

Crisis Specific Social Networks:

The Interplay Between Organizational Legitimacy and Personal Trust

Olof Ekman – Lieutenant Colonel and PhD Candidate at National Defense College and Lund University, Sweden

Christian Uhr – Research Engineer, Swedish Rescue Services Agency and PhD Candidate at Lund University,



Outline

- **Introduction**
- **Interpersonal trust, Organizational legitimacy and Interpretive framing**
- **Theory outline**
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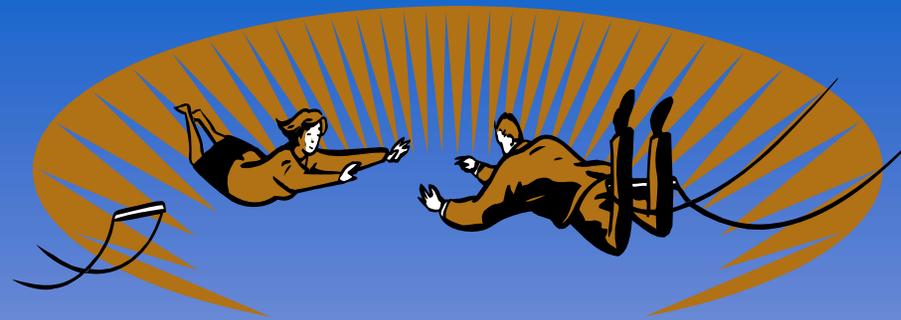


Introduction

- **Background**
- **Tentative reasoning based on literature studies and experience**
- **What do we mean by a endeavor-specific social network?**

The set of personal relations dominated by arms-length transactions between actors who share little familiarity or affect and no prolonged past or experienced future social ties (McGinn and Keros, 2002) between multiple and culturally different actors, existing limited to the context of a specific endeavor or specific response to a crisis





Interpersonal trust

“...the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to control or monitor the other party” (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995, p. 712)

Trust in endeavor specific networks:

- Unknown situations
- “Unknown participants”
- Multiple cultures
- High risks



Organizational legitimacy

“...a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values and definitions” (Suchman, 1995, p. 574)

Legitimacy ≠ legality or authority

The concept seems to be linked to societal values, organizational actions and might be transferable to individuals in the form of an initial starting capital of trust



Interpretive framing

The mental mechanisms in societal interaction that help participants define how others' actions and words should be understood (Bateson, 1954), make sense of a situation they find themselves in, to find and interpret specifics that, to them, seem central to understanding the situation, and to communicate this interpretation to others. (Elliot, Kaufman, Gardner and Burgess, 2002)

Anchored in culture



Theory outline

- Endeavor specific social networks, whose members are new to each other, are likely to build interpersonal trust through transfer
- Such transfer may relate to how network members (trustors) perceive the legitimacy of the organization to which the trustee is associated
- An organization seen as legitimate (by the trustors) in a specific endeavor may provide its representative (trustee) with a starting capital of trust.
- Such a starting capital of trust is fragile to cultural enactment when interpretative frames conflict.



Theory outline

- **Organizational legitimacy → starting capital of trust**
- **Conflicting interpretative framing → erosion of interpersonal capital**



Illustrating cases

- Zaire, airfield photo shoot
- Tsunami air Medevac
- Kosovo humanitarian airlift



Foto: Ulf Ericsson/Pressens Bild

Helsingborg chemical discharge response

Analysis of a response

Formal decision makers

The organizational legitimacy of the decision makers from other municipalities/counties → a starting capital of trust

The diverging interpretive framing of the actual context → an erosion of interpersonal trust

Informal decision makers

The organizational legitimacy of the external chemical experts as perceived by the local fire and rescue services, the company and other actors (trustors) → a starting capital of interpersonal trust for the personnel in the chemical staff team.

The harmonized interpretive framing by the experts, the local fire and rescue service and the company → a support for the expert commanders' initiatives and significance.



Discussion

- Combining theories of Organizational legitimacy, interpersonal trust and interpretative frames might help us to understand and overcome cross cultural frictions.
- More exchange postings in training centers, headquarters and field units?

