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The Application of “Swift Trust” to Humanitarian Logistics

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Abstract

Trust is essential to supply chain teams as it has a positive impact on team performance. Long-term relationships in supply chains have also emphasised trust as their key element. Yet traditional models of trust have a limited application in hastily formed networks that are formed on the spot without a long-term component. An example of such hastily formed networks is the humanitarian aid supply network, which consists of a number of individual logisticians from a variety of organisations, coming together to bring relief to a disaster-stricken area. The aim of this paper is, thus, to further the understanding of swift trust in hastily formed networks as a means of improving relief operations in rapid onset disasters. A model of swift trust is presented, and each of its conditions discussed to unearth potential facilitators of swift trust.

25 **1. Introduction**

26 Over the last three decades, the concepts of inter-organisational, intra-organisational and inter-
27 personal trust have been studied in significant depth and from a range of perspectives,
28 including economic, psychological and sociological (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998), and in the
29 relationship between trust and control as exemplified by a special edition of the journal
30 *Organization Studies* devoted to this aspect alone (see Bachmann *et al.*, 2001). Whilst it is
31 premature to suggest that there is total agreement on a conceptualisation of the various forms
32 of trust, a significant result of this interest has been a clearer understanding of their antecedents
33 and outcomes. Not only have models been developed that link different antecedents to trust,
34 but also, various evolutionary patterns for the development of trust have been studied.

35

36 Trust is a core concept in supply network management (Barratt, 2004; Mentzer *et al.*, 2001),
37 and particularly in the literature relating to supply chain collaboration (e.g. Skjøtt-Larsen *et al.*,
38 2003). Apart from stressing information exchange, one of the cornerstones of the development
39 of trust in supply networks is through cross-functional, and inter-organisational teams
40 (Christopher *et al.*, 2006). Fawcett *et al.* (2008) go so far as to call these “supply chain teams”
41 and list a lack of trust as one of the most significant barriers to effective management of supply
42 networks. Within such networks, external collaboration is considered to be important in two
43 dimensions: in the supply network itself, and with competitors (Barratt, 2004) – the latter
44 becoming increasingly important in project-based industries such as the construction (cf. Beach
45 *et al.*, 2005). However, whilst such collaboration focuses on the “selected few” with whom
46 one might aspire to develop or maintain long-term partnerships, inter-organisational teams in
47 projects are developed *ad hoc* and without a long-term perspective. Relationships in teams like
48 these are “determined by good faith rather than a formal contract” (Lu and Yan, 2007, p.165),
49 emphasising the importance of trust all the more – especially as it can be seen as acting as a

50 substitute mechanism for control (Jarvenpaa *et al.*, 1998). What is more, formal contracts and
51 their transaction costs can be avoided in the presence of trust (breaching which would create
52 demoralisation costs, cf. Ellickson, 1986).

53

54 Yet how is trust developed in such *ad hoc* relationships and projects? To date, there is a vast
55 literature on trust in long-term relationships – in fact, most of relationship management
56 literature focuses on trust in this context where it often seen as being the obverse of control
57 (e.g. Knights, *et al.*, 2001; Maguire *et al.*, 2001) or interrelated with risk (Das and Teng, 2001).
58 Studies on trust in temporary networks, on the other hand, are scant. What is more, different
59 types of temporary networks exist, from planned ones in project industries (e.g. the
60 construction industry), via the “minimal organizations” (e.g. of fire fighting teams, Weick,
61 1993), “emergent multi-organizational networks” or “emergent response groups” (cf.
62 Majcharak *et al.*, 2007) to hastily formed networks (HFNs) (Ben-Shalom *et al.*, 2005; Denning,
63 2006) in e.g. disaster relief (Uhr and Ekman, 2008).

64

65 The concept of an HFN, as described by the HFN Research Group (2006) has five elements. It
66 is a network of people (1) established rapidly, (2) from different communities, (3) working
67 together in a shared conversation space (4) in which they plan, commit to, and execute actions,
68 (5) to fulfil a large, urgent mission. Contrary to Weick’s (1993) minimal organisations such as
69 fire fighters who may well share a common aim, background, approaches and working
70 practices, the individual in an HFN, whilst sharing the same high level goals, may have not
71 worked together previously nor have undergone the same training. For example, it is estimated
72 that over 400 official international NGOs and over 5,000 associated staff were present in
73 Indonesia in the immediate aftermath of the 2004 Southeast Asian tsunami (Völz, 2005). Other
74 similar concepts to HFNs are those of “emergent (or emerging) multi-organizational networks”

75 (NRCNA, 2006) or “emergent response groups” (Majcharak *et al.*, 2007). Head (2000)
76 describes these as (1) crisis driven, (2) task-orientated, (3) self-evolving, (4) time-sensitive, (5)
77 composite and (6) temporary. Majcharak *et al.* (2007) emphasise their self-evolving nature,
78 going further by suggesting that their membership has no pre-existing structure, roles, tasks or
79 expertise. In other words, an emergent response group develops, migrates and reorganises,
80 gaining and losing membership in an unstructured way. The difference between such groups
81 and HFNs in the humanitarian context lies in that the recognition that the aims, policies,
82 doctrine and role of particular organisations in disaster relief are unlikely to change. In
83 summary, the disaster response situation brings together organisations with their pre-fixed aims
84 and policies, but individuals that do not know each other, do not belong to the same
85 organisation, and have not undergone the same training. Therefore the concept of HFNs is
86 preferred to other, similar concepts in the humanitarian context – albeit the swift trust model is
87 applicable to all of the above, as Majcharak *et al.* (2007) suggest themselves.

88

89 In a humanitarian context, therefore, HFNs can be described as “co-located teams in short term
90 local projects” with inter-sectoral partnerships (Fitzgerald, 2004) that link humanitarian
91 organisations (i.e. aid agencies and humanitarian NGOs) to governments, local communities,
92 business (suppliers and logistics service providers) as well as the military; all these together
93 forming the humanitarian aid supply network (Kovács and Spens, 2008). But while project-
94 based temporary networks are characterised by clear starting and ending dates (though the
95 same companies including competitors can be involved in several projects in a row), the key
96 characteristic of an HFN is its quick formation, lacking the potential for “prior arrangements
97 including systematic mechanisms” that Lu and Yang (2007) would otherwise emphasise. Here
98 the focus on trust, and the development of trust, turns to initial inter-personal relationships
99 (Kasper-Fuehrer and Ashkanasy, 2001; McKnight *et al.*, 1998). Thus, trust building in HFNs

100 needs to follow a different pattern from trust in long-term relationships. Meyerson *et al.* (1996)
101 therefore suggest that individuals within HFNs are tied together via “swift trust” (or “initial
102 trust”, McKnight *et al.*, 1998).

103

104 The aim of this paper is, therefore, to further the understanding of swift trust in hastily formed
105 networks as a means of improving relief operations in rapid onset disasters. Disaster relief has
106 been chosen as the context for the paper, as it involves a number of different types of
107 organisations (Kovács and Spens, 2008) that, when it comes to rapid onset disasters, need to
108 deliver aid quickly at the same time as they need to co-ordinate their efforts and thus, constitute
109 a broader response network. The humanitarian aid supply network in disaster relief is
110 characterised both by its speed of inception and execution, as well as their relative
111 impermanence. Furthermore, it serves a common goal (that of alleviating the suffering of those
112 in need), an important characteristic in team formation (Fitzgerald, 2004).

113

114 The paper will first revisit hastily formed networks (HFNs) in disaster relief more in detail,
115 before presenting different routes to trust formation in HFNs. It then presents a model of swift
116 trust, and discusses each of the conditions of trust formation in the context of humanitarian
117 logistics. The concluding discussion suggests ways to facilitate swift trust in HFNs.

118

119 **2. Hastily formed networks in disaster relief**

120 There has been a significant increase in the focus on improving the response to rapid onset
121 disasters following such high profile events as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, 2005 Pakistan
122 earthquake, Hurricanes Mitch (1998) and Katrina (2005), and recently, Cyclone Nargis (2008)
123 and the earthquake in Szechuan (2008). Tsunamis and earthquakes are indeed rapid onset
124 disasters in the sense of occurring with little or no prior warning – while e.g. hurricanes are

125 more predictable, and often cyclical in nature. But rapid onset disasters do not need to be
126 natural; terrorist attacks (e.g. 9-11, or more recently, the 2008 Mumbai bombings) also fall
127 under this category. Common to these disasters is their sudden occurrence (compared to e.g.
128 the evolution of a drought) and equal need for quick response; the effectiveness of the relief
129 depending on the speed of logisticians to be able to “procure, transport and receive supplies at
130 the site of a humanitarian relief effort” (Thomas, 2003, p.4). It is indeed humanitarian logistics
131 that contributes most to disaster relief, with most estimates suggesting that this represents at
132 least 80% of the cost of disaster (cf. van Wassenhove, 2006). Humanitarian organisations can
133 therefore be described as “logistics organisations” with the aim of assisting vulnerable people,
134 i.e. the beneficiaries.

135

136 The speed notion of disaster relief is also reflected in the way of describing humanitarian
137 supply chains as “agile” (Oloruntoba and Gray, 2006). At the same time, speed is not the only
138 constraint disaster relief needs to take into account. Other constraints are a destabilised
139 communications and transport infrastructure (Long and Wood, 1995), limited knowledge about
140 the situation, and, in particular, about the location and numbers of affected people and their
141 needs (Özdamar *et al.*, 2004). In addition, humanitarian organisations are heavily scrutinised
142 by the world’s media (Tatham and Spens, 2008). Adding to this complexity is the sheer
143 numbers of humanitarian organisations (and the individuals working within them) involved in
144 disaster relief. The estimates are stunning: the UK alone prides itself with the presence of 3-
145 4,000 internationally operating humanitarian organisations (Stoddard, 2003), whilst a relatively
146 recent analysis suggested that over 30,000 such international NGOs exist world-wide (Roberts,
147 2001). As a result, a rapid onset disaster can be typified by the descent of many such
148 organisations into the disaster area leading to huge co-ordination challenges – 72 inter-agency
149 co-ordination meetings were held weekly in Banda Aceh alone (Völz, 2005).

150

151 Smith and Dowell (2000) therefore call the humanitarian aid supply networks in rapid onset
152 disasters “incident organisations” – quite in line with Fitzgerald’s (2004) “collaborative
153 entities”, i.e. teams of previously independent individuals, groups and organisations that come
154 together temporarily on the basis of a particular event only; in this case the event being the
155 disaster. The new team works towards a common goal and needs to combine the resources of
156 otherwise independent organisations (Smith and Dowell, 2000). Fitzgerald (2004), however,
157 also speaks of the need of a “catalyst”, an individual or organisation that co-ordinates (and
158 ideally, leads and monitors) the entire team. In high-impact international disasters, this would
159 be the role of the United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) (as part of the Logistics
160 Cluster). As an example, UNJLC deployed to co-ordinate the overall relief to Cyclone Nargis
161 in May 2008 including team members (secondees) from nine different NGOs (in two locations,
162 Bangkok and Yangon; UNJLC; 2008). This was in effect a hastily formed network (HFN)
163 consisting of individuals of at least ten organisations whilst acting as the co-ordinating agency
164 for the relief efforts of many more.

165

166 Interestingly for HFNs in disaster relief is not only the complexity of the humanitarian aid
167 supply network, but also the calls for co-ordination (Oloruntoba and Gray, 2006; van
168 Wassenhove, 2006) at the same time as humanitarian organisations indeed compete for
169 financial and material resources (i.e. from donors) as well as media attention (Tatham and
170 Spens, 2008; Oloruntoba and Gray, 2009). Were the aftermath of a disaster to reflect normal
171 market economics, such competition might well be viewed as healthy, but in the humanitarian
172 context, it results in a reduction in the propensity for organisations to co-operate and this, in
173 turn, can lead to inefficiencies through duplication and overlap – or worse, through a failure to
174 deliver aid to a community that has “fallen between the inter-NGO cracks” (Christopolos,

175 2006). Team theory, however, posits that teams would have identical interests, neglecting the
176 fact that even in hierarchies, team members compete for resources (Williams *et al.*, 2008).
177 Notwithstanding issues of competition, the concept of trust is still emphasised in HFNs, where
178 it can substitute more formal mechanisms of control (Jarvenpaa *et al.*, 1998).

179

180 ***2.1. Trust in disaster relief***

181 In discussing various models of trust, it is appropriate to begin with a definition of the concept
182 – although, as observed by Rousseau *et al.* (1998, p.72) in a cross-disciplinary review, it is a
183 “...a ‘meso’ concept integrating micro level psychological processes and group dynamics with
184 macro level institutional arrangements.” Indeed, McKnight *et al.* (1998, p.474) go further by
185 suggesting that “... the word “trust” is so confusing and broad that it defies careful definition”,
186 whilst Kramer (1999, p.571) notes that “a concise and universally accepted definition has
187 remained elusive.” On the other hand, there are many authors in this field who offer broadly
188 similar definitions (e.g. Kumar, 1996; Lewicki *et al.*, 1998; Zaheer *et al.*, 1998; and Spekman
189 and Sweeney, 2005) and these are reflected in the following definition which will be used
190 within the paper:

191

192 *Trust is present when the one party has a fundamental belief that the other can be*
193 *relied upon to fulfil their obligations with integrity, and will act in the best interests of*
194 *the other.*

195

196 Importantly, this definition of trust focuses on inter-personal, rather than intra- or inter-
197 organisational relationships. It is argued that decisions within organisations are made by
198 individuals and, therefore, the level of intra/inter-organisational trust can be seen as the sum of
199 those individual relationships. Thus, the extent of the intra/inter-organisational trust will be

200 developed and shaped by the inter-personal components and, for this reason, this paper will
201 concentrate on this latter unit of account. Indeed, inter-organisational trust in this paper refers
202 to (inter-personal) trust between individuals from different organisations. Although, in doing
203 so, the authors recognise the validity of the observation by Knights *et al.* (2001, p. 315) "... in
204 practice, it is often impossible to disentangle trust invested in specific people from trust placed
205 in institutional mechanisms." That said, it is the nature of HFNs that such institutional
206 mechanisms may at best be tenuous given the *ad hoc* nature of the organisation/network and, in
207 a humanitarian crisis, the speed with which the crisis can unfold. Nevertheless, it is considered
208 to be a reasonable assumption that all members of the HFN, be they located in the field, in a
209 local subordinate headquarters or in the main (remote) headquarters, will be working to
210 common goal or goal(s) set by the organisation, and in line with the philosophy and ideals of
211 that organisation. Thus instances in which members of the HFN are actively working against
212 each other are perceived to be relatively limited. This latter point is important because the
213 above definition does not imply bi-lateral trust. It is suggested that trust exists when A trusts B;
214 the fact that this is not reciprocated (or is reciprocated at a lesser level) does not obviate the
215 existence of the A->B relationship.

216

217 But how does such inter-personal trust develop? A vast swathe of literature discusses the
218 concept of trust from a variety of perspectives (e.g. economics, psychology, sociology),
219 focusing on trust as a function, the dynamics of trust, trust vs. distrust, the organisation of
220 teams and its implications for trust, how to influence trust (mostly in the selection of team
221 members), investments into trust etc. (Kramer and Tyler, 1996). Other approaches (e.g.
222 Maguire *et al.*, 2001) conceptualise trust as calculus based (reflecting a calculation of the
223 predictability of others' behaviour); knowledge based (in which the predictability has been
224 conformed); and identification based (where trust reflects reciprocal and shared interpretive

225 assumptions)¹. Crucial to HFNs is the achievement of a trusting inter-personal relationship in a
226 very short time frame – hence the papers’ focus on this element of the trust debate.

227

228 For this reason, the work of Meyerson *et al.* (1996) has significant applicability and it has been
229 expanded into a more general framework by Hung *et al.* (2004) who suggest that there are
230 three different routes to trust: the peripheral, central, and habitual. If seen in sequence, the
231 peripheral route refers to the early establishment of trust, the central route to its further
232 development in relationships with a long-term perspective, and the habitual route to a next
233 level where trust is based on patterns that have developed in long-term relationships. In other
234 words, the peripheral route reflects the early stages of a relationship in which individuals meet
235 either physically or virtually to form a team or organisation. Trust at this stage is based on
236 (peripheral) cues such as those provided by third parties. Hung *et al.* (2004) suggest that this
237 peripheral route to trust involves less cognitive effort than making one’s own judgments and is,
238 therefore, the preferred route in the initial stages of a relationship. However, once teams or
239 organisations have formed, individuals are able to cognitively engage in consideration of the
240 other party’s perceived ability, integrity and benevolence, and this may lead to the
241 development of trust through the central route. The final route is that of habitual trust which
242 reflects the historical build up of successful trust transactions and often leads to strong
243 emotional bonds (Hung *et al.*, 2004).

244

245 It is important to appreciate, however, that the three routes can also be separate from each
246 other. The central route, for example, can be pre-conditioned in networks where the motivation
247 (and ability) to trust is high, which is why Hung *et al.* (2004) refer to this route as the
248 traditional one. In the supply chain context, such traditional trust is seen as the fundamental

¹A more detailed analysis of these forms of trust and control is found in Maguire *et al.*, 2001, with summary at Table 1 of that paper.

249 “ingredient” leading to stable relationships (Yeung *et al.*, 2009). In general, the components of
250 trustworthiness (the assessment of the other parties’ ability, integrity and benevolence) lead to
251 trust and later, trusting behaviour (Hung *et al.*, 2004), which is then linked to an outcome
252 expectation such as higher network performance (cf. Laaksonen *et al.*, 2009).

253

254 More interesting for networks that are formed with little or no prior warning, and where the
255 members are not clear from the beginning, i.e. HFNs, is the peripheral route of developing
256 trust. Hung *et al.* (2004, p.5) list some application areas of the peripheral route (which they
257 also call “presumptive trust” while Meyerson *et al.*, 1996, would call it “swift trust”):
258 temporary and virtual teams, and initial encounters in organisations. In the context of
259 humanitarian logistics, the peripheral route to trust is of particular significance, as disaster
260 relief is characterised by the arrival of a large number of individuals from a variety of
261 organisations (each with their own organisational culture) that come together on short notice.
262 The composition of the network is further complicated by the presence of people on the ground
263 (i.e. in the disaster area) as well as members from headquarters who are virtually connected to
264 the network and manage (part of the) network remotely (ALNAP, 2008). Such virtual vs. face-
265 to-face members of networks are also prevalent in other industries (e.g. the automotive
266 industry, cf. Bal and Gundry, 1999). Yet whilst other industries can still develop long-term
267 relationships in such mixed virtual – face-to-face networks, the hasty formation of the network
268 in disaster relief calls for a closer investigation of the peripheral route of trust in the network.

269

270 ***2.2. A model of swift trust***

271 The suggestion that trust can be formed by the peripheral route stems from the work of
272 Meyerson *et al.* (1996) who coined the term swift trust to describe the need to manage the
273 issues of vulnerability, uncertainty, risk and expectations that surface with the formation of a

274 HFN. Such networks “exhibit behaviour that presupposes trust, yet traditional forms of trust –
275 familiarity, shared experience, reciprocal disclosure, threats and deterrents, fulfilled promises
276 and demonstrations of nonexploitation of vulnerability – are not obvious in such systems”
277 (Meyerson *et al.*, 1996, p. 167).

278

279 Swift trust, according to Hung *et al.* (2004)’s peripheral route, has five antecedent conditions
280 that influence trust formation: (1) third party information, (2) dispositional trust, (3) rule, (4)
281 category, and (5) role (see Fig.1). Whilst Kramer (1999) also see historical trust as another
282 condition, Hung *et al.* (2004) purposefully exclude this antecedent in the peripheral route, as
283 trust formation in this route is based on limited prior interaction among the members of the
284 network.

285

286 <Take in Fig.1 about here>

287

288 The other routes to trust, the central, and habitual, result from the maturation of the trusting
289 relationship. HFNs, however, are by definition not drawing on previous trusting relationships,
290 thus the focus here is on the peripheral route to trust, i.e. swift trust (see Fig.1). A later possible
291 maturation of the trusting relationship from that obtained through the peripheral route to
292 habitual trust reflects the level of trust itself and the trusting behaviours and subsequent
293 outcomes that are generated. Importantly, it is argued that, in addition to the simple feedback
294 loop generated by improved knowledge of the others in the relationship, the process is
295 mediated by the perceived level of risk which, in turn, reflects the communications
296 environment within the network.

297

298 The remaining conditions lead to the formation of trust, yet trusting behaviour is still mediated
299 by the perceived risk of the possible gains and losses of any interaction in the network. A high
300 perceived risk may even lead to the deliberate withholding of relevant information. However,
301 Hung *et al.* (2004), whose research in on virtual teams, also see the communication
302 environment as means to exercise social control. Importantly, in the HFNs of humanitarian
303 logisticians the network as a whole, and therefore the associated communication environment,
304 is composed of both face-to-face elements (of logisticians of different organisations on the
305 ground) and virtual ones (with remote headquarters).

306

307 The literature also indicates that trusting behaviour leads to specific outcomes, e.g. better
308 network performance, and it is on this basis of the expectation of an improved outcome that
309 investment into the development of trust in relationships can be justified. Furthermore,
310 Laaksonen *et al.* (2009) show that trust can decrease the transaction costs of a relationship.
311 This thought is captured in the model at Fig. 1 as it is anticipated that the nature of the trust
312 will change as the relationship matures with, ultimately, the level of habitual trust being
313 reached. Individuals who trust each other in this way (i.e. habitually) need expend little mental
314 or emotional effort (i.e. low transaction costs) as they are happy to accept the judgement of
315 their colleague even if this may appear to be unorthodox. Unsurprisingly, however, betrayal of
316 such habitual trust is catastrophic and is likely to lead to an irrevocable breakdown in the
317 relationship. Having said this, arm's length transactional relationships pay little attention to the
318 implications of inter-firm trust (or lack thereof) but are an essential part of purchasing
319 portfolios when it comes to non-critical items that can be provided by an abundance of
320 alternative suppliers (cf. Kraljic, 1983). In essence, the importance of a trusting relationship
321 depends on the availability of suppliers as well as the criticality of items to an operation. When
322 it comes to a humanitarian HFN, the provided items are of critical nature to the operation, and

323 even if suppliers are in abundance, the extremely short delivery times required in disaster relief
324 decrease the number of alternative suppliers. Nonetheless, individual humanitarian
325 organisations may already have mature trusting relationships with potential suppliers. The
326 nature of the HFN, however, is of importance when it comes to trusting other individuals and
327 organisations that are also active in the same disaster response. These relationships are not
328 mature, thus the peripheral route to trust is in place.

329

330 **3. Swift trust in humanitarian logistics**

331 Given the plethora of actors within the humanitarian logistics system in the aftermath of a
332 disaster, it will be appreciated that issues of the development and maintenance of inter-personal
333 trust will apply both within an organisation (such as an NGO) and between organisations.
334 Furthermore, the strategic approach to the response will differ from country to country for, as
335 Drabek (1985) noted, the United States has a much more decentralised system than other
336 countries. Nevertheless, whilst some disaster response staff within an NGO are permanent
337 employees, many are drawn from a wider network of logisticians who form an “on call” roster
338 such as those held by Oxfam, RedR and the Red Cross movement in many countries (ALNAP,
339 2008). Clearly the influx of staff from many sources and backgrounds will lead to problems of
340 distrust (which can be even more emphasised in disaster areas where different ethnic groups
341 are at war, cf. Scheper *et al.*, 2006). In addition, given that such on call staff typically only
342 remain for a relatively short period (2-4 weeks), in effect the humanitarian aid supply network
343 has to repeatedly re-form and, hence, re-develop the required inter-personal trust with staff
344 turnover depleting institutional memory (Weick, 1988), even in the case of HFNs.

345

346 In addition, each organisation involved in the humanitarian aid supply network must form
347 appropriate relationships with other actors, may they be competitors (e.g. NGO and NGO) or

348 even different types of organisations (NGO and military, NGO and government etc.). But do
349 such inter-organisational relationships lie within the spectrum to which the model of swift trust
350 applies? For example, Zolin (2002, p.4) suggests that “an initial condition for swift trust is that
351 participants perceive that they belong to a team, i.e. that they perceive a shared
352 goal.” Humanitarian organisations indeed share the overall goal of alleviating the suffering of
353 beneficiaries, yet at the same time they also compete (cf. Telford and Cosgrave, 2007) for
354 funding and media attention (Kovács and Spens, 2009). The competition aspect is an
355 unfortunate, but inevitable, outcome of the funding regime in which donors provide the
356 majority of support after a disaster had taken place (Oloruntoba and Gray, 2009). Apart from
357 the fact that this is unquestionably inefficient in the longer term (Tatham and Kovács, 2007), it
358 also leads to a desire on the part of humanitarian organisations to be seen to be delivering aid.
359 The subliminal message being that success breeds success, and that a given humanitarian
360 organisation should be favoured above others in terms of donor funding. Notwithstanding
361 elements of competition, humanitarian logisticians engaged in operations relating to the same
362 disaster can develop a sense of belonging to the same team even though relationships between
363 their organisations may not be formalised.

364

365 Nevertheless, at the operational level there seems to be broad agreement over the need to
366 support the beneficiaries, to operate within the humanitarian charter and follow minimum
367 standards of the Sphere Project which lays down a set of values and behaviours that are
368 designed to guide humanitarian response (Sphere, 2004). In short, whilst humanitarian
369 organisations do see themselves as part of a broad community responding to a disaster, it is
370 argued that a greater measure of inter-personal and inter-organisational trust will improve the
371 efficiency and effectiveness of that response. In this regard, Denning (2006, p.18) notes: “The
372 more overwhelming the event, the more likely turf-asserting tendencies will occur and interfere

373 with the effectiveness of the network.”, although it is unclear whether any research has been
374 conducted that can substantiate this proposition. On the organisational and inter-organisational
375 level, a lack of risk-sharing, credit- and cost-sharing essentially inhibits collaboration; yet
376 inter-personal trust can still develop in the absence of these mechanisms.

377

378 A second key point is, again, the interdependence of the trusting relationships. In essence, there
379 is no one trustor or trustee, but each member of the network engages in a relationship with the
380 other members. What is more, the outcomes of any interchange between the parties will affect
381 each party but, potentially, in different ways. Thus, to the extent that the concept of swift trust
382 incorporates certain antecedents (see Fig.1) and that these are capable of promotion and/or
383 maintenance of trust, the actions proposed in this paper should apply to all actors in the
384 humanitarian aid supply network.

385

386 Thirdly, the level of trust within a relationship is by no means static. Indeed, as Hung *et al.*
387 (2004) argue, the peripheral route to trust can give rise to the central route in a next stage. Over
388 time, the relatively fragile swift trust can thus develop to the robust habitual form. On the other
389 hand, trust can also decline, and the different routes to trust are not necessarily forming a direct
390 sequence. Furthermore, there is no absolute level of trust at any given time in a relationship,
391 rather, parties may trust each other in relation to one issue, but not another.

392

393 Finally, there is good evidence to suggest that, subject to any negative impacts of the perceived
394 success of prior alliances (Gulati, 1995), individual members of a network often act as if trust
395 were in place and this leads to self-fulfilment (Jones and George, 1998). The very act of
396 forming a network may of itself trigger an initial level of trust, where a positive assumption
397 about the trusting behaviour of others becomes the baseline position (Meyerson *et al.*, 1996).

398 However, Coppola *et al.* (2004) and Ben-Shalom *et al.* (2005) suggest that this baseline is also
399 affected by the expectations of trust that members import from other settings with which they
400 are familiar. In the HFN of the humanitarian aid supply network similar familiar settings
401 include previous interactions with other organisations and their logisticians in other disasters.

402

403 With the above discussion in mind, in the following sections we will revisit the antecedent
404 conditions of swift trust in such HFNs before drawing a number of conclusions for those
405 engaged in humanitarian logistics.

406

407 ***3.1. Third party information***

408 Third party information enables the formation of trust based not on the, as yet, unidentified
409 capabilities of an individual, but on their prior reputation and/or the reputation of their
410 employing organisation. Information about reputation is important to mitigate the risk of
411 unreliability or incompetency of the other party. The role of third parties is important because
412 of their ability to diffuse relevant trust information (Kramer, 1999). Interestingly, even gossip
413 does not necessarily lead to mistrust but can amplify the probability of trusting behaviour (Burt
414 and Knez, 1996). Whilst incomplete and/or skewed accounts may be communicated, Kramer
415 (1999, p.577) quotes Uzzi (1997) that third parties are “go-betweens [that can] transfer
416 expectations and opportunities of embedded relationships to newly formed ones”. As for the
417 HFN of humanitarian logisticians in a particular disaster (or, indeed, the fire fighting teams
418 described by Weick, 1993), whilst the very HFN itself does not have a shared history, rather
419 the individuals within it may have carried out similar roles under different circumstances (in
420 different disasters), adding to their reputation in regard to how they behaved and are, thus,
421 expected to behave in the new HFN. In such a case, third parties play a crucial role in
422 substantiating the effectiveness of such individuals and organisations.

423

424 Within the existing community of humanitarian logisticians (as with all such communities of
425 shared interest), it is inevitable that third party information will be exchanged and, depending
426 on its content, it may have a positive impact on the development of swift trust. Moreover,
427 databases on humanitarian logisticians on call (that various organisations draw their staff from)
428 can also include such third party information about each individual. There is thus potential for
429 an organisation to provide a repository of individuals' names, qualifications and experience.
430 Were such a central data-base to be developed and maintained, it could provide useful and
431 neutral third party information to inform the development of HFNs.

432

433 More broadly, it is suggested that humanitarian organisations have a responsibility to
434 “advertise” the skills of their employees (or teams of employees) both within the organisation
435 itself and between organisations. The aim here is, obviously, not to develop an elitist mentality,
436 but rather to support the formation of trust by emphasising that individuals are likely to have
437 the appropriate skills in advance of their demonstration of these.

438

439 Such a suggestion raises the issue of the competence of a particular organisation to achieve its
440 mandate. As discussed earlier, there is a vast number of relief organisations world-wide with
441 even a relatively small country such as Nicaragua has as many as 350 different NGOs
442 (Bradshaw, 2001). Notwithstanding the assertion by most (if not all) that they adhere to the
443 Sphere standards, informal discussion with those active in the field would indicate that there is
444 a considerable degree of variability in the levels of competence displayed. That such concerns
445 have not been formally documented is unsurprising, but it does raise the question of whether
446 some form of certification of humanitarian organisations should be introduced. From the
447 perspective of this paper, such an approach would inform the development of swift trust on the

448 basis that a particular organisation has been judged competent and, by implications, so too are
449 its staff. On this basis, an assumption of trust can be made.

450

451 **3.2. Dispositional trust**

452 Dispositional trust is another antecedent condition to trust that exists prior to the very meeting
453 of the HFN. This condition refers to the general disposition of an individual to trust other
454 people, in other words, some people are more trusting than others. There are ample differences
455 between individuals' general predispositions to trust (Fukuyama, 1995; Kramer, 1999; Weber
456 and Hsee, 2000; Zak and Knack, 2001; Hung *et al.*, 2004), even though similar differences in
457 the propensity to trust are unlikely to be exhibited on an organisational level. As trust in HFNs
458 is developed between individuals, each individual member's predisposition to trust impacts on
459 trust formation in the HFN in the round.

460

461 In order to enhance the development of swift trust in the HFN of humanitarian logisticians in a
462 disaster, there is little that can be recommended to overcome the problems of dispositional
463 distrust. It would, for example, be totally impractical to attempt to select individuals on the
464 basis of their trusting disposition. Perhaps the simplest and most obvious prescription is to
465 ensure that individuals and team leaders are aware of the differences in personality and, indeed,
466 between cultures, so that they can take this aspect into consideration when organisations are
467 forming up and trust is being developed.

468

469 **3.3. Rule**

470 The presence of rules, under which heading one can include processes and procedures, is
471 deemed by Kramer (1999) to be of significance in supporting the development of swift trust.
472 Put simply, the suggestion here is that, by following such rules, individuals are deemed by their

473 peers to be trustworthy (Greenberg *et al.*, 2007). More explicitly, Kramer (1999) suggests that
474 “explicit and tacit understandings regarding transactional norms, interactional routines and
475 exchange practices provide an important basis for inferring that others in the organization are
476 likely to behave in a trustworthy fashion.” In short, the presence of rules, and the adherence to
477 them, is a guard against maverick behaviour which has the potential to destabilise an
478 organisation and reduce the level of inter-personal and inter-organisational trust. Indeed, this
479 perspective has considerable resonance with the work of other researchers such as Grey and
480 Garsten (2001) and Maguire *et al.* (2001) who conceptualise trust as enabling individuals to
481 behave in a predictable way.

482

483 However, when it comes to initial the development of swift trust, rule-based behaviour refers
484 to issues such as the normality of the situation and, potentially, the assurance of organisational
485 structures (cf. Hung *et al.*, 2004). But whilst the normality of the situation may, for
486 humanitarian logisticians well be the situation of disaster relief (albeit this is, by definition, a
487 highly fluid and uncertain situation), there is no “one” organisational structure they can be
488 assured of in their HFN. Having said this, the general concept of “structuration”, i.e. the
489 development of common approaches, sets of rules, etc., has clear relevance to HFNs as it
490 would help to ensure that individuals who join the network from different organisations can
491 make the transition with the minimum of effort. In this respect, co-ordinating initiatives such as
492 the Logistics Cluster (the successor to the UN Joint Logistics Centre, UNJLC), and the work of
493 the UK’s Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) in the development of a
494 common “Need Assessment” template are clearly important. Such initiatives, and especially
495 that of the Logistics Cluster, points towards the long term possibility of developing
496 organisational structures that can assure the rule-based development of swift trust in the HFN
497 of humanitarian logisticians in any given disaster.

498

499 Rules in the business context can refer to both pricing mechanisms and contracts – leading to
500 the rise of “contractual trust” as a type of trust in the commercial context (cf. Fynes *et al.*,
501 2005). Humanitarian organisations indeed employ contracts with their global suppliers and
502 logistics service providers, but cannot employ such mechanisms for other members of the
503 humanitarian aid supply network such as other humanitarian organisations, governmental
504 organisations, the military or even suppliers local to the disaster region. Thus, in a post-disaster
505 humanitarian HFN, the fluid nature of the evolving scenario would, unquestionably, make the
506 prior-development of a contract a massive challenge. The alternative approach of attempting to
507 write a contract post-disaster is perceived to be equally challenging as it would doubtless (and,
508 arguably correctly) be viewed by the members of the HFN as a bureaucratic sideshow that
509 detracted individuals from the time-sensitive business of saving lives. Secondly, a typical post-
510 disaster HFN is formed of staff from many countries and, by implication, cultures and legal
511 systems and it is operating in yet another country (and cultural and legal system), and with the
512 organisation’s headquarters almost certainly in yet another country. Furthermore, the staff
513 turnover within the HFN can be very high – for example, secondees drawn from on-call rosters
514 are, typically, only present for some 3-4 weeks before being replaced. Thus questions of
515 contractual jurisdiction are bound to be complex even if individual employment contracts
516 doubtless will specify certain provisions in this regard. In short, using a formal contractual
517 mechanism to provide the rule basis for trust is considered unlikely to be successful. Therefore,
518 in the absence of such an approach, HFNs have to resort to other types of rules. Here,
519 Greenberg *et al.* (2007) note that rules, processes and procedures need to relate not just to the
520 management of a particular office (i.e. the underpinning bureaucracy of the organisation), but
521 also to inter-personal communication. Thus, it is communication rules individual members of
522 HFNs can target when establishing their network. It is, therefore, not surprising that the

523 UNJLC, as part of its original coordinating mandate, focused to a significant extent on the
524 development of forms and standards of communication among humanitarian organisations in
525 addition to its role of operational coordination in the event of a disaster. Yet, in the
526 humanitarian context, the development of well documented processes and procedures (i.e.
527 “rules”) is counter-cultural. Those working within humanitarian organisations are,
528 understandably, output and outcome focussed; their *raison d’être* is the relief of hardship and
529 suffering of those affected by a disaster and adherence to “bureaucracy” is seen as a diversion
530 from this real objective. On the other hand, when responding to a major disaster, NGOs almost
531 universally are forced to use staff who are not part of their core teams, i.e. those from “on call”
532 rosters and other augmenters. In all probability these additional resources will have had limited
533 experience of working within the particular NGO and, therefore, will have even more limited
534 exposure to that organisation’s rules. This results in the potential for inadvertent maverick
535 behaviour with its concomitant negative effect on the development of inter-personal trust.
536 There is a balance to be struck here, as it could be argued that such behaviour in the guise of
537 strong leadership could be valuable in cementing relationships within a team. However, from
538 the perspective of the “swift trust” model there is clear benefit in the advance development and
539 exposition of clear simple and easy to follow rules that will help ensure new comers can fit into
540 the organisation and become effective both speedily and with the minimum of effort.

541

542 Arguably, the same situation applies to the inter-organisational scenario. Ideally, the rules
543 followed by different organisations should be broadly similar in order that those who need to
544 co-operate can do so with the minimum effort. Unfortunately, to date there are still
545 innumerable templates in use by different organisations to perform the very same task (for
546 example, that of Needs Assessment, see HELP, 2007), leading to clear inefficiencies. As this
547 example shows, NGOs may have their own organisational rules (including templates) but be

548 reluctant in co-operating with others and thus develop joint rules and procedures. This
549 behaviour can be justified for NGOs working in substantially different areas (e.g. humanitarian
550 organisations providing medical services may need different categories in their needs
551 assessment, and different expertise to perform the assessment from organisations that provide
552 food or shelter), yet it is also evident across organisations in the same sector (or UN “cluster” –
553 such as the shelter cluster etc.). The negative predisposition of humanitarian organisations
554 towards the development of common rules is, in turn, reflected in the behaviour of individuals
555 representing such organisations. Thus, whilst a standardised set of rules would appear to have
556 benefit in terms of the development of trust, this is an area in which progress is likely to be
557 slow.

558

559 **3.4. Category**

560 Further peripheral cues of trust are given by the membership of individuals in social groups or
561 categories. Hung *et al.* (2004) refer here to organisational categories such as gender or race.
562 Within the context of disaster relief, this is potentially a highly divisive area – indeed, evidence
563 of the negative effects of such categorisation has been noted by Zolin (2002, p.7) who
564 observed: “difficulties in establishing interpersonal working relationships between [US
565 Military] and [NGOs] due to perceived differences in organisational goals, strongly held
566 negative organizational stereotypes and perceived ideological differences”. Apart from trust
567 judgements based on stereotypes on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, race, or age (to
568 name but a few of potential categories), organisational culture also forms a category in itself.
569 For example, Frosdick (1995) suggests that such cultures can be described in terms of their
570 “grid” and their “group” structure. Grid structure refers to the connectedness of organisational
571 entities, with isolated or hierarchically graded entities on the one extreme and networks on the
572 other. Group structure, on the other hand, categorises organisational culture in terms of

573 individualism vs. egalitarianism (at least within the same hierarchical level). As an example,
574 military organisations are categorised as highly hierarchical organisations, though following
575 the principle of egalitarianism on the same levels of hierarchy, whilst NGOs contrast this with
576 prizing individualism. Unsurprisingly, therefore, they represent a clash of cultures.
577 Interestingly, the location of an organisation within such a categorisation must be seen in
578 relative rather than absolute terms. Thus, within the broad humanitarian family, one might
579 anticipate a UN agency being seen as more isolated and hierarchical relative to a NGO that is a
580 network of individuals. This, in turn, helps to explain the potential tension between such
581 organisations within the wider humanitarian aid supply network. Indeed, Frostdick's (1995)
582 categorisation has been used to good effect by Doughty *et al.* (2006) to help explain not only
583 the cultural dissonance between a number of organisations (e.g. FEMA and the US Coast
584 Guard service) in their response to Hurricane Katrina, but these authors go further by
585 suggesting that the propensity to take risk is link to culture. Thus, not only is there a potential
586 clash between the approaches and *modus operandi* of organisations in different categories but
587 also their approach to the management of risk. In a disaster response scenario, it seems that this
588 aspect might have a particularly negate effect on the building of trust between member so fo
589 different organisationsg.

590

591 Given that such stereotypes undoubtedly exist, the implication of the swift trust model is that
592 when the trustor and trustee belong (or perceive that they belong) to different categories, this
593 will have a negative impact on the development of trust. To the extent that both are, say,
594 logisticians or both belong to the same humanitarian organisation, this negative impact is more
595 likely to occur in inter- rather than intra-organisational trust situations. The challenge is to
596 develop mechanisms to overcome this issue through advanced dialogue and understanding.
597 Excellent examples of this can be found in the ongoing exchanges between the Irish Defence

598 Forces and Irish NGOs in which the latter present to the former on a regular basis, and the
599 former conduct training and education courses for the latter. It is not just the content of the
600 discussions that is important, but the associated knowledge and understanding of each others’
601 perspectives and concerns that will help to break down potential “category” barriers.

602

603 **3.5. Role**

604 In the context of the formation of swift trust, using roles as the basis for making initial
605 assumptions has the benefit of being de-personalised. In other words, the trustor can make
606 assumptions about an individual’s ability based on the fact that they are fulfilling a particular
607 role rather than through specific knowledge about their competence, motives etc. (Kramer,
608 1999). A typical example of role-based trust is the positive predisposition of individuals to trust
609 a medical doctor for her/his medical expertise even in their first consultation based simply on
610 the fact that the doctor holds the relevant professional qualifications. Role-based trust can
611 therefore, be seen as “competence trust”, as it is based on the confidence that the other partner
612 carries the competence to perform her/his task (cf. Fynes *et al.*, 2005).

613

614 In the HFN of humanitarian logisticians, the fact that a particular humanitarian organisation is
615 employing an individual in the role of, say, a logistician leads others to assume that the
616 individual has been judged to have the relevant competencies and capabilities, and can
617 therefore be trusted. For this means of developing trust to be effective, there is a very clear
618 onus on humanitarian organisations to fulfil their side of this notional bargain – in other words
619 only to employ staff who do, indeed, possess the relevant competencies etc. In this context it is
620 understandable why the UK case of Dr Harold Shipman, who is conservatively estimated to
621 have murdered 215 patients, was so horrific. As a doctor, those consulting him made the
622 entirely reasonable prior assumption that he was competent and trustworthy – not least because

623 he was accredited by relevant professional body. With the benefit of hindsight, it was clear that
624 the oversight regime was unacceptably lax.

625

626 In the disaster response context, this leads to the prior question of what are the appropriate
627 attributes and competencies required of a humanitarian logistician and it should be noted that
628 this remains an under-researched question (Kovács and Tatham, 2008). Indeed, whilst there
629 have been a number of models developed (e.g. Mangan and Christopher, 2005), the linkage
630 between such proposed competencies and the logistics performance of an organisation has yet
631 to be demonstrated (Tatham and Kovács, 2008). Nevertheless, to the extent that humanitarian
632 organisations are clearly embarking on a series of programmes designed to improve the
633 competence levels of their staff, there is clear potential for swift trust to be based, in part, on
634 the possession by an individual of the relevant qualification. It is therefore suggested that
635 humanitarian organisations should continue to press ahead with their training and certification
636 schemes and that, whenever possible, individuals with the appropriate qualifications should be
637 employed as permanent or on call team members. It is, of course, recognised that there are
638 significant dangers associated with such international certification schemes including ensuring
639 the achievement of a common standards and, indeed, that any examination accurately tests for
640 the existence of the right skills. However, it is argued that such hurdles are not insuperable, and
641 that the balance of benefit lies with pursuing such an approach. Such a scheme might, for
642 example, be based on existing schemes such as those provided by the UK Chartered Institute
643 for Logistics and Transport (CILT) which are delivered in concert with the NGO RedR. In any
644 event, successful anchoring of skills and experience on an internationally recognised
645 framework would provide a valuable underpinning for the antecedent of role within the swift
646 trust model and, hence, support the development of the desired inter-personal trust.

647

648 **4. Trusting behaviour in humanitarian HFNs**

649 In considering the swift trust model, it is not only important to note the five antecedent
650 conditions that give rise to trust, but also to distinguish between trust, and trusting behaviour.
651 Hung *et al.* (2004) depict trusting behaviour as mediated by the perceived risk of potential
652 gains (or losses) of acting on the basis of inter-personal trust (see also Meyerson *et al.*, 1996;
653 Kramer, 1999; Hung *et al.*, 2004; Ben-Shalom *et al.*, 2005). In the humanitarian context,
654 perceived risks can encompass physical danger as well as the loss of reputation as a result of
655 depending on the behaviour of other members of the HFN. In essence, the act of trusting is one
656 in which the trustor is prepared to increase their vulnerability to the actions of others. It
657 follows, therefore, that if level of perceived risk is greater than the level of trust, the individual
658 is less likely to engage in trusting behaviour (Hung *et al.*, 2004).

659

660 This aspect of the model is related to various streams of literature on the psychological,
661 physiological and organizational aspects of perception. For example, Laaksonen *et al.* (2009)
662 argue that rules such as contracts or pricing mechanisms help to codify the level of risk and
663 ensure a mutual perception in a business context. In the absence of contracts and pricing
664 mechanisms, e.g. in the swift trust model, the communication environment takes their place
665 (cf. Hung *et al.*, 2004). The scenario surrounding HFNs precludes lengthy contractual
666 discussions and associated understanding of financial and reputational risk. Rather, an
667 assessment is made by an individual of the impact of trusting his or her colleague but,
668 critically, it is suggested that this is heavily impacted by the effectiveness of the
669 communications environment. The two extremes of such a communication environment might
670 be characterised as a face-to-face office conversation, and a telephone call on a poor line
671 between an operator in the field and his or her headquarters located in another country, away
672 from the various mental stimuli of the operational situation. Put simply, through the ease of

673 communication and the presence of additional non-verbal clues in the former scenario, it will
674 be easier for an individual to determine whether or not to trust their informant than in the latter.
675 Furthermore, the effect of the communications medium in virtual environments operates in
676 both directions and so, from the headquarters perspective, perceived risks are increased due to
677 a reduction in the degree of control individuals from within the headquarters can exert
678 (Jarvenpaa *et al.*, 1999). Other examples for increasing the perceived risks in virtual
679 environments include role ambiguity and role overload (Jarvenpaa *et al.*, 1999) as a result of a
680 lack of face-to-face communication.

681

682 The importance of communication is also emphasised by Weick (1993) in his analysis of the
683 Mann Gulch disaster in which 13 US fire fighters lost their lives, where one of key
684 organisational failings was the near absence of communication between the team members and
685 consequential reduction in the level of intra-team coordination. In short, the lack of
686 communication in the early stages of the development of this temporary group heightened its
687 vulnerability to disruption. When stressed by the advancing wild fire, the inter-team ties
688 (which, in part, reflect the level of inter-personal trust) were insufficient to prevention
689 fragmentation of the group and a reversion to self-interest (or perhaps more accurately, self-
690 preservation). This point is equally emphasised by Drabek (1985) whose analysis of emergency
691 response organisations in the United States indicates that cross-agency communication was
692 perceived to be the greatest weakness and the source of most difficulties. In summary, there
693 would appear to be broad support for the proposition that the clarity of the communications
694 environment has an effect on the formation of trust and, by extension, the view of Hung *et al.*
695 (2004) that computer mediated communications environments increase the perceived risk and,
696 hence, reduce the propensity to convert trust into trusting behaviour.

697

698 Once again, in terms of mitigating these problems and difficulties, the key would appear to lie
699 in an understanding of the problem (i.e. the effect of the perception of risk) on the actions of
700 individuals, and the role that the effectiveness of inter-personal communication has to play as
701 an antecedent. Clearly a number of technological (such as the use of video-conferencing) may
702 help overcome the inherent defects on simple computer-based interaction (e-mails etc.), but
703 there would also appear to be support for attempting to achieve face-to-face communication
704 (e.g. visits to the field by HQ staff) wherever possible as well as ensuring that team members
705 are aware of this facet of the problem through appropriate guidance, training and education.

706

707 **5. Conclusions and further research**

708 The humanitarian aid supply network in any particular disaster relief operation includes a
709 number of logisticians from various organisations and organisational types that are confined to
710 the geographical region of the disaster upon its occurrence. Together, they form a hastily
711 formed network with a common aim, alleviating the suffering of vulnerable people. They show
712 all characteristics of an HFN: (1) their network is established rapidly, (2) they come from
713 different communities, in fact different organisations, countries and cultures, (3) they work
714 together in a shared conversation space, with a need to co-ordinate their activities, (4) in which
715 they plan, commit to, and execute actions, (5) to fulfil a large, urgent mission. Their ability to
716 work together has far-reaching consequences for their aim and ultimately, for the success or
717 failure of the disaster response.

718

719 Trust, both inter-personal and inter-organisational, has been argued to have positive
720 consequences for the success of a relationship – even reducing transaction costs (cf. Ellickson,
721 1986, Laaksonen *et al.*, 2009). Not surprisingly, supply chain collaboration literature draws on
722 trust as a key success factor for collaboration, though mostly in combination with long-term

723 relationships (Skjøtt-Larsen *et al.*, 2003; Barratt, 2004; Christopher *et al.*, 2006; Fawcett *et al.*,
724 2008). Such trust is developed over time in each relationship. Time being the essence in HFNs,
725 this paper focused on the aspects of developing trust when a network is formed. Meyerson *et*
726 *al.* (1996) suggest the model of swift trust for such initial contacts. The aim of this paper was
727 to further the understanding of such swift trust in HFNs as a means of improving relief
728 operations in rapid onset disasters. In order to do so, each of the antecedents of swift trust (see
729 Hung *et al.*, 2004, and Figure 1) has been discussed in the humanitarian context.

730

731 The swift trust model seems indeed highly applicable to this context, and its consideration
732 leads to a number of important conclusions. It shows that the central and habitual routes to trust
733 that supply network management traditionally considers are important aspects in the
734 collaboration between humanitarian organisations and their global suppliers and logistics
735 service providers, yet other models of trust are in place among the logisticians that carry out
736 the operation in a region. Reconsidering the antecedents of swift trust, it is important to note
737 that third party information about humanitarian organisations, and the individuals they send to
738 the disaster response, are crucial to develop trust in the humanitarian HFN. Information on
739 which individuals have been part of a successful operation can help in the formation of (parts
740 of) inter-organisational teams that can be co-deployed to the same operations. It is in the
741 interest of humanitarian organisations to provide information about the individuals they send to
742 a particular disaster area to other humanitarian organisations in the disaster area, thereby
743 helping to facilitate the individual-individual interaction on the ground even in absence of
744 historical encounters. Yet in light of third party information about humanitarian organisations
745 being an antecedent of trust in the humanitarian HFN, a further strand to such research would
746 be to understand, from the perspective of the humanitarian logistician, how one might identify
747 a successful organisation (i.e. that in which a high level of inter-personal trust exists) from an

748 unsuccessful one. In the case of the latter, not only would it be instructive to understand the
749 nature of the perceived failings, but also the implications for the beneficiaries. It would be
750 hoped that such an analysis, which reflects the reverse of the obvious line of enquiry, would
751 help to triangulate the practical development of this model.

752

753 At the same time, the selection of individuals on the basis of dispositional trust, while
754 important for swift trust in the HFN, is not deemed practical. More important is the
755 development of common rules such as standard operating procedures and common forms, to
756 ensure the inter-operability of logisticians from different humanitarian organisations. Needs
757 assessment templates are a good example of such rules for inter-operability, in particular given
758 the absence of a common organisation in humanitarian HFNs. Rules of communication can be
759 set in co-ordination meetings and by the establishment of a joint website for a particular
760 disaster relief operation – such as the current websites of the Logistics Cluster. The “category”
761 antecedent is usually more an impediment than an enabler to trust. Again, establishing a
762 communication environment that breaks down preconceptions of other individuals and their
763 organisations helps to overcome categorical barriers. Arguably, the most important conclusion
764 can be drawn from the “role” antecedent of swift trust. Considering that there is no clear
765 picture of the “role” of the humanitarian logistician, nor what makes a “good” humanitarian
766 logistician, more research is needed on the skills of humanitarian logisticians. What is more,
767 unlike e.g. fire fighters, there is currently no common training for humanitarian logisticians of
768 different organisations. Recent joint training efforts in the Logistics Cluster are envisaged to
769 overcome this problem – and may indeed lead to the development of inter-organisational teams
770 that can be deployed together to a particular disaster relief operation. Certifications of
771 humanitarian logisticians are also on the rise, and some educational programmes have been
772 added to this list. These are certainly positive developments, which will be interesting to

773 follow. The potential benefit of such a professionalisation programme, in terms of the saving of
774 life and improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the disaster planning and response,
775 is enormous. Whilst it would clearly not be limited to the relatively narrowly bounded issue of
776 swift trust, this does appear to be of considerable importance in the achievement of a
777 successful logistics response to a rapid onset disaster.

778

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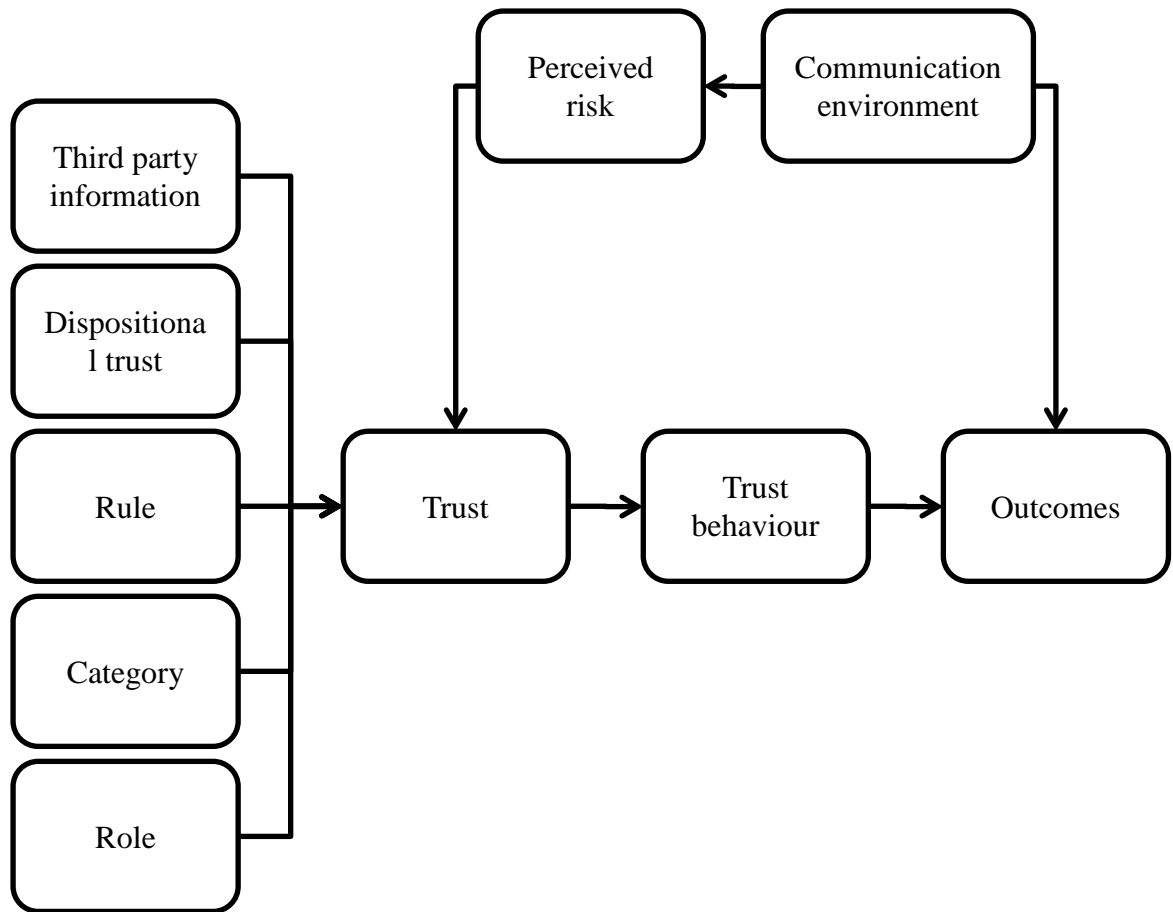
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977 Fig. 1. The route to swift trust (based on Hung *et al.*'s, 2004, p.4, peripheral route to trust)