

Who is VOAD?

Typifying the Membership of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) Organizations in Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas

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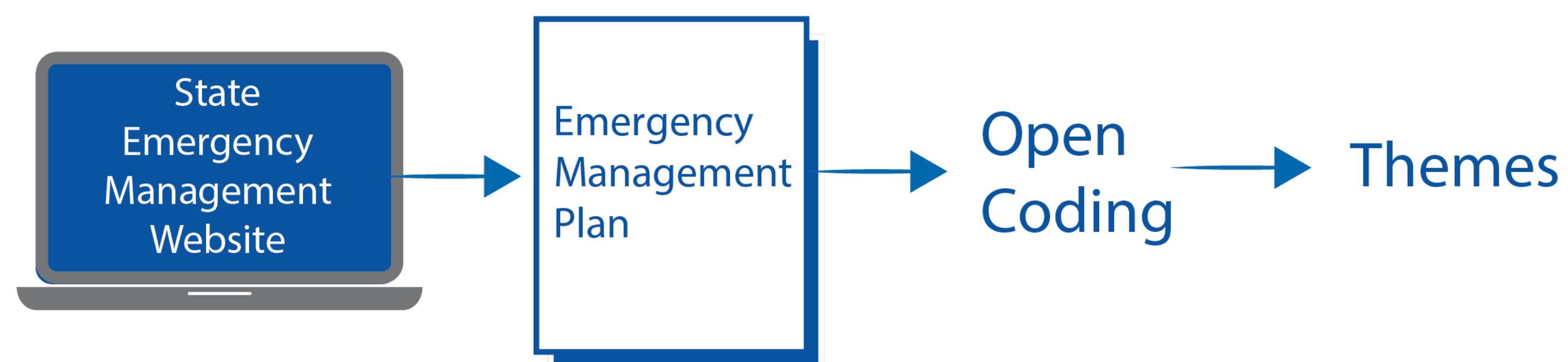
Background

- Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) chapters are frequently referenced in emergency management plans and offered as a solution for managing organizational emergence and convergence.
- National VOAD was founded in 1970; since 1970, VOAD networks have rapidly taken root in the emergency management profession. However, scarce empirical work has been done on VOAD associations.
- This poster highlights findings from an analysis of VOAD networks at the national-level, selected states (Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas), and local VOADs in Alabama and Texas. The poster also shares themes related to how VOADs are represented in respective state-level emergency management plans.

Research Questions

- RQ1:** How are VOAD networks represented in selected state-level emergency management plans (Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama)?
- RQ2:** What characterizes organizations affiliated with National VOAD, selected state VOADs (Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama), and local VOADs in these states?

Research Question 1



Inconsistent Terminology Surrounding VOADs and Nonprofits in General

- VOAD as a network vs. VOAD as an individual nonprofit
- Nonprofit, Volunteer Agency, Private Relief Organization... etc.
- “Whole Community”

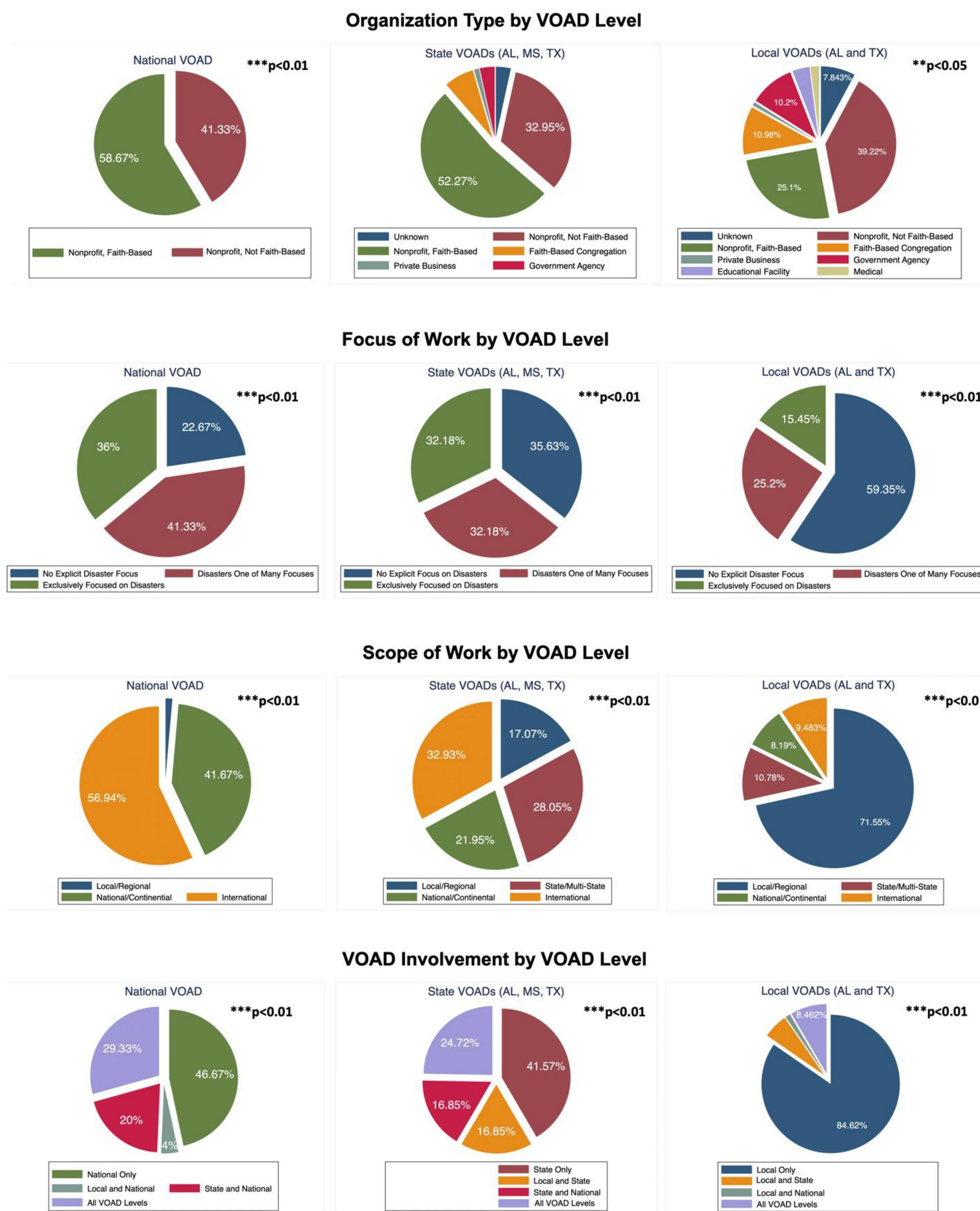
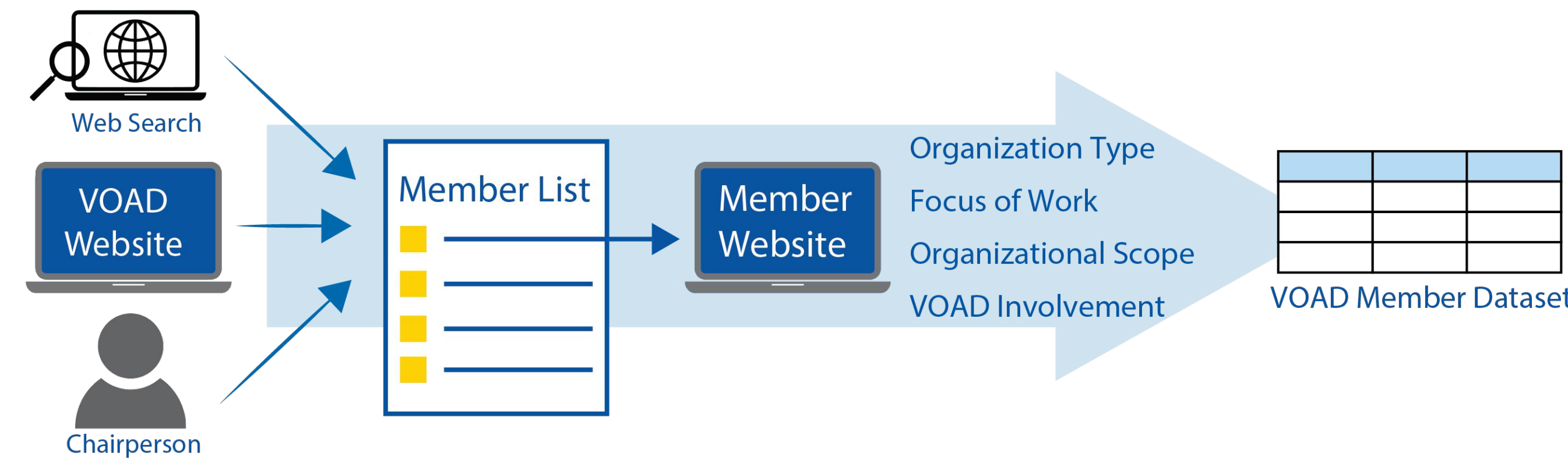
Nonprofits Expected to Respond and Provide Many Services

- At least 20 different services and 7 ESFs are attached to voluntary organizations in the 3 plans analyzed
- Broad categories:**
 - Emergency assistance
 - Human services
 - Mass care
 - Restoration of community services

Nonprofits/VOAD Networks Are “Support”

- Not listed as lead agency for any function

Research Question 2



NOTE: p-values indicate the statistical significance of the difference between the VOAD level with others VOAD levels in the analysis.

Key Findings

- There is conceptual ambiguity surrounding VOAD organizations (both in the academic literature and in the emergency plans reviewed in this analysis). This ambiguity applies also to nonprofits more broadly.
- We see increased diversity of **organization types** at Local VOAD levels, as compared to state and National. This may be indicative of local VOADs being constructed for and flexible to the needs of the communities they serve.
- Greater focus on disasters may be present at broader levels given disasters reoccur at state and national levels more frequently than local; nonetheless, there is a large portion of disaster focused (in-part or in-whole) at local VOAD levels.
- Information on VOAD networks can be difficult to obtain.** Reliance on publicly-accessible webpages may be considered a limitation of this work.

Directions for Future Research

- Scholars must work to develop conceptual clarity surrounding VOAD networks.
- Future scholarship may explore the role of nonprofits as “support” agencies; *does this truly characterize the role they play?*
- Future scholarship should examine the concept of “Whole Community” to understand the symbolic role of this concept and how/if it can be applied practically.
- Future scholarship will explore VOAD network characteristics for the remaining forty-seven states, three U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.

In conclusion, disasters are only expected to increase in frequency and severity. **VOAD organizations may offer a possible solution for capacity building, but only if we can improve our conceptualization and understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.**