



The State of Emergency Management 2000: The Process of Emergency Management Professionalization in the United States and Florida

Jennifer L. Wilson

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This dissertation analyzes the current status of emergency management professionalization in the United States and Florida using a qualitative case study. I investigate the efforts of various organizations at the national and state levels in the private and public sectors to organize emergency management as a profession. I conceptualize emergency management professionalization as occurring in two phases: the indirect institutionalization of the occupation of emergency management and the formal advancement toward an emergency management profession. The legislative, organizational, and procedural developments that occurred between approximately 1900 and the late 1970s became the indirect institutionalization of the occupation of emergency management. Over time, as our society developed and became increasingly complex, more disasters affect the security of the population. In order to adapt to increasing risks and vulnerabilities the emergency management system emerged and with it the necessary elements upon which a future profession could be established providing the basis for the formal advancement toward an emergency management profession. The purpose of this research is to provide a frame of reference for whether or not the field of emergency management is a profession. Based on sociology of professions literature, emergency management can be considered to be professionalizing. The current emergency management professionalization efforts may or may not be sufficient to achieve the ultimate goal of becoming a legitimate profession based on legal and public support for the exclusive right to perform emergency management tasks (monopoly) as well as self-regulation of those tasks (autonomy).

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