD  
Fox 4  
MSNBC  
NBC 5

## PIO PITCHED STORIES

Real Trash Talk

TOTAL REACH FROM PIO PITCHED STORIES: 1.5 MILLION

# Open Records

## PROCESSED REQUESTS

1,557

## AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME

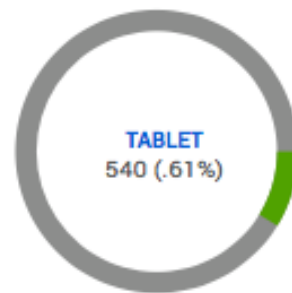
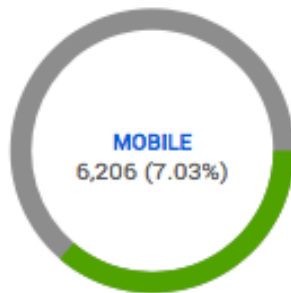
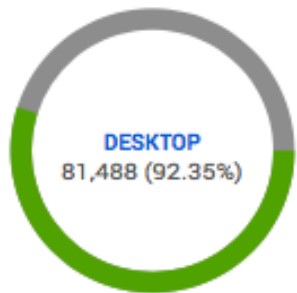
4.65 Days

# Broadcast Team

**PAGEVIEWS**  
194,073  
**SESSIONS**  
78,203  
**USERS**  
41,183

Active Shooter Training  
Dallas Open Carry  
Park Board: July 21  
Watch Live  
Council Briefing: 8.20.14

93,337 views  
85,443 views  
7,136 views  
5,335 views  
177 views



## HIGHLIGHTS

**LIVE PROGRAMMING**  
18.2 Hours

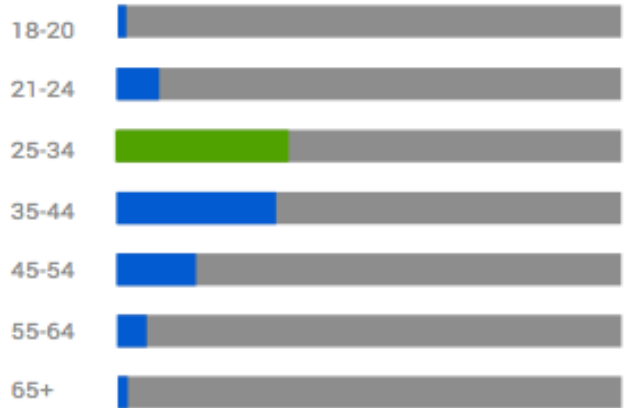
**AV EVENTS**  
79

**CITY HALL MEETINGS**  
13

**PEAK TRAFFIC DAY**  
July 20

# Social Media Breakdown

## SOCIAL PLATFORM: TWITTER



### HIGHLIGHTS

- NEW FOLLOWERS**  
4,907
- LINK CLICKS**  
2,830
- RETWEETS**  
3,257
- IMPRESSIONS**  
815,013

## SOCIAL PLATFORM: FACEBOOK



### HIGHLIGHTS

- NEW FANS**  
1,227
- UNLIKES**  
96
- IMPRESSIONS**  
1,624,105
- TOTAL PAGE LIKES**  
12,656



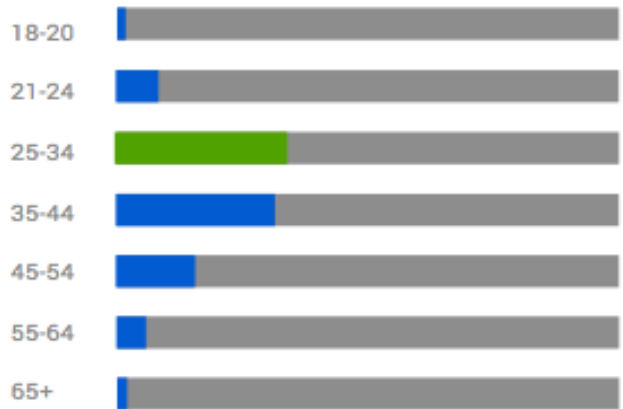


# Social Media Breakdown

## SOCIAL PLATFORM: TWITTER

 MALE FOLLOWERS  
**55%**

 FEMALE FOLLOWERS  
**45%**



### HIGHLIGHTS

- NEW FOLLOWERS**  
4,907
- LINK CLICKS**  
2,830
- RETWEETS**  
3,257
- IMPRESSIONS**  
815,013

**SOCIAL PLATFORM: FACEBOOK**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**NEW FANS**  
1,227

**UNLIKES**  
96

**IMPRESSIONS**  
1,624,105

**TOTAL PAGE LIKES**  
12,656

MALE FANS **41%** | FEMALE FANS **59%**



**SUNDAY**  
Avg. 12.8 k imp.

**MONDAY**  
Avg. 100.7 k imp.

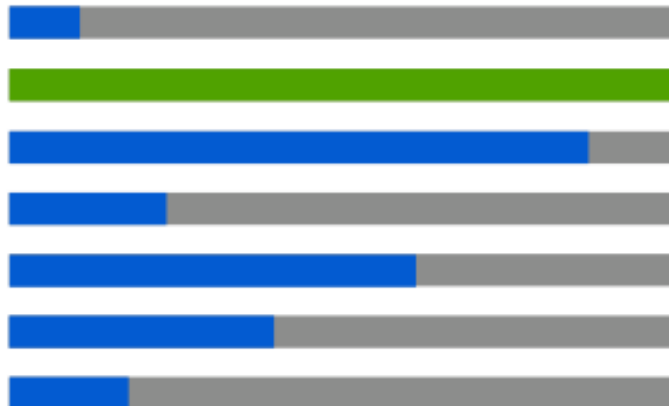
**TUESDAY**  
Avg. 88.7 k imp.

**WEDNESDAY**  
Avg. 31.1 k imp.

**THURSDAY**  
Avg. 61.1 k imp.

**FRIDAY**  
Avg. 44.9 k imp.

**SATURDAY**  
Avg. 21.6 k imp.



**SOCIAL PLATFORM: YOUTUBE**

### HIGHLIGHTS

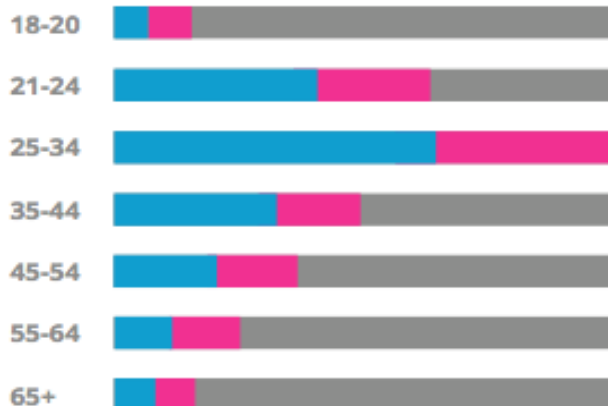
- NEW VIEWS**  
12,389
- NEW VIDEOS**  
4
- NEW SUBSCRIBERS**  
10
- MINUTES WATCHED**  
44,757
- AVERAGE DURATION**  
3:36
- TOTAL VIEWS**  
872,134
- TOTAL VIDEOS**  
383

**TOP PERFORMING CONTENT: New Uploads**

- DALLAS SHOOTING: 7:30 AM**  
4,045 Views | 25 Likes | 0 Comments
- DALLAS SHOOTING: 12:30 AM**  
3,753 Views | 2 Likes | 0 Comments
- GOVERNOR VISITS DALLAS**  
150 Views | 3 Likes | 0 Comments
- DPD MEMORIAL**  
2 Views | 0 Likes | 0 Comments

**TOP PERFORMING CONTENT: All Videos**

- DALLAS SHOOTING: 7:30 AM**  
4,045 Views | 25 Likes | 0 Comments
- DALLAS SHOOTING: 12:30 AM**  
3,753 Views | 2 Like | 0 Comments
- CITY OF DALLAS | OPEN CARRY**  
1,185 Views | 3 Likes | 0 Comments
- GOVERNOR VISITS DALLAS**  
150 Views | 3 Like | 0 Comments
- TRINITY PKWY: PT. 1**  
307 Views | 3 Like | 0 Comments



- EXTERNAL (43%)
- SUGGESTED VIDEOS (25%)
- YOUTUBE SEARCH (21%)
- OTHER (12%)