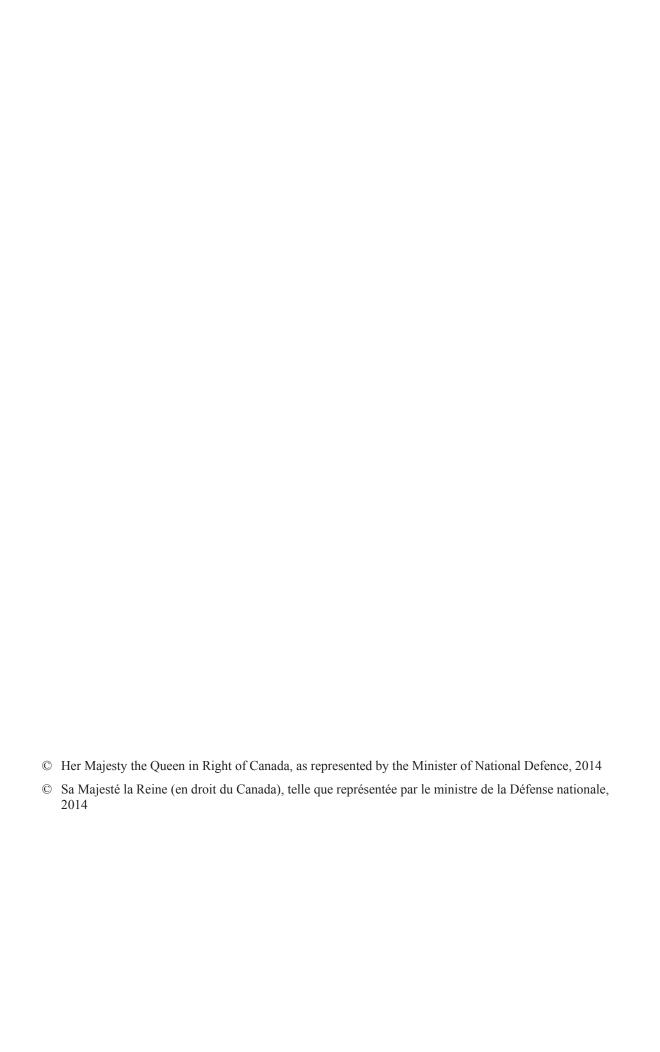# Swift trust

*Implications for whole of government/comprehensive approach (WoG/CA) missions*

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# Abstract

Interpersonal trust has been proposed as a key mechanism to overcome many of the barriers to collaboration and coordination in a variety of team and organizational settings, including Whole-of-Government /Comprehensive Approach (WoG/CA) missions. Traditional models of trust are predicated on a gradual, incremental history of deepening risk and demonstrated reliability between parties. However, these models do not lend themselves to those WoG/CA contexts in which members of different governmental departments who have no history together must quickly coalesce into an effective team, often in response to a crisis or a top governmental priority. Fortunately research from within the organizational behavior realm has demonstrated that there are times when 'swift trust' may exist, that is, where initial trust levels in work settings can be quite positive, even when the parties collaborating are strangers to each other. This research on swift trust is integrated with the literature on organizational alliances and applied to WoG/CA context. The paper concludes with recommendations to instantiate and to promote swift trust in WoG/CA interagency missions.

# Significance to defence and security

The Government of Canada, The Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) expect WoG/CA to be the norm in the complex missions that are anticipated to characterize the Future Security Environment (FSE). In light of its potential to facilitate the effectiveness of WoG/CA (i.e., interagency or interdepartmental) teams, this paper provides a needed critical review of the 'swift trust' construct and the key factors that enable it.

The major conclusions of this work are that consistently attaining swift trust in temporary WoG/CA teams will require a priori consideration to ensure that the requisite task-, team- and leader-level factors are in place within the temporary WoG/CA team. Moreover, success in this regard will be predicated on demonstrated and tangible governmental/departmental support for, and commitment to genuine interagency interaction, coordination, and collaboration.

# Résumé

La confiance interpersonnelle a été proposée comme élément clé pour surmonter de nombreux obstacles à la collaboration et à la coordination dans divers cadres organisationnels et de travail d'équipe, incluant des missions effectuées selon une approche exhaustive/pangouvernementale. Les modèles traditionnels de confiance reposent sur un historique graduel et progressif de risque accru et une fiabilité démontrée entre les parties. Toutefois, ces modèles ne se prêtent pas aux situations d'approche exhaustive/pangouvernementale dans lesquelles des membres de différents ministères n'ayant jamais travaillé ensemble doivent rapidement former une équipe efficace, souvent en réponse à une crise ou à une priorité absolue du gouvernement . Heureusement, la recherche effectuée dans le domaine du comportement organisationnel a permis de démontrer qu'il y a des situations où la « confiance instantanée » est possible lorsque le niveau de confiance initial en milieu de travail est plutôt positif , même si les parties qui collaborent sont étrangères l'une à l'autre. Cette étude sur la confiance instantanée est intégrée à la documentation sur les alliances organisationnelles et elle est appliquée au cadre d'approche exhaustive/pangouvernementale. Le document se termine par la présentation de recommandations pour établir et favoriser la confiance instantanée lors de missions interorganisationnelles effectuées selon une approche exhaustive/pangouvernementale.

# Importance pour la défense et la sécurité

Le gouvernement du Canada, le ministère de la Défense nationale (MDN) et les Forces armées canadiennes (FAC) s'attendent à ce que l'approche exhaustive/pangouvernementale soit la norme dans les missions complexes devant caractériser l'environnement de sécurité de l'avenir (ESA). Compte tenu de la possibilité de favoriser l'efficacité des équipes dans le cadre d'une approche exhaustive/pangouvernementale (p. ex., interorganisationnelle ou interministérielle ), ce document présente l'examen critique et les facteurs clés nécessaires à l'établissement de la « confiance instantanée ». Les principales conclusions de cette étude sont que le maintien d'une confiance instantanée au sein d'une équipe temporaire dans le cadre d'une approche exhaustive/pangouvernementale nécessitera une réflexion a priori afin de s'assurer que les facteurs relatifs aux dirigeants, aux équipes et aux tâches préalables sont en place. Par ailleurs, le succès à ce chapitre sera axé sur le soutien ministériel/gouvernemental concret et démontré pour la collaboration, la coordination et l'interaction authentiques entre les organisations, de même que sur l'engagement à cet égard.

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# 1    Introduction

Addressing the complexity of the issues that underlie many domestic and international missions increasingly requires governments to integrate security, governance, development, and rule of law considerations that are tailored to the specific needs and phase of each mission (Olson & Gregorian, 2007; Patrick & Brown, 2007). Delivering these integrated effects is predicated on coordinating the experience, technical skills and resources of a variety of government agencies and organizations (DeConing, 2008; Morcos, 2005; Olson & Gregorian, 2007; Patrick & Brown, 2007; Thompson & Gill, 2010). While such diversity can offer a broader and more sophisticated repertoire of responses to complex issues, it also can be associated with very different and potentially conflicting perspectives on the objectives, priorities and the approaches that might be used. Further complicating matters, the agencies and organizations involved in such missions often possess very different organizational mandates, processes and structures. All of these differences have been documented as significant barriers to effective coordination and collaboration within Whole of Government/Comprehensive Approach[1] (WoG/CA) missions (DeConing, 2008; Morcos, 2005; Olson & Gregorian, 2007; Patrick & Brown, 2007; Spence, 2002; Stephenson & Schnitzer, 2006; Winslow, 2002). Yet many of these same analyses have identified trust as essential to effectively reaching out and working across organizational boundaries in such settings (e.g. Hill, 2007; Stephenson & Schnitzer, 2006; Thomson, Adams, Hall, Brown, & Flear, 2011). Indeed, Canadian researchers Gizewski & Rostek (2007) termed trust "a critical prerequisite" (p. 66) for effectiveness in WoG/CA environments.

Trust is usually described as resulting from a deliberate process based on personal knowledge and a history of interactions – an incremental helix in which initial risk, if rewarded with trustworthy actions, leads to deepening trust and further risk-taking (see Holmes, 1991; Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Jones & George, 1998; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Lewis & Weingert, 1985; Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995; McAllister, 1995). While applicable to many interpersonal and organizational settings, such models of trust have limited applicability those WoG/CA missions that require the quick input and coordination of people from multiple agencies who have not previously worked together. In such cases, there simply is not the luxury to make gradually informed assessments of another's trustworthiness over time.

Fortunately, Meyerson, Weick & Kramer (1996) described an apparently unique form of organizational trust in which it is possible for diverse teams of strangers acted 'as if' high trust already existed. Termed 'swift trust', they further suggested it could occur in the absence of traditional contracts, bureaucratic and legalistic processes and structures that usually ensure smooth coordination in organizational settings (Zaheer, McEvily & Perrone, 1998). Not surprisingly, this idea had immediate relevance as the remedy to the challenges inherent in many team settings, including WoG/CA contexts (see Gizewski and Rostek, 2007). The purpose of this

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[1] Variously termed Whole-of-Government (WoG), Interagency, Integrated or the Comprehensive Approach (CA) to Operations, each is similarly characterized as seeking "to incorporate all the elements of power and agencies, and harmonize them, their capabilities, and their activities, in order to work to address the elements and complexities present in an environment and reach enduring strategic and operational end states" (B-GL-300-001/FP-001, *Land Operations*, 5-14). For the purposes of this paper I have adopted the terminology of WoG/CA to reflect the specific Whole-of Government interagency focuses within the broader CA construct.

paper is to provide a critical review of swift trust construct, and summarize the factors and conditions associated with swift trust, or assumed to enable it. This literature is then applied to unique conditions inherent in WoG/CA contexts, highlighting the areas of correspondence and of inconsistency with the original formulation of swift trust. Pertinent information on the social dynamics of organizational alliances is also applied, and the paper makes recommendations to best ensure swift trust in temporary WoG/CA teams. To foreshadow the major conclusion of this report, consistently attaining swift trust in temporary WoG/CA teams will require a priori consideration to ensure that the requisite task-, team– and leader-level factors are in place within the temporary WoG/CA team. Moreover, success in this regard will predicated on demonstrated and tangible governmental/departmental support for, and commitment to genuine interagency interaction, coordination, and collaboration.

# 2 Trust: The what and the why

We trust others when we are willing to rely on them to provide something important to us, even when we cannot compel them to or guarantee that they will do so (see Holmes, 1991; Boon & Holmes, 1991; Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Kramer, 1999; Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). Decisions to trust become particularly important as interdependence between actors deepens and the risk in a situation increases (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998). This willingness to rely on others is largely based on our assessments of three distinct, though often related characteristics. Competence refers to the task-based skill of others, integrity refers to other's assumed adherence to important values or principles important to us, and/or benevolence refers to the other's genuine care and concern for us (Mayer et al., 1995).

Trust is important to teamwork because it has a variety of personal and interpersonal benefits. For instance, it addresses a basic psychological need to manage or reduce feelings of uncertainty, ambiguity and vulnerability in situations (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2003; Sorrentino, Holmes, Hanna, & Sharp, 1995). This allows us to anticipate, plan and to act in situations. Trust also preserves valuable cognitive resources, because if trust is conferred, people can focus on task requirements and problem solving and can more readily make predictions about the likelihood of future outcomes (Hung et al., 2004; Kramer, 1999). Trust also guides our impressions of others' actions and the motives behind their actions, thus providing our social orientation regarding others, (i.e., a desire to work with or distance oneself from others, see Kramer, 1999). Indeed, when trust is in question or does not exist, people spend a great deal of time and energy monitoring the behaviors and intentions of others, a process aptly termed defensive monitoring (Holmes, 1991; Currall & Judge, 1995; McAllister, 1995), and focusing on putting in place safeguards to make sure that one's interests are protected from exploitation (Das & Teng, 1998). Not surprisingly, high trust is also associated with a variety of positive team-level outcomes including greater cooperation, and cohesion, less conflict, proactive information and resource sharing, greater risk taking, better job performance and a greater likelihood of developing integrative solutions that will meet the needs of all contributors (Butler, 1999; Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007; Zaheer, et al., 1998). Each of these is in turn associated with more efficient and effective performance (Dirks, 1999). Assumed to be particularly important during a crisis (Webb, 1996); trust in such situations works to keep authority decentralized, lines of communication open and behavior flexible (Mishra, 1996).

## 2.1 Knowledge- and category-based trust

As noted earlier, trust largely has been depicted as a very deliberate, iterative process of increasing risk and reward that occurs incrementally and over time. Termed *knowledge- or person-based trust* models, in these instances trust assessments are rooted in our direct experience and knowledge of a specific individual. Accordingly, trust occurs as result of time, familiarity, reciprocal disclosure and the sharing of experiences and risks -- the usual sources of personal, specific and cumulative knowledge about the individual. Quite appropriately, such models of trust were originally formulated to describe trust and its development in romantic or close interpersonal relationships (e.g., Holmes, 1991). And certainly shared experiences and direct knowledge can also play a very significant role in on-going organizational contexts as well (McAllister, 1995).

However, other research from within the organizational behavior realm has demonstrated that there are times when initial trust levels in work settings can be fairly positive, even when the parties collaborating may have no prior history or interactions with each other upon which to base trust (McKnight, Cummings, & Chervany, 1998). In these cases, trust is assumed to be warranted as long as there is no evidence to the contrary. In the absence of traditional trust-building mechanisms, these initial evaluations of the unknown co-workers are usually based on whatever information is available at the time. Moreover, "[b]ecause there is insufficient time for these expectations to be built from scratch they tend to be imported from other settings" (Meyerson et al., 1996, p. 174). These initial expectations are often determined by the most salient categories that others represent (or appear to represent), and as such is referred to as *category-based trust*. These categories become the basis of our inferences concerning a range of characteristics, competencies, and motives that the unknown others are also assumed to possess (Kramer, 1999; Kramer, Brewer & Hanna, 1996). Although it can facilitate quicker judgements of trust, at times such short-hand assessments can be more susceptible to a variety of biases and errors, including negative expectations based on stereotypes, third-party gossip and/or high trust that may be unwarranted, i.e., misplaced trust (see Brewer, 1981; Burt & Knez, 1995; 1996; Kramer, 1999; Weber, Malhotra & Murnighan, 2005) than knowledge-based trust. Of course category- and knowledge-based trust can be related to each other. That is, while the categories can guide initial trust assessments, as individuals work with each other, over time knowledge-based mechanisms often come into play, working to calibrate the initial trust that is based on categories (see Robert, Denis, & Hung, 2009).

# 3 Swift trust

In 1996, Meyerson and colleagues extended the discussion of categorical trust, focusing on the organizational context of temporary teams.[2] As this term implies, such teams are distinguishable by their short-term nature and often by the speed and urgency by which they are formed. As such, their members: (1) have no history together, (2) work together for a limited period of time, (3) are called upon to collaborate for a specific purpose, and (4) do not expect to work together in the future (Meyerson et al, 1996). Swift trust capitalizes on a specific type of category-based trust, namely that associated with the roles that people assume in the temporary team environment (Meyerson et al., 1996, see also Barber, 1983 for an earlier discussion of the effects of roles on trust). Accordingly, the team-based roles are the categories that are assumed to provide valuable information concerning the unknown team member's presumed training and expertise, as well as their area of responsibility in the overall task and therefore are assumed to facilitate trust in the initial stages of an interaction.

More formally Meyerson et al. (1996) defined swift trust as:

 *"a collective presumption [among unknown or new team members] that each member's inclusion in the group is predicated on a rich and relevant history. ... It is tacitly understood that the necessary experience and learning were gained elsewhere but are nonetheless in place and do not need to be verified or negotiated" (Meyerson et al., 1996, p. 187).*

Swift trust then is an expectation that exists across a group or team of people that their as yet unknown fellow task contributors will have the requisite training, education, skills, expertise and resources and that they are motivated to apply these in appropriate and expected ways to completing an important shared task at hand. All of this is assumed of everyone in the team from the outset: individuals do not need to establish their bona fides. In effect, "it is not the person in the role that is trusted so much as the system of expertise that produces and maintains role-appropriate behavior of role occupants" (Kramer, 1999, p. 578). Similar to category-based trust, "… swift judgments about trustworthiness … enable people to act quickly in the face of uncertainty … [and require a willingness] … to wade in on trust rather than wait while experience gradually shows who can be trusted and with what" (Meyerson et al., 1996; p. 170).

## 3.1 Foundational task, team and leader conditions of swift trust

Yet, swift trust is not only based on team roles. As summarized in Table 1, Meyerson and colleagues also enumerate a series of defining task-, team- and leader-level variables or conditions that are critical to the ready occurrence of swift trust. For instance, beyond the known, limited duration and deadline associated with temporary team tasks, the tasks are also said to be important, are almost always complex in nature, and unique "relative to routine procedures", after all that is why the temporary team is both required and considered important enough by the

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[2] Closely related constructs are hastily-formed networks (see Kozlowski & Bell, 2001; Zolin, 2002), and more recently Swift Starting Action Teams (i.e., STATS, see Wildman, Shuffler, Lazzara, Fiore, Burke, Salas & Garven, 2012).

organization(s) to create the temporary team (Meyerson et al, 1996). Another task characteristic that enables swift trust to occur is a moderate level of interdependence[3], meaning that members must interact with each other on a regular basis. Finally, Meyerson et al (1996) also state tasks must have clear goals for swift trust to occur.

*Table 1: Defining Conditions of Swift Trust (Meyerson, Weick & Kramer, 1996).*

| :<br>Task Factors | Tasks are non-routine, and new organizational structures are required to address the task |
| --- | --- |
| | Tasks are important enough that there is organizational-level willingness to create new team to deal with the issue. |
| | The tasks involved are often complex |
| | A moderate level of interdependence is required for task successful. |
| | Continuous inter-relating is required to produce an outcome* |
| | The task has a deadline. |
| | Clear goals define the task. |
| Team Factors | Team members have limited or no prior personal or professional history together |
| | Members anticipate working together for a short period of time |
| | There is little likelihood that team members will work together in the future |
| | Team members have diverse skill sets and expertise that they already possess |
| | Each skill set is recognized as necessary to the successful completion of a task. |
| | Members roles are clear and there is minimal blurring of roles or responsibilities |
| | Members must continuously interact with each other in order to reach a solution. |
| Leader Factors | Team leader is respected so that in the absence of knowledge of the other individuals, trust may be conferred because of ones trust in the judgment of the leader |
| | Team leader should be seen as directly selecting contributing team members. |
| | Team leader understands and respects the contributions of every member of the team. |
| | Team leader provides a clear, overarching and inspirational vision to the diverse team members. |

\* - note that this could as easily be a team factor

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[3] Consistent with traditional formulations of trust, Meyerson and colleagues argue that swift trust is not a relevant psychological dynamic in situations of low risk and interdependence because we do not have to rely on others. Interestingly, they also suggested that swift trust is also not expected to play a role when risk and interdependence are both too high as there is "too little data for too high stakes" (Meyerson et al., p.183) in these settings.

As the tasks that give rise to the formation of temporary teams are non-routine and complex, they most often require the attention of strangers drawn from a diverse set of backgrounds and skill sets. Thus, beyond being strangers who do not expect to work together again, two additional team characteristics are foundational for swift trust. Specifically, individual member expertise must be *recognized* and *understood to be necessary* by the others to the successful completion of the task. Finally, Meyerson et al. also argue that swift trust is said to be facilitated when team roles are clear. Indeed, any blurring of roles or responsibilities is said to add ambiguity and thus increase doubt and lower trust.

The authors also outline four important leader variables as enabling swift trust. That is, the leader must be respected in his or her own right by the team members and should also be directly involved in carefully selecting a skilled cadre of individual team members so that in the absence of knowledge of the other individuals, trust in other team members may be conferred because of one's trust in the judgment of the leader (Meyerson et al., 1996).Thus, the singular credibility of the leader to select and to work with skilled personnel will establish initial expectations of the competence among all members concerning their counterparts. Moreover, the team leader must understand and respect the contributions of each team member. Finally, the leader should be able to provide an overarching and inspirational vision to the team members who come from diverse backgrounds, and who are called together on a rapid and temporary basis to address a complex, non-routine issue. This vision is assumed to reduce task uncertainty and thus vulnerability for individual team members, allowing them to put aside any doubts that they may have, and to focus on the task at hand. If these task, team and leader qualities are sufficiently aligned, Meyerson and colleagues suggest that swift trust will ensue.

## 3.2    Additional psychological dynamics of swift trust

Meyerson et al. (1996) argued that the time constraints, levels of task importance and risk associated with temporary team tasks mean that team members usually will be motivated to "… look for data that confirm their initial categorizations." (p. 182). This means that people will generally be biased toward a positive confirmation of existing skill assumptions, because doing so allows for smoother and more rapid initial coordination and cooperation in a task, and further facilitating trust. They further suggested that these same psychological processes would mean that swift trust is fairly resilient (vs. fragile) in nature. This is because the high task focus and short time constraints associated with swift trust in temporary teams may simply reduce the opportunity for trust violations to occur, and should they occur these same task and time factors may work to reduce the impact of many trust violations – there simply isn't the time to dwell on these in light of the importance of the task and imposed time limits. They also argue that a number of cognitive (e.g., positive illusions of control and invulnerability, general levels of optimism that people have concerning their own outcomes and success) and social (e.g., mere group effect, social proof) mechanisms can work to maintain the positivity and resiliency of swift trust, at least in the face of minor threats.

## 3.3    Caveats and pending conceptual issues

Although focused on the potential benefits of swift trust in temporary teams, Meyerson and colleagues (1996) also present caveats of which to be aware. For instance, the same constellation of psychological processes that they suggest will often bias initial categorization to be positive

could as easily lead to 'swift distrust' or misplaced trust (see Weber, Malhotra & Murnighan, 2005), if the requisite beliefs concerning team members competence and commitment do not exist. Moreover, they noted that swift trust may not be resilient in the face of major violations of trust, with trust repair being more difficult to achieve than initial trust development (see Kim, Dirks & Cooper, 2009). They further contended that the extent to which swift trust is resilient in the face of moderate to major disruption will depend on the actual skill levels of team members and leaders to address issues or crises, their attitudes in response to crises, and their ability to improvise in the face of them. As eloquently noted by Meyerson et al. (1996) "… trust may be more resilient within those temporary groups in which members are skilled in the art and attitude of improvisation … doing something different when something different needs to be done… [which] … requires careful attention, listening and mutual respect" (p. 189).

In addition, the conceptual model of swift trust leaves at least two important issues unresolved. First, although enumerating the various task, team and leader variables expected to facilitate swift trust, Meyerson and colleagues do not address if each variable is equally necessary and important, whether particular classes of factors are most critical (i.e., individual, team and/or leader), if there are more critical variables within these classes of factors, or what the critical dimensions are. For instance, one might anticipate that a strong leader who understands and respects the expertise skills and contributions of all team members might be able to overcome the lack of knowledge team members have about the roles other contributors may play in a WoG context, at least to some extent. On the other hand, perhaps leadership can only go so far in bridging a lack of mission and role clarity.

Second, Meyerson et al (1996) do not articulate the typical duration of tasks or mandates that would constitute or would exceed what would be considered a 'temporary' in nature. Thus, it is not clear if contexts such as major events which can have interagency teams that may or may not contain the same that work together intermittently for years in preparation for an event (i.e., 2010 Olympic Games) have a short enough duration to be eligible for temporary team status and thus relevant to swift trust. Similarly, would the six month deployments generally associated with the Afghan mission qualify as short enough in duration to qualify as a temporary team context? Likely not, but if not, then what portion of the typical deployment would qualify as the context for swift trust? The first meeting? The first week? The first month? Or something else?

Finally, while sketching out a conceptual model of swift trust, it is unfortunate that at least some of the examples provided in their paper seem to be at odds with the model that Meyerson et al. are advocating. Curiously, they offer the example of directors who specifically work with the same team of experts on all of their film projects. Presumably however, after the first job, these individual team members are no longer strangers to one another, are aware of the specific levels of competence and commitment of the other team members, beyond their roles on the set, and likely also begin to have the expectation that they may well work together again in the future – all of which violate their stated conditions of swift trust. These reservations aside, the notion that high levels of trust are both 1) readily possible among teams of people with diverse backgrounds who are unknown to each other and 2) facilitates coordination and collaboration make the swift trust construct most appealing for potential application in a WoG/CA context, the focus of the next section of this paper.

# 4 Application of the key tenets of swift trust to WoG/CA teams

Certainly, some of the foundational features of swift trust are immediately evident in WoG/CA contexts. For instance, by definition, WoG/CA approaches involve the input and coordination of multiple agencies, in response to the complex, non-routine and high priority nature of the events they are called upon to address. Moreover, governments often respond to these demands with the creation of temporary, unique organizational units to coordinate activities (e.g., Afghan Task Force; Provincial Reconstruction Teams, see Coombs, 2013; the Integrated Security Unit of the G8/G20 Summits and the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, see Brister, 2011). Further, in many of these cases (although as I note below not all) there are clear mission requirements, mission duration and end dates involved (e.g., 2010 Olympics, G8/G20 summits).

In addition, some of the team aspects associated with swift trust are also evident in WoG/CA contexts. That is, team members, again by definition, come from diverse organizations, and represent a variety of skills, expertise and resources that are brought to bear on a complex mission. Further, in most cases individuals representing different departments will have no prior personal or professional history together, have little or no information about their new team members prior to beginning to interact with each other, have no expectation of a long association together, nor anticipate that they will work together in the future.

With regard to leadership factors, in one of the most notably successful Canadian WoG teams in the Afghanistan mission the senior Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) military commander who had a previous posting in the OGD with whom he would be working most closely (Thomson et al., 2011). This knowledge of the capabilities, skills, expertise and the potential contributions of the OGD to the overall mission objectives would have been invaluable. Moreover, he moved the Representative of Canada in Kandahar (RoCK), the senior civilian on the ground to the office next to his to further facilitating interaction, cooperation and collaboration. It is important to note that in this case, this CAF commander and the RoCK had actually worked together before in the OGD, suggesting that the dynamics of swift trust was not operating in their working relationship in theatre. However, just as importantly, these actions and the quality of the ongoing interactions between these two Canadian WoG leaders would have sent a clear signal concerning the level of interaction they were expecting to be the norm between the civilian and military WoG team members, which is consistent with the tenets of swift trust.

Conversely, the CA literature also documents how many of these missions have not conformed to the conditions that are thought to promote swift trust. For instance, most reviews of the international missions in Afghanistan suggest that it seemed to lack clear, overarching and integrated mission goals, that the goals changed as the mission continued and/or that mission priorities differed between contributing organizations (DeConing, 2008; Morcos, 2005; Olson & Gregorian, 2007; Patrick & Brown, 2007; Spence, 2002; Stephenson & Schnitzer, 2006). Also consistent with the international literature in the area, our interviews with Canadian WoG/CA players from the military as well as other government departments also makes clear that several essential team aspects are often lacking in WoG teams (Thomson, et al., 2011). Most critically, it was clear that there were misunderstandings between the CAF and members of Other Government Departments (OGDs) in terms of the roles and capabilities of the contributing

departments and agencies. Especially early on in the mission, personnel were unaware of the skill sets of the members of other agencies, did not believe that the other personnel possessed the requisite level of competence in the required skills, or did not recognize that the various skill sets were important to achieving success (Thomson et al., 2011). Indeed, (and again consistent with WoG/CA research of the interagency missions of other countries), there were sometimes negative initial stereotypes associated with many of interagency organizations, with at least some civilians being unaware of the background and education level of military officers and military personnel being taken aback at the young age, and thus inferring a lack of competence and expertise of their civilian OGD counterparts. Our interviewees recounted how they sometimes had to work quite hard to overcome these initial stereotypes. In particular, the civilian members noted that they felt that they had to work incredibly hard and long hours, feeling that little consideration was given to the fact that there were so few civilians to complete the OGD portion of tasks, relative to military personnel. They also felt that they had to demonstrate their expertise and competence before they felt that their military counterparts would begin to pay attention to or trust their input (Thompson et al., 2011).

Regarding the leader factors identified as a key enabler of swift trust, the CA literature suggests that leadership in such missions has tended to be ad hoc and often personality-driven, which has yielded some notable successes (see Thompson & Gill, 2010). On the other hand, dysfunctional leadership in such settings has been described as leading to increased suspicion, infighting and self-interested agendas (Caslen & Louden, 2011) or at worst a breakdown in communication altogether (Thomson et al., 2011). Moreover, departing from the criteria to establish swift trust, even those leaders well-known and respected by personnel from their home organizations to date have been largely unknown even by reputation to the team members from other organizations. This limits the possibility that the individual team members will confer trust on the members of the wider WoG/CA team based on their respect for the leader or the leader's reputation.

Furthermore, most WoG team members were assigned by their home organizations, precluding the opportunity for swift trust to occur because the leader is seen to 'hand pick' the diverse experts that populate the team. Indeed, given the many organizations that often contribute to WoG/CA missions it is often a challenge for WoG/CA leaders to be aware of and understand the unique skills and contributions of each member within the interagency team, especially those from other agencies that have very different mandates. All of this will contribute to an additional challenge for WoG/CA leaders; namely, providing an overarching, inspiring vision for the WoG team, especially in those cases where the mission itself is characterized by multiple, conflicting or changing goals. Finally, although identified as both important to swift trust in temporary teams (Meyerson et al., 1996) and to interagency success (e.g., Gizewski & Rostek, 2007), it is also the case that there is has traditionally been little in the way of the education and training for leadership that is specific to leading interagency teams (Scoppio, 2011).

# 5    Implications for WoG/CA teams

The above discussion should lead the reader to feel caution about a too-quick embrace of the term swift trust without the requisite understanding of what it is, how it can be achieved, and the particular challenges that a WoG/CA mission can pose to its occurrence. Indeed, there is the danger that the very term 'swift trust' itself connote a quick and easy fix that will almost magically overcome the many barriers to collaboration in a diverse team. On the other hand, integrating and applying the same literatures, swift trust is attainable. That is, on rare occasions swift trust may occur naturally, should there be a natural alignment of the factors enumerated in the literature presented above. However, *consistently* attaining swift trust in temporary WoG/CA teams will require a priori consideration to ensure that the requisite task-, team- and leader-level factors are in place within the temporary WoG/CA team.

First, returning to the definition, swift trust is the expectation that exists across a group or team of people that their as yet unknown fellow task contributors will have the requisite training, education, skills, expertise and resources, and that they are motivated to apply these in appropriate and expected ways to completing an important shared task at hand. Ultimately, then it is the member's *very inclusion in the team* that is used as summary information for others to infer or assume that the member possesses the requisite levels of technical skill, domain expertise and resources for smooth collaboration, all of which leads to increased confidence about the likelihood of future task success. Inherent in this definition is the assumption that "it is not the person in the role that is trusted so much *as the system of expertise that produces and maintains role-appropriate behavior of role occupants* (emphasis added)" (Kramer, 1999, p. 578). The underlying principle here then is that swift trust and effective WoG/CA interaction will be enhanced by a system of education and training that supports: 1) the required expertise of each contributing member from different departments and agencies, and, just as importantly, 2) *interagency-level* understanding, that develops shared mental models (Fiore, Salas, Cannon-Bowers, 2001) of interagency interaction and fosters behaviors that support interagency coordination and collaboration, especially in a crisis context.

In terms of the task-level criteria there must be a clear reason for a WoG/CA team to be constituted -- a clear and agreed upon objective or set of objectives is a requisite, as is a clear understanding of the contributions and the roles of each participating agency will play. Moreover, team member roles must be clear to, and deemed to be important by all members of the WoG/CA team. That being said, these roles and members' behavior within them must not be overly rigid. Due to the level of importance and novelty of typical WoG/CA tasks, operational effectiveness and "trust may be more resilient within those temporary groups in which members are [also] skilled in the art and attitude of improvisation … doing something different when something different needs to be done" (Meyerson et al., 1996, p. 189). Note that both role clarity and the ability to improvise in meaningful ways as required will be made easier if interagency education and training is an integrated feature of professional development.

Also following from the tenets of swift trust, the leader(s) of WoG/CA temporary teams must be knowledgeable enough to understand and respect the contributions of each team member, and to provide an overarching and inspirational vision to the team members. In addition, leaders should understand how the expertise and contributions of the diverse team members fit together, not just what they are. This will facilitate the understanding of the members and assist in resolving any

uncertainty that may exist between them with respect to roles. The leader should be known and respected in his or her own right by the team members. Ideally, they should be seen to select each of the WoG/CA team members so that, in the absence of direct knowledge of each other, members' trust in each other may be conferred because of their trust in the judgment of the leader. Although this is certainly difficult to attain in many current WoG/CA missions, again the advent of regular interagency education and training opportunities would at least increase the possibility that the reputation of the leader will precede them, and that team members will know the leader at least by reputation, or know someone who knows the leader.

## 5.1    Planning

As interagency planning is such a crucial phase of WoG/CA missions, I include recommendations from the temporary team literature concerning this area as well. Interestingly, as early as 1976 Goodman and Goodman, the researchers that began investigating the phenomenon of temporary teams argued for a two-stage planning process to maximize the products associated with temporary teams. In the first stage, all team members would contribute to problem definition. Once this common understanding and overarching objectives were achieved, the second phase of the planning process would involve each contributor would focus on providing the task-oriented products based on their individual expertise.

## 5.2    A final, (yet critical) piece of the puzzle: The role of governments in ensuring swift trust in WoG/CA teams

While completely unaddressed in the original formulation of swift trust[4], the role of members home organizations is nonetheless immediately relevant to the reality of WoG/CA teams. This being the case, any discussion concerning swift trust in a WoG/CA context must be also informed by research on temporary organizations (Kenis, Janowicz-Panjaitan & Cambre, 2009) and organizational alliances (Branzei, Vertinsky, & Camp, 2007; Jennings, Artz, Gillin, & Christodoulos, 2000) -- research that has also identified trust as a vital component of success (Elmuti & Kathawala, 2001; Jap & Anderson, 2003; Gulati, 2005; Kauser & Shaw, 2004). This literature is pertinent to swift trust in WoG/CA teams given that organizational alliances and temporary organizations represent composite organizational structures, often having a limited duration and specific task focus, but are comprised of "discrete [home] organizations that remain distinct from a legalistic framework, yet which contribute complementary expertise, skills, resources and technologies" (Thompson & Gill, 2010, p. 227). As such, they capture many of the key organizational characteristics of the WoG/CA context.

Elmuti & Kathawala (2001) summarized a variety of reasons why organizational alliances can fail. These include clashes of culture and incompatible personal chemistry, lack of clear goals and

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4 To be fair, the context that gave rise to the original formulation of swift trust involved individual professionals working on television and movie sets, essentially self-employed individual experts, well-known to and assembled by a contractor (i.e., the producer) to perform respective tasks on a group project of a limited duration. Thus, inclusion of the effects of home organizations was not relevant to their original formulations. Nonetheless, in this respect the formulations upon which swift trust were based differ significantly from WoG/CA because individual CA team members remain connected to and are representatives of the home organization to which they will return after the CA mission.

objectives, lack of coordination among management teams, differences in operating procedures and attitudes among partners, and a lack of commitment to the alliance on the part of the contributing organizations. Importantly, as the differences that exist between home and temporary organizational values, mandates or processes increase, they amplify uncertainty as well as the multiple or competing demands that already characterize many temporary team settings, and also increasing the potential for conflict in roles and loyalties (Kenis et al., 2009). This can decrease trust among individuals in the temporary organizational unit, and thus interfere with cooperation and coordination. Similarly, the perceived legitimacy, prestige and priority accorded to the temporary unit by home organizations can affect the speed with which representatives of these organizations are able to provide resources and information to the temporary organization, again affecting smooth coordination of activities and interpersonal cooperation (Bakker, 2010; see also Engwall, 2003). In fact, Elmuti & Kathawala (2001) concluded that one of the major reasons why organizational alliances fail is because "[m]any managers enter into an alliance without properly researching the steps necessary to ensure the basic principles of cooperation" (p. 208). Perhaps not surprisingly, virtually all of these reasons have also been cited as issues that can and have undermined successful WoG/CA collaborations. Indeed, such differences may be particularly acute in WoG teams, where different home organizational processes may not simply reflect distinct organizational cultures and bureaucratic processes but also legislated mandates and legal obligations (e.g., Government of Canada, 2014; see also Bhatta, 2003).

Speaking to the influence of home organizations, our own Canadian interviewees confirmed that there were times when it appeared that their own and their WoG counterpart's organizations were impeding coordination and collaboration within the WoG/CA team on the ground (Thomson, et al, 2011). For example, there was at least the perceived limit on information sharing between government agencies, which affected the ability to contribute to integrated planning.

Micromanaging by the home organization was also mentioned as interfering with collaboration on the ground: *"They try to direct it, try to pull the levers, from 10,000 kilometres away in Ottawa ... etc.... [my WoG counterparts were] constantly getting calls from Deputy Ministers ... and being, you know, being questioned or told what to do or having…ideas shot down, having to constantly justify what it was [the Senior Civilian] was doing"* (Anonymous Respondent, Thomson et al., 2011). Similarly *"up until the point information or things left Kandahar, there was a lot of synergy in the field. But as soon as it went into the hands of people in one department who sat in their own office, surrounded by their own people, it got away from where it should be going"* (Anonymous Respondent, Thomson et al., 2011). In addition, the interviewees noted the requirement for all temporary CA team members to provide detailed reports in response to multiple information requests from the various home organizations, to the point that it was perceived as interfering with the core work tasks they to perform within the context of the WoG/CA team.[5] Finally, while issues of prestige of joining the WoG/CA team did not emerge as a major theme across our respondents, one respondent did state that his home organization did tend to deploy inexperienced personnel: *"Most of the [personnel] are very, very junior. Our more senior people with ten to fifteen [years of experience]…don't want to deploy…for us … [it is] definitely not a boost to your career and so for a lot of people it's not worth it."*
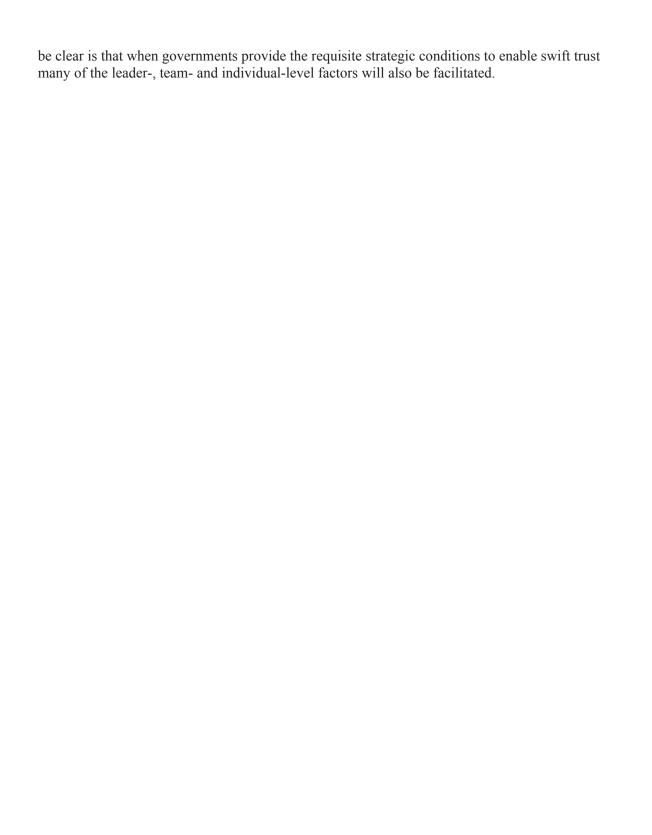
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[5] It should be noted that these differences were particularly acute at the beginning of the Afghan mission, prior to the Manley report and the concerted efforts of the Cabinet Committee on Afghanistan to harmonize mission objectives and procedures.

Applying these notions to the WoG/CA context suggests the trust and effectiveness in such settings will be significantly enhanced if the highest levels governments actively recognize, endorse and support the need and necessity of truly interagency teams, including those that must be constituted on short notice for limited duration (see Meyerson et al, 1996). Tangible governmental support of this requirement has a variety of important implications that will set foundational personnel, education and training policies that will promote swift trust. This must represent a deliberate, strategic choice and a commitment on the part of the government to establish and maintain and an organizational culture and system that actively supports and rewards interagency experience and effectiveness and achievement. While this begins with the appropriate words in high-level strategic and policy documents, on a very practical level the government must be seen to create and support the deliberate efforts made to create the necessary alignments between home and temporary organizational mandates and processes. This also means that the temporary team context must be accorded the requisite legitimacy, prestige and priority that will encourage active participation by the contributing organizations and their best personnel. Ultimately this means the commitment of the resources, time and the people to invest in education and training for such missions.

Certainly we have seen positive evidence of this high-level mindset, particularly with respect to major events in Canada (e.g., 2010 Olympics, G8/G20 Summits, Pan-Am Games). Moreover, there is no doubt that there were certainly great improvements in this regard across the course of the Afghanistan mission. In particular, the 2005 creation of the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START), led by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), and with programming from by the Global Peace and Security Fund, signifies high-level Canadian governmental support of coordinated interagency responses to international disasters, and crises[6]. Indeed, since its inception, START has provided high-level Canadian government coordination and timely responses with respect to multiple "international crises such as the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. START also helped deploy 286 RCMP officers to various peacekeeping missions, including the mission in Afghanistan, and developed a whole-of-government framework to support the deployment of civilian experts" (Government of Canada, 2011).

As important as START is at the strategic planning and policy levels, the question is whether there exists the national political will to devote the economic and human resources to integrate the key lessons learned from past WoG/CA missions to continue to improve Canada's integrated response on operational and tactical levels through dedicated education and training, especially in preparation for integrated responses to international or domestic crises. It is also not clear as to the extent that the government or individual departments currently reward individuals who contribute to interagency mission activities at strategic, operational, or tactical levels. In any event, governments must consider these issues and make informed decisions concerning them, keeping in mind the costs associated with failing to pursue WoG/CA preparation. What seems to

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[6] The range of Canadian departments and agencies that may be involved in these missions includes Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Canadian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Canadian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Department of National Defence (DND), Health Canada (HC), Immigration and Refugee Board (IRC), Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Public Safety Canada (PSC), as well as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and local police forces via the Canadian Police Arrangement.

be clear is that when governments provide the requisite strategic conditions to enable swift trust many of the leader-, team- and individual-level factors will also be facilitated.

# 6    Implications for future research

Beyond its implications for WoG/CA strategic and operational leaders in the articulation, formulation and delivery of an optimal interagency capability for Canada, the reviewed literature also suggests a variety of future research activities that would directly support its articulation and development. For instance, what are the most common bases of categorical trust in adhoc WoG/CA teams? That is, what are the key dimensions that people use to make initial trust assessments of unknown interagency team members – what assumptions underlie overall trust assessments in interagency contexts, as well as competence, integrity, benevolence and predictability that people make concerning trustworthiness based on these categories? How well calibrated are these categorical assessments in terms of the true level of competence, integrity and benevolence of the other? Are competence, integrity, and benevolence assessments equally important in all interagency contexts, or do they differ depending on the type of interagency team (e.g., crisis response, policy development or standing committee; Operational/tactical levels versus strategic-level interagency teams)? What specific aspects of knowledge about the other individuals and/or the organizations they represent would best facilitate trust in interagency contexts? Similarly, does understanding the true relationship between initial categories and the actual competence, integrity and benevolence work to better calibrate initial assessments? Does understanding the nature of the biases that can be associated with categorical assessments ameliorate the extent of their impact on initial interagency trust decisions?

Meyerson and colleagues have detailed classes of individual, team and leader factors that were implicated in swift trust. However, they did not address whether particular classes of factors are most critical (i.e., individual, team and/or leader), or if each variable within a class of factors is equally necessary and important -- are more critical variables within these classes of factors, or what the critical dimensions are. For instance, one might anticipate that a strong leader who understands and respects the expertise skills and contributions of all team members might be able to overcome the lack of knowledge team members have about the roles other contributors may play in a WoG context, at least to some extent. On the other hand, perhaps leadership can only go so far in bridging a lack of mission and role clarity. What specific information on roles, responsibilities, mandates and constraints are important to be aware of prior to working together in an ad hoc team? Although I have presented some initial data that speaks to this issue, more research addressing this issue is required. To be fair it would be difficult to include all the task, team, and leader factors associated with swift trust in one study. It is clear then that this is an area that calls for an integrated program of experimental research in order to identify those factors or the constellation of factors that are most important to and optimize swift trust.

Further, Meyerson et al. mention the role of trust violations in their original swift trust formulation, and seem to suggest that swift trust may work to protect from the effects of many trust violations. Several research questions arise here. For instance, it is not clear exactly when trust violations would be an issue in ad hoc teams with swift trust and when they would not. Is it the severity of the violation, the type of violation or some configuration of both severity and type that will be the biggest threats to interagency trust and effective collaboration? What is the range of effects of violations of swift trust? Importantly, what specific remediation strategies would best restore trust levels in such settings?

In the interagency context exactly what constitutes clear *interagency-level* mission objectives? Are these simply an enumeration of each agency's area of responsibility in a plan, or do an interagency plans differ from this in some substantive way? How are shared mental models created and maintained in an interagency context? How might interagency team leaders create and communicate inspiring mission visions and statements for WoG teams? Does this differ from doing so in military- or civilian-only contexts and if so, how? In another vein, is the two-stage planning process outlined by Goodman and Goodman applicable to WoG teams and does this produce optimal plans relative to other planning processes? Future research should validate whether this is indeed the optimal approach to planning in temporary WoG/CA teams.

Finally, what inter-organizational conditions will facilitate swift trust in temporary teams? For instance, what are the relative impacts of clashes of culture lack of clear goals and objectives, lack of coordination among management teams, differences in operating procedures and attitudes among partners, and a lack of commitment to the alliance on the part of the contributing organizations,? Are some of these more detrimental to interagency coordination and collaboration than others? Are some of these factors the primary means to mitigate or overcome deficiencies in other of these areas? What is the impact of these organisational factors relative to more basic incompatible personal chemistry between people from different organizations?

Answers to these research questions would provide evidence-based recommendations to inform interagency policy, training and educational strategies. Moreover, understanding the uniquely human aspects of trust and interagency trust should be used to underpin the development and validation of tools, techniques and technologies that best promote and ensure effective collaboration interagency settings. Such data could, and arguably should, be compiled via a variety of research methods, for instance, after action reviews of past WoG missions, and through the systematic implementation of this approach and contrasting it with planning other approaches within WoG training exercises.

# 7 Conclusion

It would be ill-advised for government leaders embrace swift trust as a quick fix to the challenges of WoG/CA without having a full understanding of what the term actually means and what achieving it will entail. Although swift trust can spontaneously occur, this circumstance will remain a rarity, the exception to the rule. The literature reviewed in this report suggests that swift trust is possible to achieve. Yet, *consistently* achieving swift trust will be the result of strategic-level commitment and the deliberate and thoughtful implementation of specific task, team, leader, organization- and government-level conditions ahead of time to will allow swift trust to flourish when a crisis requiring the integrated response of various agencies occurs. Of course one of the added benefits is that the time, resources and energy associated with enabling swift trust via integrated education and training opportunities will also improve trust and collaboration in all interagency contexts, not just in emergencies that require swift trust.

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# List of symbols/abbreviations/acronyms/initialisms

CA            Interagency

CAF           Canadian Armed Forces

DFATD         Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development

DND           Department of National Defence

FSE           Future Security Environment

OGD           Other Government Departments

RoCK          Representative of Canada in Kandahar

RCMP          Royal Canadian Mounted Police

START         Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force

WoG           Whole of Government

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Interpersonal trust has been proposed as a key mechanism to overcome many of the barriers to collaboration and coordination in a variety of team and organizational settings, including Whole-of-Government /Comprehensive Approach (WoG/CA) missions. Traditional models of trust are predicated on a gradual, incremental history of deepening risk and demonstrated reliability between parties. However, these models do not lend themselves to those WoG/CA contexts in which members of different governmental departments who have no history together must quickly coalesce into an effective team, often in response to a crisis or a top governmental priority. Fortunately research from within the organizational behavior realm has demonstrated that there are times when 'swift trust' may exist, that is, where initial trust levels in work settings can be quite positive, even when the parties collaborating are strangers to each other. This research on swift trust is integrated with the literature on organizational alliances and applied to WoG/CA context. The paper concludes with recommendations to instantiate and to promote swift trust in WoG/CA interagency missions.

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Swift Trust, WoG/CA teams, Interagency, trust in teams