Nongovernmental Organizations, Formal Networks and Barrier Mitigation in Humanitarian Relief: A Case Study of the Partnership for Quality Medical Donations

Maral Narin Dilanian

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of

Public Administration/Public Affairs

Dr. Angela M. Eikenberry, Chair

Dr. Patrick S. Roberts

Dr. Max O. Stephenson

12/05/07

Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: humanitarian relief, disaster relief, formal networks, interorganizational coordination, nongovernmental organizations

Nongovernmental Organizations, Formal Networks and Barrier Mitigation in Humanitarian Relief: A Case Study of the Partnership for Quality Medical Donations

Maral Narin Dilanian

ABSTRACT

The overarching focus of this research is to examine the role and effectiveness of formal network organizations in mitigating barriers to disaster relief. I address this larger focus by examining the impacts of one formal network organization, the Partnership for Quality Medical Donations (PQMD) on its twelve NGO members. Specifically, the study addressees the following questions: 1) How does PQMD function? 2) What effects has PQMD had on its NGO members' relationships with each other, especially in the context of disaster response efforts? The research design for this study uses a qualitative framework. The study includes a literature review, content analysis of PQMD's website, research from a previous study with the same organization, and new interviews with representatives from nine NGO members, as well as the executive director of PQMD. My findings indicate that PQMD has been able to successfully bring together 27 different organizations (private and nonprofit), and mitigate the barrier of lack of central authority and lack of trust, to discuss their concerns, learn from one another, learn about one other, and create relationships that lead to better communication and collaboration in humanitarian relief. Although PQMD is working on a much smaller scale, I argue that researchers can look at this formal network organization to better understand how to improve the coordination of humanitarian aid on a worldwide scale and can glean lessons from this group.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

"The power of partnership is paramount." Anonymous

In recent years, there has been a rising awareness of *catastrophic disasters*[1] around the world. In response, there has been growing attention to barriers faced by agencies while providing disaster relief and the need to focus on the mitigation of these barriers. Due to this mounting necessity for better disaster relief operations, as well as a growing mistrust in government's ability to address such collective problems (Ozerdem & Jacoby, 2006; Sobel & Leeson, 2006; Dulany & Winder, 2001) and neo-liberal efforts to rollback the state (Kapucu & Van Wart, 2006), non-governmental organizations[2] (NGOs) are increasingly expected to play a larger role in providing disaster relief around the world. Not only have NGOs taken a more central role in disaster relief and recovery (Ozerdem & Jacoby, 2006), they have had to do so often without the help of a formal coordinating body (Kapucu & Van Wart, 2006). Although, the United Nations (UN) does try to fit the role of a coordinating body, due to the sheer size of

[1] I am using Kapucu and Van Wart's (2006) definition: "Catastrophic disasters (a.k.a. extreme events) are characterized by unexpected or unusual size, disruptions to the communication and decision making capabilities of the emergency response system itself, and an initial breakdown in coordination and communication" (p. 280).

[2] Although the type and scope of organizations that are characterized as nonprofit or non-governmental vary according to different countries, for the purpose of this paper I shall use the following as common characteristics of NGOs: 1) "the primary function … is to serve underserved or neglected populations, to expand the freedom of or to empower people, to engage in advocacy for social change, and to provide services" (McCarthy et al., 1992, p. 3) and 2) income from these organizations is not distributed to owners or members. The literature shows one of the most valuable functions of NGOs is deliverer of goods and services (Frumkin, 2002). In the past, during disaster situations NGOs have supplemented already previously existing local systems. However, due to the issues briefly discussed earlier, NGOs are becoming more like independent actors that sometimes coordinate among themselves during disaster relief.

many disasters and the number of players involved in the response, along with other factors discussed below, they have not been the notably effective.

The larger focus of this research is to examine the role and effectiveness of formal network organizations in mitigating barriers to disaster relief. A formal network organization could potentially be a way to provide accountability and coordination during a disaster situation, much like a formal coordinating body, but without the negatives associated with a centralized authority. The main negative associated with a centralized authority is that a participating NGO would hand over their say-so. Researchers cite many reasons for why a central authority is not the best format for the humanitarian relief environment. These include: 1) conditions are not conducive for one authority for multiple reasons, one reason is that no organization has the budget or the authority to take on such a task. 3) reluctant nonprofits do not want to give up their power (Arroyave et al., 2005; Kapucu & Van Wart, 2006, Stephenson, 2006). Due to the changing nature of humanitarian relief and the lack of desire for a top-down hierarchy of command, more and more literature is focusing on network (interorganizational) coordination for disaster relief. Hierarchical structures work well during routine situations to coordinate multiple actors, but they weaken significantly during the chaotic atmosphere of emergencies (Kapucu, 2003). Kapucu (2006) explains, "hierarchies generally perform badly in emergencies, because if any of a hierarchy's top nodes fail, they isolate large networks from each other" (p. 208). Theory states, "Humanitarian aid implementation is better conceived as a network of actors enmeshed, in part, within a set of pre-existing relationships… but with no natural lines of authority existing among them" (Stephenson & Schnitzer, 2006a, p. 31). Through my research I hope to find a potential framework for an effective formal network.

For this study, I address this larger focus by examining a formal network organization[3], the Partnership for Quality Medical Donations (PQMD), and the implications of its operations on its twelve NGO members' relationships with one another both inside and outside of a time of disaster. In particular, I look at the role of the network in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and coordination or organizational relief activities. PQMD is a formal network of related organizations dedicated to the development, dissemination and adherence to high standards in the delivery of medical products to under-served people and disaster victims globally. PQMD is a partnership of twelve non-governmental organizations and twelve medical product manufacturers (PQMD, 2006, para. 1). PQMD is a good case study for the research I propose because these organizations have been working together for seven years and have productively collaborated together to provide humanitarian relief, as well as disaster relief, in many situations.

Specifically, I will address the following questions:

- What is the main function/purpose of PQMD?

[3] For the purpose of this paper I will use Van Alstyne's (1997) behavioral and strategic definition of network organizations:

> A behavioral view is that a network is a pattern of social relations over a set of persons, positions, groups or organizations. . . A strategic view of networks considers them long term purposeful arrangements among distinct but related . . . organizations . . . Then a network as an organization presupposes a unifying purpose and thus the need for a sense of identity useful in bounding and marshaling the resources, agents, and actions necessary for concluding the strategy and goals of purpose. (p. 2)

A network organization or partnership is an interconnected group of organizations working together towards the same end. I will call these networks *formal* because they have some form of organized structure, relationship and/or partnership prior to actual relief operations during a disaster.

- What effects has PQMD had on its NGO members' relationships with each other, especially in the context of disaster response efforts?

The rest of this paper is organized in the following manner. First I will provide an overview of the literature. Here, I discuss why the literature and the recent trends in disaster relief show that it is important to conduct further research on network organizations in relation to disaster relief; first by looking at barriers to disaster relief, then by looking at the role of trust in disaster relief, and finally, by looking at how networks and interorganizational coordination works in the context of disaster relief. The next section outlines the research methods that were used to address the research questions of the study. I present my research design, my data collection procedures, my data analysis, and finally the trustworthiness and limitation of my research. The third section contains my findings from the interviews. The findings are organized in order of my research questions. First I answer: what is the function/purpose of PQMD? The four main perceived function/purposes of PQMD from the interviews were: 1) to produce standards for quality medical donations—its stated mission, 2) to facilitate conversations between its member NGOs and between the two sectors (private and nonprofit), 3) to create a forum where conversations happen and relationships develop, and lastly, 4) to help build relationships and establish partnerships between the member organizations. Next, I answer: what effects has PQMD had on its NGO members' relationships with each other, especially in the context of disaster response efforts? The four main topics I discuss are: 1) the issue of trust and how it is built and maintained between NGO members, 2) the issue of competition and how the NGO members view competition amongst each other, 3) how and why collaboration occur between the NGO members, and finally, 4) different examples of collaboration during disaster

times. The fourth section is a discussion of my findings with some implications for effective disaster relief. Based on my findings, I discuss 1) how PQMD's network model seems to be a successful model for mitigating the barrier of a lack of central authority, 2) how PQMD has been able to facilitate partnership through the development of trust, 3) that it is not possible to eliminate competition between NGOs, however by increasing trust organizations might be willing to work together for the greater good, and lastly, 4) the issue of trust between the agent and the donor. The final section is a conclusion and potential questions for future research in this area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a plethora of literature looking at the barriers that NGOs face when responding to disaster situations, the importance of trust in disaster relief, and literature studying networks as a model for inter-organizational coordination. However, there seems to be a gap connecting these three areas to one another, to understand whether a formal network model would help NGOs to mitigate barriers during disaster response. My research attempts to fill in this missing link and understand how these three areas intersect. In the literature review, I layout the context of formal network organizations and attempt to show gaps in the literature. First, I briefly discuss the barrier of a lack of central authority that NGOs face when delivering disaster relief. Next, I discuss the literature looking at trust in the framework of disaster relief. Then, I examine what the literature shows as the role of networks and inter-organizational coordination. Finally, I attempt to show that there is a gap in the literature related to how these areas coincide to create a possible model for barrier mitigation during disaster relief.

Barriers to Disaster Relief

If NGOs are to play a larger role in responding to disaster while mitigating barriers to provide effective and efficient disaster relief, it is important to first investigate the different barriers they face, and understand the root causes of these barriers. The literature repeatedly cites lack of inter-organizational coordination as one of the key barriers to efficient and effective disaster response (Stephenson, 2005, 2006; Haddow & Bullock, 2003; Kapucu, 2006; Arroyave et al., 2005). Some of the main consequences of coordination are delayed, ineffective and duplicated relief efforts. For example, in the United States context, Dahle (2006) notes that

"Katrina proved, even the vast resources of a Western nation are ineffectual in the absence of coordination . . ." (p. 2).

One issue that is often cited as a main cause of poor coordination among disaster relief agencies is a lack of central authority during disaster responses. During two recent devastating disasters, Hurricane Katrina and the Asian tsunami, the media and literature showed that relief agencies and the public had certain expectations of the two main organizations that are seen as having the lead roles in disaster relief – the United Nations (UN) and the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). The UN and FEMA both did not live up to the expectations[4] of the public and the NGO community during the hurricane and tsunami when aid "relief efforts bec[a]me delayed, complicated and very frustrating" for all parties involved (Arroyave et al. 2005, p. 29). Although many NGO representatives express frustration with this lack of central authority and coordination, not all feel that one strong central authority could fully mitigate the problem of lack of coordination among NGOs during disaster responses. As the number and magnitude of natural disasters increases, so does the number of responding agencies. It would be difficult for one entity to coordinate so many organizations. In addition, some NGOs do not want to have an authority telling them what to do during such response efforts (Arroyave et al., 2005; Kapucu & Van Wart, 2006). The literature also indicates that NGOs and governments want to move away from a central coordinated structure (hierarchical in nature), to a more lateral model when responding to disasters (Linden, 2002, p. 15; Kapucu, 2006). Thus, creating a central overseer of disasters does not seem to be a feasible solution to the barrier of coordination for a variety of reasons. However, the lack of desire and/or the feasibility of having

[4] This does not address whether the expectations of the public and the NGO community were realistic or not. It is important to note that organizations like the UN and FEMA are not mandated to be the lead organizations during disaster response but rather umbrella agencies to support relief efforts (Takeda & Helms, 2006).

a central overseer does not lessen the need for better coordination in disaster relief. Therefore, I, along with other researchers like Stephenson (2006), suggest that there needs to be an alternative model for humanitarian relief. In order to find an alternative model of coordination it is important to understand the role that a central authority would play.

A central coordinating body can fill many roles during a catastrophic disaster from dissemination of information, to being a provider of security. Newell and Swan (2000) note that when an authoritative body is present there is a sense of accountability and trust that makes it easy for agencies to coordinate inter-organizationally. Without an authoritative body to keep agencies accountable, there is a lack of established trust, which hinders NGOs from coordinating with one another on an intimate level needed for effective disaster response (Kapucu, 2006). While NGOs often do not want to work under the hierarchy of a central authority, they do want the trust and accountability that would be present among NGOs working through or with a central agency (Arroyave et al., 2005). It seems that with this move away from hierarchical structures that potentially create accountability and trust, it might be more difficult for agencies to build the trusting relationships still needed to coordinate during disaster times.

Trust and Disaster Relief

Trust is key to effective networking relationships (Newell & Swan, 2000); therefore, making it essential for any type of inter-organizational coordination (Stephenson, 2005). In order for dynamic networks to share information, risks and opportunities, which are all key components of any collaboration during a disaster situation, there needs to be mutual trust (Kapucu, 2006). "These links are vital, because they connect organizations to one another, and

give organizations access to the larger world outside their circle through a chain of affiliations" (Kapucu, 2006, p. 210).

To improve collaborations during disaster situations, it is important to understand the different kinds of trust and then understand how to create them. In Table 1 below, drawing from Stephenson (2005, p. 345), is a summary of four types of trust based on the work of numerous other scholars.

Table 1: Types of Trust

Trust Type	Description
Companion	The trust that an organization boundary spanner (those individuals actively interacting with members of another organization) places in a counterpart in a network organization that is based on judgments of goodwill or friendship.
Competence	Trust that is extended based on the perceived ability of the other to carry out needed tasks.
Commitment	Describes a setting in which parties will trust one another as long as each behaves in a fashion consonant with contractual agreements between the parties.
Swift	Trust that is based on the reality that it is easier to extend trust than it is not to do so in conditions when individuals and organizations will work together only for short periods. Based on contextual cues rather than inter-personal ties.

Within the literature, there is much discussion of how difficult it is to create trusting relationships in disaster relief situations. Stephenson (2005) explains that "none of these forms of trust [from above] typically exist in the humanitarian environment because participating organizations or their employees self-consciously define open and rapid coordination as in their self-interest and seek to pursue that end as a part of their central vision" (p. 346). One reason for this lack of or difficulty in developing inter-organizational trust is, "the competing incentives and turbulence present in the [humanitarian aid] environment" (Stephenson, 2005, p. 346).

Kapucu (2006) shows that during disaster relief, "communities that have strong working relationships on a daily basis generally function better in emergency situations because of increased trust" (p. 210). Kapucu's (2006) findings in his study of the 2001 World Trade Center (WTC) disaster are important because they show that lack of trust is in fact a real issue. Out of 43 respondents, trust was cited as the third largest factor hindering disaster relief, behind lack of prior communication and lack of common priorities. The success of humanitarian aid action depends on the willingness of different organizations to work together, which depends on the level of trust organizations have with one another (Kapucu, 2006). Moore et al. (2003) write that "Whether 'working' means information-sharing or joint operations and projects, inter-organizational coordination is not simply the product of two organizations choosing to share resources, personnel or projects" (p. 316), but rather it is the establishment of a higher level of trust. Models for how to establish this kind of high-level trust are largely missing from the literature. This leaves us with the question of how can organizations have effective coordination during disaster times? In recent years, several scholars have pointed to a network model as a possible solution.

Networks and Inter-organizational Coordination

There is a growing body of literature that suggests network organizations are a way to create trusting partnerships that facilitate better communication and coordination among organizations. The efficient flow of information between organizations during disaster situations is crucial and therefore established networks of communication among organizations are vital in order to have effective disaster relief coordination (Moore et al., 2003; Arroyave et al., 2005; Stephenson & Schnitzer, 2006a, 2006 b). It is important to understand the role of these network

organizations and their effectiveness at mitigating the trust barrier when coordinating inter-organizationally because they could potentially be used as models for creating trust during the chaos of response to disaster situations.

Even without a central coordinating authority to create trust and guide disaster response, relief is still being delivered, but perhaps not in the most efficient and effective way possible. In some cases NGOs are forming their own networks before disasters occur. One example of NGOs creating their own networks is, after the tragic and chaotic events of September 11, 2001, representatives from several agencies[5] came together to discuss lessons learned and to find a better way to serve the needs of those affected by disaster situations. Unlike many organizations that create lessons learned, these seven agencies not only identified the issues, but went on to create an action plan to deal with them. They came together to form the Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN), the first goal of which was to develop a process for centralized data collection during disaster recovery. Another domestic network of NGOs that has existed for over 25 years is called The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD). NVOAD, like CAN, started with numerous organizations coming together because they were concerned with the haphazard way that agencies assisted during disasters in the U.S. Seven NGOs[6] came

[5] The agencies were: Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), American Red Cross (ARC), 9/11 United Services Group, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), Safe Horizon, The Salvation Army, and United Way of America.

[6] The agencies are: Adventist Community Services, American's Second Harvest, American Baptist Men/USA, American Disaster Reserve, American Radio Relay League, Inc., American Red Cross, Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team, Catholic Charities USA, Christian Disaster Response, Christian Reformed World Relief, Committee, Church of the Brethren – Brethren Disaster Ministries, Church World Service, Church of Scientology Disaster Response, Convoy of Hope, Disaster Psychiatry Outreach, Episcopal relief and Development, Feed The Children, Friends Disaster Service, In., HOPE Coalition America, Humane Society of the United States, International Aid, International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, International Relief and Development, International Relief Friendship Foundation, Lutheran Disaster Response, Medical Teams International, Mennonite Disaster Service, Mercy Medical Airlift, National Association

together to form NVOAD because they saw unnecessary duplication of efforts during disaster situations and at the same time needs of victims not being met.

The Partnership for Quality Medical Donations is another type of network organization. "In 1996 the World Health Organization (WHO) published Interagency Guidelines intended to ensure future donations would be both appropriate and effective. However, the guidelines raised several concerns among relief and humanitarian agencies and healthcare firms," (PQMD, 2007). It was during this commotion that PQMD was conceived. The membership consisted, and still consists, of nonprofit humanitarian aid agencies and pharmaceutical and medical devices companies. The member organizations all share a common commitment to the advancement of effective and appropriate medical donations. This organization grew to become formally incorporated in 1999. The partnership meets regularly with all of its members and has established relationships and lines of communication. In the wake of a major disaster, PQMD created its Emergency Committee, which is designed specifically for coordination and information sharing during a disaster situation.

Although there are examples of formal network organizations, there is little literature examining these networks; showing how they work and if they are able to mitigate such barriers as lack of trust between "competing" NGOs as well as poor coordination due to a lack of central authority. It is important to have first-hand data from these network organizations to see what the members feel about the partnership.

---

of Jewish Chaplains, National Emergency Response Team, National Organization for Victim Assistance, Nazarene Disaster Response, Operation Blessing, Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer center National Network, Presbyterian Church, REACT Interational, Inc., Samaritan's Purse, Save the Children, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Southern Baptist Convention, The Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors, The Salvation Army, Tzu Chi Foundation, United Church of Christ, United Jewish Communities, United Methodist Committee on Relief, United Way of America, Volunteers of America, World Vision

Interestingly, a 2005 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on Hurricane Katrina, stated that although tools like electronic databases were helpful with coordination, "these systems were not as important to coordination efforts as *pre-existing* relationships" (p. 11, emphasis mine). This highlights the importance of *formal* networks versus networks that emerge during a disaster situation. One agency representative discussed how difficult it is for organizations to "make introductions in the chaos of a disaster" (GAO, 2005, p.11). The GAO report both complimented and criticized CAN and NVOAD's efforts and role during Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. However, it seems that one important role that these networks are playing in disaster relief is creating relationships prior to a disaster situation. At this point in my research it is unclear whether or not these organizations are facilitating trust and accountability within their groups and therefore are able to collaborate more effectively with one another. In order to draw these types of conclusions it would be necessary to do a set of interviews to ask specific questions related to trust.

It would be tremendously useful to have case studies in order to form a clearer picture of whether formal NGO network organizations are in fact able to mitigate the barriers of trust to ultimately foster better coordination and delivery of disaster relief. If these organizations have found a way to mitigate the barriers of trust and coordination through these formalized partnerships, then they can be used as models for other responding agencies to follow. This research will be beneficial even if the results show that these partnerships are not successful at mitigation because it will open doors for additional dialogue to fix problems in existing systems.

PQMD is similar to NVOAD and CAN in that it is a formal network by my previous definition. PQMD has an organized structure, and the members have relationships prior to actual relief operations. However, the difference is that PQMD was not conceived specifically in

reaction to poor coordination of disaster relief, but rather in response to a need for standards for proper medical donations in humanitarian relief in general. Since case studies of formal humanitarian aid networks is largely missing in the literature, the purpose of my research is to provide a look into one such network. PQMD is a good case study because it is similar to the larger networks, however smaller in size and therefore more manageable for research in a short period of time. PQMD has been working together for over seven years and has had experience providing aid during disaster situation, as well as humanitarian aid in general. Hopefully, PQMD will be the first of many case studies looking at NGO networks that exist prior to a disaster situation and how they function, and how the partnership affects the relationships of the NGO members. In the next section I will discuss the methodology for my case study of PQMD.

METHODOLOGY

In this section, the methods used to address the research questions are discussed. The structure will be a case study that will explore the capability of one network organization, PQMD, to overcome the barriers of trust and coordination during disaster relief. I will draw on data from interviews and other secondary data. Again, the research questions are:

- How does PQMD function?

- What effects has PQMD had on its NGO members' relationships with each other, especially in the context of disaster response efforts?

Research Design

The research design for this study uses a qualitative framework. Qualitative research methods are appropriate for this study because it explores new areas where little is known (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). According to Berg (2001), the qualitative research approach can be conceived of "as spiraling rather than linear in its progression" (p. 18). In this context, the researcher is in a constant process of reviewing and perfecting ideas and theoretical assumptions throughout. The study includes a literature review, content analysis of PQMD's website, research from a previous study with the same organization, and new interviews with representatives from nine NGO members, as well as the executive director of PQMD.

I chose to use a case study for this research because it maximizes what can be learned, in the limited period of time that is available for this study (Tellis, 1997). Tellis (1997) notes:

> The classic characteristic of case studies is that they strive towards a holistic understanding of cultural systems of action (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1990). Cultural systems of action refer to sets of interrelated activities engaged in by the actors in a social situation. (para. 31)

By using case study methodology, I will be able to have a multi-perspectival analysis by looking at not just the voice of the interviewees but also of the group as a whole and their interactions (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg cited in Tellis, 1997).

Data Collection Procedures

Study Sample

PQMD defines itself as "an alliance of private voluntary organizations and medical product manufacturers dedicated to raising standards of medical donations to meet the needs of underserved populations and disaster victims around the world" (PQMD, 2007, para. 1). PQMD consists of twenty-four organizations: twelve INGOs and twelve for-profit pharmaceutical companies.

PQMD's first objective as a partnership was to develop and promote sound donation practices by donor and recipient organizations. In 1996 an informal alliance of private voluntary

agencies and pharmaceutical and medical device companies came together to address concerns of inappropriate medical product donations. The group was formally incorporated in 1999. "Its membership shared a common commitment to address these concerns and advance effective and appropriate medical donations," (PQMD, 2007). PQMD is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

PQMD is structured so that every member organization is an active board member. The criteria for membership are set by the PQMD Committee on Membership and the Governance Committee and are endorsed by the PQMD Board of Directors. The board formally meets three times every year. Each representative is also a member of a subcommittee. The subcommittees meet more frequently than three times a year. PQMD activities are funded through grants, corporate contributions and member dues.

PQMD was chosen for this study because of previous research that I, in partnership with two colleagues, previously conducted with the twelve INGO (international NGO) members and because it appears to serve as a good example of a formal network organization. The earlier study was conducted to understand the similarities and differences between international and domestic barriers to disaster relief faced by international NGOs and their implications. The study included a literature review and interviews with representatives from each of the twelve INGO members of PQMD.[7] The three main research questions were focused on the key barriers these organizations faced in providing disaster relief in the U.S. and abroad, how these barriers were similar and different, and finally how the barriers could be mitigated or eliminated.[8] In that earlier study, surprisingly, we found that the barriers to international and domestic disaster response are more similar than different. Whether looking at the coordination or communication

[7] For a list of members see Appendix A.
[8] For a list of interview questions see Appendix B.

barriers noted by the interviewees and the literature, there is a theme of broken or nonexistent relationships: between and among INGOs, INGOs and the private sector, and INGOs and government.

At the end of our study we found many areas that needed further research. I became interested in the networking aspect and understanding whether PQMD members were able to mitigate the barriers of lack of trust and poor coordination more effectively than other humanitarian relief agencies because of their special alliance. The data gathered from this previous study were used in addition to new interview questions for this research.

Because of the current study's focus, only the INGO members of PQMD are included in the study. These INGOs have two main traits in common: their missions and how the missions are achieved. The missions of these agencies incorporate, in some fashion, the aim of serving the underprivileged. These organizations achieve their missions primarily by assisting the underserved through global health and development. A key area of work for all of these organizations has been some form of international disaster relief. All of the INGOs are registered 501(c)3 organizations with headquarters in the United States, although most have field offices in the developing world and Europe. While all of these organizations emphasize health and international development, each varies in its approach to defining health, implementing health programs, and measuring outcomes. They all accept medicines and medical supplies as donations or gifts-in-kind as well as private and government funding. Additionally, these organizations have a long-standing reputation for their work in their areas of expertise.

Although there are many similarities between the PQMD INGOs, there are also differences. For example, they range in size from over 20,000 employees to fewer than 10, including volunteers. Their operating budgets range in size $29 million to $803 million. They

range from faith-based to secular in their mandate and their founding dates range from 1928 to 1992. The differences among the organizations eliminate the question of whether their likeness in size, scope and mandate plays a large role in the creation and maintenance of trust. Rubin and Rubin (2005) discuss that the credibility of findings are enhanced due to the variety of perspectives in interviewing organizations that are not all the same.

Interviewee Selection

In the already completed round of interviews from the earlier study (Arroyave et al., 2005), interviews were arranged with one representative from all twelve of the INGO member organizations of PQMD, and the executive director of PQMD; a total of thirteen people. The selection of interviewees was based on a purposefully selected sample of those staff most knowledgeable about the organizations' humanitarian relief efforts. The selected interviewees are involved in their INGOs' relief efforts and generally oversee the management and/or distribution of medical products to devastated regions. Of the thirteen interviewees, most are liaisons specifically to the medical product manufacturers and work on procurement or distribution. The interviewees are all liaisons to PQMD. Those interviewed, however, are not directly involved in on-the-ground efforts. Instead, they coordinate efforts from their headquarters.

The interviewees for the current research project were chosen from the same set of thirteen interviewees who participated in the prior study. However, only nine organizations and the executive director were interviewed for this study due to the travel schedules of the representatives.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted during August and September of 2007 with a set of predetermined questions (See Appendix B) in order to ensure consistency in information from each of the INGOs. When appropriate, I used probing and follow-up questions to capture the "richness" of the interviewees' experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 13). The interviews lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes each and were tape-recorded.

Data Analysis

My main data source for this research was my interviews. These were analyzed through memo-writing. After each interview, I wrote a memo to spur and develop and ideas in a narrative form (Charmaz, 2006). Finally, after all interviews are completed, I wrote another memo making comparisons between the data collected (Charmaz, 2006). These memos "help to tease out distinctions that sharpen [my] treatment of the material" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 84-85). The interviews were tape recorded so that I could refer back to them later and draw out quotes when needed. Corbin and Strauss (1990) maintain that:

> Writing theoretical memos is an integral part of doing grounded theory. Since the analyst cannot readily keep track of all the categories, properties, hypotheses, and generative questions that evolve from the analytical process, there must be a system for doing so. The use of memos constitutes such a system. Memos are not simply "ideas." They are involved in the formulation and revision of theory during the research process. (p. 10)

Charmaz (2006) describes memo writing as the step between data collection and writing a paper. It is a way to analyze your thoughts and ideas earlier on in the process. By writing these memos throughout the research process, one is continually engaging in analysis, which helps to "increase the level of abstraction of your ideas" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72). Memos are useful to capture connections and comparisons and to fine-tune ideas (Charmaz, 2006).

Trustworthiness and Limitations

To demonstrate credibility and trustworthiness, I have attempted to make sure that my research is fully transparent. This will allow the reader to "assess the thoroughness of the design…as well as [my] conscientiousness, [and] sensitivity" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 76). Also, to demonstrate thoroughness of my work, I have tried to "follow up on different lines of inquiry, paying attention to possible contradictions or unexpected findings, and examin[e] alternative views" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 265). To show credibility I use anonymous quotations from my interviewees' first-hand experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

One of the shortcomings of my data as Tellis (1997) discusses, is that it is only a single case, which might make it difficult to provide a generalizing conclusion. Yin (1993) also discusses case study methodology and that it is sometimes looked at as "microscopic" because it lacks a certain number of cases. While this is a limitation for such an exploratory study as this, I hope to mitigate it by expanding my future research to closely examine closely many more network organizations. Yin (1984) discusses that having multiple cases strengthens the results of the study by creating a pattern-matching: "Multiple cases strengthen the results by replicating the pattern-matching, thus increasing confidence in the robustness of the theory" (p. 87).

One other limit of my research may be the interviewee's unwillingness to be completely candid about issues regarding trust between themselves and the other partners in PQMD. NGO representatives might not be willing to discuss their relationships openly with the pharmaceutical companies or even with other NGOs due to issues of competition or donor-agency dependency. This might have greater implications for networks in general and whether they really do create trust or an appearance of trust for a mutually beneficial relationship. Hopefully, the assurance of anonymity allowed the participants to speak candidly. Conducting analysis across interviews may help to mitigate this problem. Future research might also involve observation and other methods for triangulating data sources.

Another limit of this research is the use of convenience sampling. This strategy is not seen as scientifically precise as other methods like maximum variation or homogeneous sampling (Weiss, 1998). With this technique, it is difficult to say how representative the information collected is to the population as a whole. However, the information gathered from these interviews could still provide some fairly significant insights, and be a good source of data in exploratory research.

FINDINGS

In this section I present the findings derived from data collected from interviews. I will discuss my findings in the order of my research questions, one building on the other. The first research question that I discuss is: How does PQMD function? Then I answer the next research question: What effects has PQMD had on its NGO members' relationships with each other, especially in the context of disaster response efforts?

The overall sense from those interviewed is that the partnership that PQMD has provided among the organizations has been a positive experience. PQMD seems to have successfully brought together 27 different organizations with the same mission and goal of providing quality medical donations to the world, from two very different sectors (private and nonprofit), to discuss their concerns, learn from one another, learn about one other, and create relationships that lead to better communication and collaboration both inside and outside of PQMD meetings. Seven of the ten interviewees emphatically answered *absolutely* when asked if PQMD has had an impact on their organization both in a general sense, and in a specific sense in terms of: 1) their relationships with both the NGOs and the private companies, and 2) whether trust has been enhanced within these relationships. However, these questions remain: How and why is PQMD able to do this? What makes PQMD different from other "partnerships"? And, should PQMD be looked at as an example to other NGOs?

PQMD has four main objectives: 1) develop and promote sound donation practices by donor and recipient organizations, 2) represent members' interests before national and international agencies responsible for policy formulation affecting medical product donations and distribution, 3) encourage documentation and scholarly study of health and socioeconomic

impacts of the donation of health care products and services, and 4) educate audiences on member projects and programs that serve to encourage replication of appropriate donation practices (PQMD, 2007). However, the explicit goals or purpose of an organization is not always the same as the *perceived* goals and purpose. In the following section I examine perceptions of PQMD by looking at what the NGO members believe to be the purpose of PQMD.

Research Question #1: What is the purpose of PQMD?

The name says it all… the uniqueness of PQMD is that it takes the strengths of the companies to go along with the heart of the organizations, and we merge those two together. And with this alliance we are able to focus in on how to best deliver medicines and medications… (Interviewee #4)

In this section I discuss my first research question. When I asked what the interviewees felt the purpose of PQMD is, I received many different answers but they all fell under four main categories. The four areas of purpose I will look at are: 1) PQMD as mission- focused, 2) PQMD as a facilitator, 3) PQMD as a forum, and, 4) PQMD as a place to create relationships and find partners. The four areas are discussed in order of most discussed.

Mission Focus

One theme that reoccurred in the interviews was a discussion of PQMD being made up of *likeminded* organizations or being *mission focused*, which the interviewees used interchangeably.

The mission or like-mindedness that the interviewees spoke of is "a dedicat[ion] to the development, dissemination and adherence to high standards in the delivery of medical products to under-served people and disaster victims around the world" (PQMD, 2007). It was important to the interviewees that they know the people within this group have one goal and one mission, which some even discussed in conjunction with being able to trust one another better. For example, when asked what the NGOs saw as the main function or purpose of PQMD, almost half of the interviewees restated the written mission statement of the group. One interviewee said that it is this like-mindedness that brings everyone in PQMD to the table but it is the uniqueness of everyone's work that creates effective collaboration, including during disaster response.

Some of the other words and phrases used to describe PQMD in terms of its mission focus were *advocate*, *spokesperson to the world*, and an organization that *stands in the gap* to create medical standards. The next logical question is to ask how PQMD is able to bridge the gap among its own partners, both across sectors and within sectors, to *stand in the gap* and be the *spokesperson to the world* for quality medical donations.

Facilitator

According to the interviewees, one way that PQMD is able to bridge the gap among its partners is by acting as a facilitator. One interviewee directly called PQMD a "facilitator" (Interviewee 1), while three others described PQMD as "providing interface between sectors" (Interviewee 4, 5, and 7). Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a facilitator as**:** "one that helps to bring about an outcome (as learning, productivity, or communication) by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance, or supervision" (Merriam Webster, 2007, para. 3), and PQMD is doing just this. PQMD brings together 27 organizations, private and nonprofit, to enhance

communication about quality product donation and other peripheral issues. Several of those interviewed stated that they were not sure if their organizational paths would have crossed if it were not for the time spent at the PQMD meetings.

Interviewee #2's discussion of PQMD as facilitator was a little different from those I discussed above. This person stated, "PQMD is not facilitating anything [and that] it is ultimately up to the individual agencies to facilitate the relationships." Therefore, the individual agencies *facilitate* the relationships and PQMD provides the forum for these organizations to meet and have discussions. PQMD's role is to "creat[e] a very positive atmosphere" (Interviewee #2). Is it possible to separate PQMD from its members? If so, you have PQMD as a forum providing the space where discussions occur and the members facilitate the relationships and communication. Maybe PQMD *facilitates* by creating the environment and providing a venue or forum for interaction to occur. This brings me to the next idea of PQMD providing a forum atmosphere for its members.

Forum

The third most discussed purpose/function of PQMD is its function of providing a forum atmosphere for its member organizations. Within this *forum*, members are able to learn about one another's strengths and weaknesses and then initiate relationships and partnerships they want and need (Interviewee #2). One of the interviewees stated that there had not been a forum like PQMD for NGOs before (Interviewee #3).

The Webster's Dictionary definition of forum is: "a public meeting or assembly for open discussion" (2007, para. 2). How has PQMD been able to facilitate an atmosphere where people

are able to have *open*[9] discussions? One interviewee defined forum and how PQMD has been able to do this:

> PQMD is a platform. The uniqueness and the mission and the alliance in and of itself is the forum. It's a rally[ing] point that companies and organizations can come to talk about "what are the best practices," is there a certain way to that, "how do we develop sound donation practices," by donor and the recipient organizations… And what you are able to do is get the best of all these different groups and companies, all meshed into one, that have talked about here is what we come up with as a unit. That is the forum. (Interviewee #4)

Is it the actual meetings that PQMD has that the interviewees consider the forum? One interviewee discussed that although PQMD does have many board meetings a year, and even more committee meetings, it is the environment and attitude of the partners that creates the forum.

> An environment where people with similar backgrounds can get together and have informal conversations that enables best practices to occur; having the environment where that's conducive to NGOs understanding each other, building up trust with each other and also with pharmaceutical companies. (Interviewee #7)

[9] meaning: candid, honest, blunt, etc.

Many interviewees felt that PQMD is a great place for *information sharing*, from best practices to the situation on the ground during a disaster. They see PQMD as a forum where information can be shared across sectors--NGOs to pharmaceutical companies (Interviewee 3, 4, 7).

It is important for the NGOs that are in the field to be able to communicate and coordinate with the corporations who provide the funding and the medical donations (Interviewee #7). Interviewee 5 discussed how this *interface* between the two sectors "allows assistance to be sent to developing world countries and hopefully in the most efficient way possible." Interviewee 4 stated: "By being at the same table with all of these different NGOs, it gives you a grander view [of the humanitarian aid situation]." PQMD seems to be a communication venue where everyone is at the same level participating with one another.

PQMD has been able to facilitate these relationships by bringing these different players from around the country into the same room. Each member of PQMD is a board member, and the entire board meets three times a year. These meetings consist of both formal and informal gatherings. The formal gatherings consist of various educational sessions. The informal gatherings consist of a reception the first night of the meeting, dinner the second night, and the times in between the formal sessions. A few interviewees mentioned that much of the relationship building occurs during the informal times. Also, the subcommittees, in which every member serves on a least one, meet once a month. Monthly updates and a "members only section" on the website are other ways that the members can share good news and share about projects that they are working on. "PQMD creates a setting where [the members] are close in proximity to one another" (Interviewee #1), which encourages the relationships to occur.

It seems that it is a mix of the environment that PQMD provides in its meetings, with both the formal and informal sessions, and the intentions of the members to be forthright and

having one mission that creates the forum where relationships between the organizations are fostered. The next section will look at the kinds of relationships/partnerships there are among the PQMD members.

Partnership/Relationships

The interviewees used the words *partnership* and *relationships* interchangeably throughout the interviews. One interviewee stated that one reason they joined PQMD was to find partners, and for the opportunity to network with organizations who have the same mission and high standards for relief (Interviewee #2). Another interviewee felt that one of the main functions of PQMD is to build strong relationships with other NGOs (Interviewee #9). This interviewee brought up the issue that before joining PQMD, they viewed these other NGOs more as competitors, whereas now, they believed them to be *partners* (See Question #2 for more on Competition). After more probing the interviewee said that competition is present when, "no one knows what the other is doing…what they may be doing during a disaster…what they are doing in other countries," (Interviewee #9). There were situations where, "[Organizations] would all be looking for the same type of product in the same region," therefore becoming competitors rather than working together, as partners (Interviewee #9). This interviewee saw a relationship/partnership as one where people know each other and respect each other. PQMD seems to be *facilitating* a *forum* for the member organizations to develop *relationships* with one another.

Only two interviewees saw one of the functions or purpose of PQMD specifically as fostering partnerships and building relationships with the other members. The other interviewees felt that the relationships were more of a *positive outcome* of PQMD and not a specific goal.

Trust, relationships and collaborations are the three main effects PQMD has had on its members' relationships. In the next section I will discuss these effects.

Research Question #2:

What effects has PQMD had on its NGO members' relationships with each other, especially in the context of disaster response efforts?

The Partnership for Quality Medical Donations is able to bring 27 different private and nonprofit organizations into one room, with one mission, to help provide quality medical donations to the world. Somehow PQMD is able to facilitate a forum where these different partners (prior to PQMD these might have even been seen as *competitors*) are able to *come to the same table* and have discussions. In this section, I look at the different effects PQMD has had on its NGO members' relationships with each other. I also discuss the impacts that these relationships have had on providing disaster relief. First I look at how PQMD has been able to facilitate trust among its member organizations. Next I discuss how competition has had a role within these relationships. Lastly, I discuss my findings on collaborations among the PQMD members.

Trust

Along with the explicit purpose and mission of PQMD, the interviewees discuss "side benefits" of being a part of this partnership. One such "side benefit" or "perk" of PQMD that many interviewees mentioned is the development of trust (Interviewee #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7).

Trust is an essential part of any kind of relationships, whether it is between two casual individuals, two business partners, or two organizations working together to provide humanitarian relief. One interviewee defined a trusting relationship as one where both parties are

looking out for each other's and their own best interest (Interviewee #2). Trust takes time and years of really getting to know people and the organizations working together (Interviewee #4).

Trust is also defined as having *confidence* in the other person/organization (Interviewee #7). It is important to have confidence in another organization's capability, their integrity and their abilities. This type of trust is important among these NGOs because if they collaborate with another organization and send their goods with them overseas, they need confidence that the other organization is going to have the same standards for quality delivery as they would. One-way that PQMD does ensure that the organizations all have the same standards is by instituting a strenuous courting process before a member is accepted into the partnership. They do this:

> Because they want to make sure that people understand that when you are part of this organization that you have taken, basically, a vow to do things that PQMD has said is the best practices and the best way to do things. So there is a *trust factor* coming into PQMD that no one will be part of that group that doesn't understand what all this is about and the standards that we adhered to. (Interviewee #4, emphasis mine)

This *trust factor* is an idea that was discussed in different ways by many of the interviewees. The interviewees felt that it is something that is developed over time and with the history that shows an organization has done the right things at the right places over an extended period of time. When these organizations join PQMD, they are agreeing to the *systems* that PQMD has put into place in terms of quality medical donations. PQMD is able to create a sense of accountability by using *systems*, and therefore the partners within PQMD trust one another to perform within the parameters of these standards (Interviewee #4).

Accountability and trust seem to go hand-in-hand. One interviewee specifically stated that the NGOs are able to trust one another *because* there is more accountability within the partnership. At the PQMD meetings they see each other face-to-face, and therefore, "you are more likely to follow through with projects and do them well" (Interviewee #10). The NGOs trust of one another does seem to depend more on an organization's ability to follow through, however, it is helpful for these organizations to have a sense of personal accountability.

Along with accountability, knowledge and understanding are also factors of a trusting relationship. Many interviewees discussed the idea that the knowledge they gain from each other increases their trust (Interviewee #1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7). It seems that these organizations come to the meetings and put their defenses down so that they are able to develop much deeper relationships with one another (Interviewee #7). The organizations are able to learn so much about each other because they all "take off their hats and become quite honest with each other" (Interviewee #7). They share their successes along with their errors, so that others will not make the same mistakes (Interviewee #8). Straightforward communication seems to play a considerable role in understanding and gaining more knowledge among the member organizations.

Interestingly, the interviewees felt unanimously that the trust among the NGOs has been enhanced, in one way or another, since joining the partnership. However, in terms of the trust towards donor agencies there was a mixed response. Some organizations felt that trust was *to a degree* increased because they now had an understanding of the challenges and needs of the donors. Yet, some felt that trust was not enhanced, and the relationships were not changed (Interviewees #5, 6, and 8). One interviewee stated that they understand that the donor agencies are in the business to make money and "that's just a part of working with them," and therefore

they do not expect to trust them or have relationships with them like they do with the other NGOs (Interviewee #5). Having a "greater knowledge" and therefore a "greater appreciation" of the donors (Interviewee #5) seems to be the level of expectation in the donor-agency relationship. I will discuss this issue of trust and the donor-agency relationship further in the discussion/implications section.

Another facet of trust that is present in my findings is competition among the PQMD NGO members. However, I believe this concern deserves its own section so I will discuss this topic next.

Competition

Within PQMD there seems to be a different kind of relationship that fosters trust and partnership, rather than mistrust and competition. For the organizations within PQMD, to be able to fully trust one another they must deal with the issue of competition. Only four out of the ten interviewees even mentioned competition. Two of the four stated they felt PQMD eliminates some competition because they understand one another better. Also, they discussed competition as a *healthy part* of the business that is inevitable.

Interviewee #2 discussed that there might be competition for ideas. For example, a smaller organization with less resources could be scared that a larger organization could take their idea and do it better. However, their perspective was, "then so be it, humanity is better served." Another interviewee (#6) stated that they might be *competitors* but they are all *peers*. When I probed further, the interviewee said that the NGOs are all going after the same companies for donations, but PQMD has rules that do not allow organizations to solicit personal business while they are at the meetings. But this interviewee, like Interviewee #2, had the

perspective that "as long as [the donations] get to where it needs to go, I'm happy" (Interviewee #6).

According to the interviews, it seems that the organizations within PQMD are willing to work with each other on a high level of disclosure even though there seems to be some competition. When I tried to probe further about competition, the organizations did not discuss it, or did not have much to say about it. Two of the four organizations that mentioned competition also talked about sharing resources with the other NGO members and trying to collaborate for the bigger cause. My findings show that these organizations are more focused on sharing information and working together as partners than competing with one another for resources, donations, and even ideas. It seems that due to this focus on a higher purpose--the betterment of humanity--PQMD has not only been able to establish quality donation standards, but also has prompted collaborations among its NGO members for that same purpose.

Collaboration

PQMD encourages an environment where organizations can come together and do things that they would not be able to do on their own due to a lack of resources, a lack of expertise, etc. (Interviewee #2). Due to the frequent interaction that these NGOs have with one another, they are able to know what other NGO partners are doing and the different programs they have in various countries (Interviewee #10). This knowledge creates opportunities for collaboration. The NGO representatives seemed to feel that they have "an open door" with each other and therefore can contact each other and talk at any time. "It's easier than calling an NGO that you have never talked with or never worked with" (Interviewee #8).

One example of collaboration was between Interchurch Medical Assistance (IMA) and International Aid (IA). IMA has a strong presence in Ghana and therefore is well acquainted with the different logistical issues, the management of legal and security barriers, and the oversight of material aid in that country. Due to the relationship established through PQMD, International Aid was able to coordinate a shipment of goods that IMA helped them clear customs.

PQMD has enabled member organizations to "detail their work and to provide more opportunity for collaboration" (Interviewee #4). Interviewee #3 felt that there was a definite difference felt working with PQMD during disaster relief because outside of PQMD there is not much collaboration between the responding organizations and agencies. However, they felt that within PQMD there was definite collaboration because of the Emergency Committee. PQMD's Emergency Committee was specifically created for disaster response. One of the jobs of this committee is to set up a conference call with whomever would like to join and discuss things such as, who is where, who has what resources, what areas are not being helped, etc. They are able to find out if there is any overlap in service, and so on. This is the "initial communication before anyone hits the ground, people are already talking about what they are doing and able to connect while they are there" (Interviewee # 7). The Emergency Committee has played a major role in collaborations during disaster times.

Interviewee #10 felt that collaborations might increase in the future, as the organizations are around one another for longer. However, they also stated that as personnel changes occur within the organizations, that directly affect PQMD, the process is slowed. For organizations to get to the point of working together as partners and collaborate on the field, it takes *a lot* of time to get to know one another and develop trust. It is for this very reason that PQMD members

have been able to collaborate successfully with each other during disaster times, because they have taken the time to get to know one another and develop trust *prior* to disasters like Hurricane Katrina and the Asian tsunami occurring.

Cooperation During Disaster Times

A relief setting is a lousy time to try to build relationships…it needs to be done during the quieter time[s], where you have a chance to see how folks work in a community.

(Interviewee #5)

In previous interviews focusing on the barriers to disaster relief, with the same group of organizations, we found that coordination and collaboration is chaotic during disaster relief because of the volatile circumstances (Arroyave, 2005, p. 15). Even so, PQMD has many examples of successful collaborations during disaster times.

One example of collaboration was mentioned by multiple NGOs interviewed. In response to the Asian tsunami, Heart to Heart had chartered a plane from FedEx that was headed to Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. A few of the other organizations were able to load their product on the plane too. By doing this Direct Relief, World Vision and MAP International were able to get their product to the people who needed it while alleviating the cost of chartering a plane. Collaborations like this one allow "…more of the money raised [to] be given to direct services" (Interviewee #4). There have been other similar collaborations. For example, situations where the partners of PQMD have talked with one another and found that they had product that they did not need anymore and were able to give it to another organization. By getting these

organizations talking, they are able to "make sure that there are no wasted resources" (Interviewee #4), which is discussed as a major issue in the literature (Cohen et al., 2005; Arroyave, et al., 2005; GAO, 2002).

Another example of collaboration during a disaster response was during Hurricane Katrina. Americares communicated with Heart to Heart and Northwest Medical Teams and found out that these two organizations were providing aid in Fidel and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, so they decided to direct their aid to Mississippi. The organizations coordinated with one another to ensure that there was no duplication of relief and that as many people as possible were receiving the aid that they needed. While these organizations were on the ground they continued to communicate with one another to pass information about the current situation in the area they were serving. Communication was improved because these organizations had relationships prior to the disaster. One organization representative stated that in disaster situations,

> [They] trust each other's knowledge… So it just goes faster because you don't have to develop the rapport and figure out if the person knows what they are talking about. You already have that behind you and so things go a lot faster. (Interviewee #7).

However, it should be noted that one interviewee from a very large NGO said that because of the sheer size of their organization, they are not able to interface with other NGOs during disaster response; rather, they are focused on the internal processes of their organization. This person stated that, "If you are mobilizing a response from your organization well then your people are going to be focused on how to trigger the mechanisms of your response as opposed to talking to half a dozen others" (Interviewee #5). This organization did not mean to disparage the

relationships they have with other PQMD members or the Emergency Committee at PQMD, but rather was stating that it is not useful to them in a disaster situation.

As a whole it seems that more NGO members perceived there was a significant enhancement in both trust and collaboration among the NGO members due to PQMD. The interviews suggested three main effects of PQMD on its member NGOs. First, it enhanced trust between the NGO members. However, trust is not necessarily enhanced between and among NGO members and their donor agencies. Secondly, competition is discussed as being overlooked for the betterment of humanity and also as being a healthy part of business. Thirdly, collaborations are enhanced compared to the partnerships outside of PQMD. Therefore, as collaborations in general are increased so are collaborations during disaster times because of the *prior* relationships that these organizations have with one another due to the partnership. The next section ties my interview findings to the literature.

DISCUSSION

The Partnership for Quality Medical Donations originally came together as a response to the need for standards and accountability in medical donations. However, it seems to have become a tool for communication and coordination of humanitarian aid as well. At the outset, I expected to find that the coordination of humanitarian aid and building relationships was a main mission of PQMD. Yet, the findings from the interviews revealed that trust, relationships, and collaborations were only a byproduct of the main purpose. PQMD has been able to create naturally what researchers are trying to figure out how to accomplish. Although, PQMD is working on a much smaller scale, researchers looking at how to better coordinate humanitarian aid on a worldwide scale can glean lessons from the synergy of this group.

In this section I tie the findings from the interviews back to the literature. I also discuss the possible implications of these findings. The literature shows the lack of central authority to be one main cause of poor coordination, not only during disaster responses but for humanitarian aid delivery in general. In this first section I compare how PQMD, on a small scale, has been able to mitigate the barrier of a lack of central authority. Next, I discuss how PQMD has been able to facilitate partnerships through the development of trust. Then, I examine how trust plays a role in the mitigation of competition. Finally, I discuss how trust plays a role in the donor-agency relationship.

Barriers to Disaster Relief: Lack of Central Authority

One of the issues that I discussed in my literature review as a barrier to disaster relief was a lack of central coordination/authority during disaster response as a cause of poor coordination. In essence, the literature discusses that there is a need for central coordination among humanitarian aid organizations; however, there is also reluctance on behalf of NGOs to hand over their own powers and take commands from a "higher" authority.

Newell and Swan (2000) suggest that in effect, a central authority provides a sense of accountability and trust among organizations, which provides an environment for organizations to freely coordinate inter-organizationally. My findings show that PQMD has been able to provide such an environment, where there is a sense of accountability and trust among the member organizations. Repeatedly, the interviewees stated that trust has been enhanced among the member NGOs because of PQMD. One organization directly stated that accountability is increased, while many others alluded to the idea of accountability because they are "face-to-face" with these organizations on a regular basis. Has PQMD been able to create an alternative model for central coordination? Perhaps PQMD is more of a central coordinator rather than a central authority? Or perhaps PQMD is not the coordinator or the authority, but rather, a venue that facilitates trust and accountability where the organizations do the coordination and have the authority?

What is the difference between a central authority and a central coordinator? Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines authority as: 1) power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior; and 2) person(s) in command; a governmental agency or corporation to administer a revenue-producing public enterprise. Webster's defines coordinator as: 1) to put in the same order or rank; and 2) to bring into a common action, movement, or condition: to harmonize. According to these definitions, PQMD is neither exerting any power or influence over its

members[10], nor is it necessarily bringing the group to common action, movement or condition. However, the organizations within the partnership are all likeminded in their mission. It seems that PQMD is only a venue that facilitates trust and accountability where the member organizations themselves do the coordination and have a *shared authority*.

My findings support Stephenson's (2006) definition of interorganizational networks. He states that "Interorganizational networks diffuse power and authority and create interdependence by definition" (p. 42). Stephenson draws on Stone's (1989) discussion on "power over" and "power to." Stone states that:

> If society is not neatly integrated into a hierarchy of command and control, the problems of governance cannot be reduced to the question of who holds authority over others. Instead—assuming that numerous centers of authority exist, each pursuing its own ends—the purpose of governance is not to command but to create the capacity to act—to create the 'power to' accomplish collective goals. This is done by creating arrangements that allow numerous authorities to cooperate to achieve collective goals. (Stephenson, 2006, p. 46)

According to Stone's analysis, PQMD has been able to "not command but to create the capacity to act… to accomplish the collective goal" of better serving humanity. Within PQMD, each member is a "center of authority." Stephenson (2006) states that creating this type of network is a challenge. However, PQMD must be up for the challenge, because they have created a network where "sustained and sustainable communication ties among actors that are

[10] However, I am unclear if it does have any stipulations for membership.

linked most basically by their common interest to develop a capacity to act without the imposition of unifying control" (p. 47). It appears that PQMD is able to create this environment because of the mutual respect that is developed among the members over years, along with the likemindedness in mission and purpose.

Earlier in my literature review, I discussed that since a central overseer of disasters does not seem to be a realistic solution, for various reasons, maybe there should to be an alternative model that humanitarian aid organizations can look to in order to provide the best (fill in the blank) possible. Stephenson (2006) in his paper on a descriptive model for humanitarian aid seems to suggest a similar idea. Stephenson argues that, "the operating environment of humanitarian assistance is best conceived as an interorganizational social network… and that the problem of power and authority in such situations must be reconceptualized" (p. 42). The next question would be to understand if PQMD is a successful example of an "interorganizational social network" providing humanitarian aid?

Stephenson (2006) advocates a network approach rather than a "single authoritative agency actor" (p. 51). He states that there needs to be "development of organizational networks in which stakeholders develop a robust array of communication channels that foster interorganizational awareness and, finally, individual, institutional, and network learning" (p. 46). PQMD is a tangible example of what Stephenson is discusses in his paper. PQMD has multiple channels of communication, such as: the board meetings that are held three times a year, committee meetings that occur at least once a month, a website where organizations share good news and information about the different projects that they are involved in, and so on. The interviews show that PQMD is seen as a *forum* where the members can talk candidly, *share best practices*, and where they can *learn about each other's organizations* and their *strengths and*

weaknesses. PQMD members have ongoing relationships where this type of information is constantly being shared across the different types of communication channels without a central power or top-down control, which is the ideal situation (Stephenson, 2006, p. 53).

It should be noted that Stephenson and other researchers seem to all be looking at humanitarian relief coordination on a large scale, while PQMD is only an organization of 27 partners and therefore a very small portion of the relief scenario. However, the question I pose is: could PQMD be a model for coordination on a larger scale? Could PQMD be a case study of a network organization that proves Stephenson's theory on interorganizational social networks to be an effective form of coordination, and possibly the more naturally occurring form? It seems that trust is naturally being developed through the time these organizations spend together, which in turn is facilitating partnerships to occur.

Facilitating Partnership by Developing Trust

The literature discusses trust as an indispensable part of effective interorganizational coordination (Kapucu, 2006; Stephenson, 2005; Newell & Swan, 2000; Hardin, 1982). Yet, much of the literature also says, for example, that "[The] environment in which humanitarian agents work and the typical structure of their operational relationships," is not conducive to building trusting relationships (Stephenson, 2005, p. 337). However, according to my findings, PQMD has been able to overcome this problem, and has created a trusting environment in which NGOs are able to work together and form collaborations

There are many different definitions of the word trust. Zaheer et al. (1998) has a three part definition of the word trust: "the expectation that an actor (1) can be relied on to fulfill obligations, (2) will behave in a predictable manner, and (3) will act and negotiate fairly when

the possibility for opportunism is present" (p. 143). According to the interviews, the members of PQMD are able to 1) trust one another to fulfill obligations and 2) trust one another to act a certain way. In essence, it looks as if accountability and trust are very closely related and quite possibly could be used interchangeably in Zaheer's definition. How is PQMD able to create this type of trust and accountability?

It appears that PQMD's strenuous courting period to become a member brings the NGOs and the companies on to the same playing field with the same mindset. When an organization becomes a part of PQMD, they have agreed to do things the way PQMD has set out. The standards or systems that PQMD has in place ensure likemindedness:

> We rely on systems. When [the] groups say "we know that this system works" and if everyone would agree to this particular system, to this particular practice, these particular guidelines, then we know that … we trust each other to perform within the parameters of that system. (Interviewee #4)

The organization's history allows them to know that the other agencies are noteworthy groups and have proven track records (Interviewee #4).

Also, there is level of transparency among the PQMD members that helps create accountability and trust. Many interviewees said that they are able to discuss both their successes and their failures with each other and therefore are able to learn from one another. Also, it is because of this transparency that there have been collaborations like the FedEx airlift to Sri Lanka. Organizations have a mutual trust that allows them to share their resources, their ideas, information about their programs, etc. It would be interesting to do a follow up set of

questions to find out what level of transparency the members have with one another. Interviewee #1 stated that trust is stronger between some members than others, and that, "trust is tempered by the issues … depending on the level of control they want to give one another." This last comment makes me wonder if I probed deep enough to gauge how well these organizations trust each other. However, that was not my purpose in this study. My purpose was to see if the NGOs within PQMD feel that the trust has been enhanced within the parameters of PQMD compared to outside the group. The answer to that question was a resounding "yes" and "absolutely."

In Figure 1 in the literature review section, Stephenson (2005) summarizes four types of trust based on the works of several other scholars. The four types of trust are companion, competence, commitment and swift. PQMD seems to fit all categories of trust except swift. According to Stephenson these forms of trust are typically nonexistent in the humanitarian environment; however, they seem to exist among the PQMD members.

According to Stephenson's (2005) definition the representatives from each organization that sits at the board of PQMD is a boundary spanner. Companion trust is when the boundary spanner[11] of an organization "places in a counterpart in a network organization that is based on judgments of goodwill or friendship" (Stephenson, 2005, p. 345). The interviews show that many relationships exist between the PQMD representatives that are beyond formal. One interviewee discussed that there is a professional level of trust in that the members consider each other trusted advisors with an understanding of limitations, but then you have some people who are great friends and then there is a personal level of trust present (Interviewee #1).

[11] "Those individuals actively interacting with members of another organization" (Stephenson, 2005, p. 345).

There is also Competence trust within PQMD. As I discussed earlier, the organizations trust one another on the basis that they know that they will carry out the needed tasks. Interviewee #4 stated that, "you don't mind having a certain group [within PQMD] taking your product … [because] they are going to provide you with a report [showing what they did with it]." There is also the Commitment level of trust within PQMD. Although there is no contractual agreement between these organizations, they do trust one another to adhere to the standards of the group. Then finally there is Swift trust. Swift trust is "based on contextual cues rather than inter-personal ties" (Stephenson, 2005, p. 345). This type does not exist within PQMD because there is no basis for it. The organizations within PQMD work together because of relationships and partnerships established prior to a disaster situation. PQMD's members believe that, for example, "During a disaster is not the time to exchange business cards!" (Interviewee #1). Throughout the literature there is discussion about the difficulties in building trusting relationships during a disaster situation, which PQMD is mitigating by developing the relationships prior to an emergency situation.

Kapucu discusses three pathways in which social networks can improve the performance of collaboration in emergencies:

> (1) Social networks increase interaction among organizations that can lead to development of trust which reduce transaction costs; (2) trust and reciprocity provide a kind of informal social control within dense network relations; (3) social networks facilitate the rapid dissemination of information among members of the organizational network. (Kapucu, 2006, p. 210)

There is definitely an increase of interaction between the member organizations in PQMD, which has increased trust and therefore led to collaborations that have reduced costs for multiple organizations (i.e. the FedEx airlift). Kapucu's second point concerning trust and reciprocity is very interesting to think about in the context of PQMD. It is clear that between the NGOs there is trust and reciprocity, which in turn does create an informal social control or accountability. However, it is not clear that this reciprocity and trust exists between the donors and the NGOs. Can there be reciprocity between the *Donor* and the *Agent*? This is an ancient question that researchers have been studying for many years, the donor-agent relationship. It would be interesting to do more research and find out what the pharmaceutical/medical product companies feel about their relationships with the agents and whether they see it as an equal partnership. The Corporate Social Responsibility Reports of some of these companies refer to the NGOs as their "partners." So, at first glance it is fair to say that the donor companies do see the NGOs as partners and equals. However, would it not be a better gauge of the situation to look from the bottom-up rather than from the top-down?[12]

Also, one of Kapucu's (2006) findings from the World Trade Center (WTC) study was that success of humanitarian aid action depends on the willingness of different organizations to work together. Again, PQMD has been able to create this environment that Kapucu discusses. All of the organizations that are apart of PQMD come in with one mission in mind--to provide quality medical donations to the world--and they are willing to work with one another to make that goal a reality. The social networks that PQMD has created definitely increase the ability of information to flow from one organization to another. One example of this is the Emergency Committee and the conference calls that happen immediately after a disaster situation occurs.

[12] I will be so presumptuous to say there is a hierarchy present in a donor-agent relationship.

According to Stephenson (2005), "Trust plays a vital role in establishing the conditions for effective coordination among otherwise separate organizations in the humanitarian relief environment" (p. 343). But the big question is, how do you establish trust among organizations that are different, and competing with one another for resources and ideas? Looking at my findings, I conclude that PQMD has been able to do this because of four main factors. The first is the idea of likemindedness. The members within PQMD have all come together for one main purpose, to create standards for medical donations. The NGOs are also likeminded in their organizational missions, to provide humanitarian aid for people in need around the world. Also, the members are likeminded in their willingness to work together, which is implicit in their agreement to accept PQMD's systems/standards. The second is knowledge and understanding of each other's organizations and their history. All of the interviews in one way or another discussed that trust was enhanced because they understood one another better and knew the other organizations history. The third factor is transparency. The NGO members all discussed that information is shared openly[13] whether at the formal meetings or through informal times. The final factor is accountability. The NGO members trust one another's word that they will perform as they say and they refer to two main reasons: 1) they trust the systems that PQMD has in place, and 2) they have face-to-face accountability. Although, PQMD seems to have developed trust in the face of many obstacles, according to the literature a major hindrance of NGOs having trusting relationships is competition.

Trust and Competition

[13] I use this term loosely. I would need to ask more specific questions about the information that is shared, or be present at the meetings to observe at what level they are forthright with their organizational information.

Competition undermines coordination and collaboration on many levels. It highlights the motivational structures underpinning relief efforts. According to David McEntire (1997), "although the international relief community is frequently referred to as a system, this statement is an inaccurate depiction of those agencies and organizations which provide relief" (p. 223). As many scholars point out, the "system" is "frequently marked by competition and rivalry for public attention and available resources" (Granot, 1997, p. 305), and that problems are caused by a "crowded and highly competitive aid market in which multiple organizations compete for contracts from the same donors" (Cooley & Ron, 2002, p. 17). Unfortunately for many INGOs, "Securing new funding is an ever-expanding part of [their] function, pushing other concerns – such as ethics, project efficacy, or self-criticism – to the margins" (Cooley & Ron, 2002, p. 16). Resources include not only dollars, but also donors' time and the media's attention (Arroyave, et al., 2005, p. 19).

Despite the plethora of information on competition in the literature, only four NGO representatives mentioned competition. In my prior interviews, again only three NGO representatives discussed competition as a barrier to disaster relief. Interestingly, two of the NGOs that discuss competition are the same in both sets of interviews. The interviewees discussed competition in a very different light than is portrayed in the literature. All three of the interviewees saw competition as a healthy part of business. And, two of the three interviewees stated that competition was lessened because of PQMD.

In the previous set of interviews with the same NGOs, even though there were only three representatives that discussed competition, they discussed it more fully. I am curious if the context the interview questions were asked in made a difference in the responses? The context of the first set of interviews was barriers to disaster relief and the context of interviews for the

current study were about PQMD as a partnership and how it functions. Although the responses were not necessarily different, they were shared with a different tone. The gist of my findings are the following: 1) competition creates barriers to disaster relief, 2) competition is lessened within the partnerships at PQMD, 3) competition is a natural part of business and can be good, and 4) the NGO members of PQMD are willing to work together in collaboration in spite of existing competition.

It is not possible to eliminate all competition because there are too many factors that play into why it exists within the humanitarian relief framework. However, maybe the aim should be to lessen competition so that it doesn't completely hinder collaborations, while increasing trust among organizations in one another's ability and willingness to perform in a certain manner, which is what PQMD seems to have been able to create. The NGO members of PQMD are able to work with one another and share ideas and resources in the face of competition because of their higher call to better serve humanity. However, this same *type* of trust that exists between the NGO members do not seem to exist between the agencies and the donors. In the previous two sections I discussed trust among the NGO members, but it is also important to understand the dynamics of trust between the agencies and the donors.

Trust: Agency and Donor

One interesting finding is that only two of the nine NGO members interviewed stated that trust was *somewhat* enhanced between them and the donor agencies. All of the NGOs that I interviewed stated that trust was in some way or another enhanced between the other NGOs and their organization. It seems that the interviewees were not even expecting trust to be enhanced between their organizations and the donor agencies. One interviewee discussed that it is not

even a matter of trust with the donor agencies because they are in a different playing field (Interviewee #5).

> I see trust being enhanced more with the NGOs. With the donors… they have different situation… they have their own challenges… I see that with some donors trust has been enhanced but with others the relationship hasn't gone either way. (Interviewee #8)

This same interviewee stated that they would like to see more interaction and more cooperation between the private and the nonprofit organizations. In my findings the only collaborations that were discussed were between the NGO members. Does this imply that these collaborations do not occur at all? Or maybe they are so far and few between that the interviewees do not think to mention them?

As I discussed in the above section, the NGO members are able to look past the competition and share information and resources because of the public good. However, when discussing the private donors there was no mention of the public good, but rather a mention of business and making money. One organization stated that they understand that the donor companies are in "the business of making money" and therefore you have to understand that "it," referring to a lack of trust, is apart of working with them.

This brings up an interesting issue of trust and partnership. In a majority of the interviews, when the NGOs were referring to their partnerships and collaborations, they were speaking of the other NGO members. However, when speaking of the private companies within PQMD, they referred to them as "the donors." One interviewee discussed how a partnership is one where the organizations are working for a common goal. "If it's a true partnership it's a

win-win for all parties involved," (Interviewee #2). Do the NGOs feel that they "win" in their relationship with the donors? Or is there less of a peer relationship between donor and agent, and more of a top-down authoritative relationship? Or maybe, between the donor and agent there is not the same "likemindedness" in terms of their organizational mission?

The literature states that, "Partnerships can … be perceived as a social exchange that involves commitment of knowledge, skills and emotions by leaders and staff of participating organizations" (Kapucu, 2006, p. 207). It would be interesting to learn if the donor members of PQMD see the NGO members as partners and how they define the word. Maybe there is a difference in the way private companies view partnership versus how nonprofit organizations view partnership. Another interesting aspect to further research would be the role of equality, status and respect in partnerships. An idea that was discussed in the interviews was that they are able have trust among one another because they all come to the same table as equals. However, looking back at the interviews it is not clear whether the NGOs were speaking solely of other NGOs or if they were speaking for the partnership as a whole, including the private companies. Even though PQMD has not necessarily *enhanced* trust between the NGO members and the donor members, it has provided a venue where they have a "greater knowledge" of these companies and therefore a "greater appreciation" of them (Interviewee #5).

In this section I have discussed many different aspects of PQMD and how the partnership is affecting the relationships between its partnering members. PQMD has been able to naturally develop trusting relationships, which in turn has facilitated partnerships and collaboration. Also, the environment that PQMD has created enables the NGOs to work with one another, and share ideas and resources in spite of competition due to their higher calling, the public good. Then looking at the donor-agent relationships, PQMD has provided a venue where the NGOs have a

better understanding of and appreciation for the companies. In the next section, I will discuss the implications for these findings and what it means in the big picture.

CONCLUSION/IMPLICATIONS

There is evidence to show that prior established relationships do in fact increase trust, even if a little. My research found that the barrier of trust was in fact mitigated by PQMD compared to if these agencies had to work alone and establish relationships in the middle of a disaster situation. PQMD does not seem to be specifically pursuing creating ways for trust to be enhanced within the partnership, especially between the donor companies and the NGO members. It seems that if PQMD focused on building more trust between its partners, it would become even more successful in providing humanitarian aid. However, it is important to restate that the collaborations and partnerships are a by-product of PQMD's mission to create standards for quality medical donations. Understanding how this partnership works will make a big difference in understanding what direction to move towards to find a better model for disaster relief in a time where organizations are moving away from hierarchical structures to lateral network structures.

So, what does this all mean? What are the implications of my findings for the enhancement of disaster relief? The three themes that I see running through my findings are that time, likemindedness and accountability/transparency are essential for the development of trust, in turn the development of partnerships, in turn the development of collaborations. It is clear that time spent together, time talking with one another, time seeing each other's track record, etc., has developed the trust that these NGOs have with one another. To be able to facilitate the type of companionship, competence and commitment trust (Stephenson, 2006) that PQMD has takes years of building deliberate *prior* relationships. What does this mean for the bigger picture?

Quite possibly this means that NGOs have to be proactive/aggressive in building these networks today and not waiting for tomorrow after a disaster has occurred. Once a disaster has happened, it is too late to start building trust. Maybe NGOs do not think it is important to spend the time, the money or the person power to build these relationships, but it seems to me that more money, time and person power is wasted as a result of not having these prior relationships. Perhaps there needs to be a paid position called "boundary spanner" that is 100% devoted to building these relationships.

Another important finding was the likemindedness that was continually discussed within the interviews. In the literature, there is not much discussion of this topic. A good question to ask is whether PQMD is able to mitigate barriers like competition, and a lack of central command because of their likemindedness in purpose--providing medical donations? Could a potential framework for networking be, that organizations that provide the same type of aid work together, like PQMD? For example, all organizations providing humanitarian aid in the form of clothing partner together, and all of the organizations providing aid in the form of food work together.

This leads me into the next topic of accountability and transparency. Possibly, having a network of organizations coming together that are working in the same area of humanitarian aid would create accountability and transparency. Before PQMD was formed, who were these organizations truly accountable too? What type of accountability is there for other humanitarian organizations? Obviously, medical donations are of a more serious nature and could have serious consequences if not done properly; however, does this mean that other nonprofits should not have the same accountability in other areas? Maybe PQMD could be used as a framework for accountability within the third sector. Maybe interorganizational networks that diffuse

power, diffuse authority, and create interdependence would be the best type of accountability for this sector in our economy. The public sector has its checks and balances. The private sector has many controls that watch over the happenings. But who watches over the nonprofit sector?

Finally, my findings have implications for the donor-agent relationship. One question that was brought up in my discussion was whether NGOs could really expect the for-profit organizations to be likeminded in their mission for the public good? Is this a realistic expectation considering the for-profit organizations are just that, for profit? According to my findings, the answer seems to be "no." What does this mean for the new forms of philanthropy (Ostrander, 2007; Eikenberry, 2007; 2005)? Do donors really want to be more intimately involved in the process and "getting their hands dirty" or are they "in it for the business"? New Philanthropy suggests that there is a move toward this type of thinking but maybe the for-profit world has not caught up to this change in thinking? However, it could be that the process of change is slow, and PQMD has to be mindful of helping to facilitate this transformation. Ultimately, if NGOs want to truly facilitate trust and coordination, they will have to put in the time, money, and person power to creating this type of relationship/partnership/collaboration.

FUTURE RESEARCH

There are several directions that future research could take building on the findings of this study. This study will hopefully be a part of a larger study to understand how networks are being used to mitigate barriers to disaster response, and can be used by other NGOs as a model for effective disaster relief. If it is established that formal network partnerships can mitigate trust and coordination barriers during disaster response, it will be important to create a model for other NGOs to use. In order to create one or more models, the next step of my research could be to look into how these three different formal network organizations (CAN, NVOAD, and PQMD) function and work together. It would be interesting to compare and contrast these organizations and see how they are similar and different from one another. Then to take this another step forward and make it a more thorough investigation, it would be important to find and examine other formal NGO networks.

One possible area of this research could be faith-based organizations (FBO). During my study, it became apparent that FBOs have been using the network structure to respond to disaster situations for many years. A future study could investigate FBOs to see how their networks work and how effective they are at mitigating different barriers that are present for NGOs when responding to a disaster situation. It would be interesting to see what "best practices" the rest of the humanitarian sector could learn. It would be beneficial to see if there are similarities of differences between the experiences of these NGOs and whether the PQMD responses are an isolated case.

Another question that could be asked is whether the number of members involved in the network makes a difference in the ability to create trust and truly mitigate the barriers. PQMD is an organization of 27 agencies. How do the partnerships, relationships and level of trust today compare to when the organization was smaller or to other organizations that have fifty or more partnerships? How does PQMD compare to networks like NVOAD? And if size does matter, what does that mean for organizations like NVOAD? What implications would this have ultimately for disaster relief? Would it be best to have small networks that focus on different areas of relief, like medical donations, transportation, security, telecommunication, etc.?

REFERENCES

Arroyave, V., Cooper, T., and Dilanian, M. (2005). *Report: Key barriers faced by NGOs in responding to disasters internationally and domestically.* Unpublished manuscript.

Berg, B. L. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Boris, E. T., & Steuerle, C. E. (Eds.). (2006). After Katrina: Public expectation and charities' response. The Urban Institute, Emerging Issues in Philanthropy Seminar Series. Cambridge, MA: The Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London: Sage Publications.

Cohen, S., Inderfurth, K., & D. Fabrycky. (2005, December). The tsunami report card. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved March 20, 2006, from http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3314&fpsrc=ealert051213

Cooley, A., & Ron, J. (2002). The NGO scramble: Organizational insecurity and the political economy of transnational action. *International Security, 27*, 5-39.

Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN). (2007). Retrieved January 19, 2007 from http://www.can.org/solutions.htm.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology, 13*, 3-21.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dulany, P., & Winder, D. (2001). The status of the trends in private philanthropy in the southern hemisphere. A discussion paper for the executive session on the Future of Philanthropy of the International Network on Strategic Philanthropy. New York: The Synergos Institute.

Eikenberry, Angela, M. (2005). Fundraising or promoting philanthropy? A qualitative study of the Massachusetts catalogue for philanthropy. *International Journal of the Nonprofit Voluntary Sector, 10*, 137-149.

Eikenberry, Angela, M. (2007). Philanthropy, voluntary association, and governance beyond the state. *Administration & Society, 39*, 857-882.

Feagin, J., Orum, A., & Sjoberg, G. (Eds.), (1991). *A case for case study*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Frumkin, P. (2002). *On being nonprofit*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Granot, H. (1997). Emergency inter-organizational relationships. *Disaster Prevention and Management*, *6*, 305-309.

Haddow, G. D., & Bullock, J. A. (2003). *Introduction to emergency management*. Newton, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann

Kapucu, N. (2006). Interagency communication networks during emergencies: Boundary spanners in multiagency coordination. *American Review of Public Administration, 36*, 207-225.

Kapucu, N., & Van Wart, M. (2006). The evolving role of the public sector in managing catastrophic disasters: Lessons learned. *Administration & Society*, *38*, 279-308.

Linden, R. M. (2002). *Working across boundaries: Making collaboration work in government and nonprofit organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1995). *Designing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

McCarthy, K. D., Hodgkinson, V. A., Sumariwalla, R. D., and Associates. (1992). *The nonprofit sector in the global community*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

McEntire, David, A. (1997). Reflecting on the weaknesses of the international community during the IDNDR: some implications for research and its application. *Disaster Prevention and Management, 4,* 221-233.

Merriam Webster Online. (2007). Retrieved on March 6, 2007 from http://209.161.33.50/dictionary/network.

Moore, S., D., M., & Eng, E. (2003). International NGOs and the role of network centrality in humanitarian aid operations: A case study of coordination during the 2000 Mozambique floods. *Disasters*, *27*, 305-318.

Newell, S., & Swan, J. (2000). Trust and inter-organizational networking. Human Relations, *53*, 1287 – 1328.

NVOAD website. (2007). Retrieved on January 8, 2007 from http://www.nvoad.org/articles/paradigm.php

Ostrander, Susan, A. (2007). The growth of donor control: Revisiting the social relations of philanthropy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 36*, 356-372.

Ozerdem, A., & Jacoby, T. (2006). *Disaster management and civil society: Earthquake relief in Japan, Turkey and India*. London: I. B. Tauris.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Sobel, R. S., & Leeson, P. T. (2006). Government's response to Hurricane Katrina: A public choice analysis. *Public Choice*, *127*, 55-73.

Stephenson, M. (2005). Making humanitarian relief networks more effective: Operational coordination, trust and sense making. *Disasters*, *29*, 337-350.

Stephenson, M. (2006). Toward a descriptive model of humanitarian assistance coordination. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *17*, 41- 57.

Stephenson, M. & Schnitzer, M. (2006a). Inter-organizational trust, boundary spanning and humanitarian relief coordination. Paper presented at the 67th National Conference of the American Society for Public Administration.[14]

Stephenson, M. & Schnitzer, M. (2006b). The role of trust and boundary spanning behavior in humanitarian assistance coordination. *Non-Profit Management and Leadership*, *17*, 211-233.

Stone, C. (1989). *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946–1988*. University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS.

[14] I have received permission to cite this article.

Takeda, M. B., & Helms, M. M. (2006). Bureaucracy, meet catastrophe: Analysis of the tsunami disaster relief efforts and their implications for global emergency governance. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, *19*, 204-217.

Tellis, W. (1997). Introduction to case study. *The Qualitative Report*, 3. Retrieved on March 14, 2007 from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-2/tellis1.html

The Partnership for Quality Medical Donations (PQMD). (2007). Retrieved March 27, 2006, from http://www.pqmd.org.

U. S. General Accounting Office (GAO). (2002, December). *Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate: September 11: More Effective Collaboration Could Enhance Charitable Organizations' Contributions in Disasters*. Washington, D.C.: U. S. General Accounting Office.

U. S. General Accounting Office (GAO). (2005, December). *Hurricanes Katrina and Rita: Provision of charitable assistance*. Washington D.C.: U. S. General Accounting Office.

Van Alstyne, M. (1997). The state of network organization: A survey in three frameworks. *Journal of Organizational Computing*, *7*, 83-157.

Yin, R. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods* (1st ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing.

Yin, R. (1993). *Applications of case study research*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing.

Weiss, R. (1994). *Learning from strangers; The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. New York: The Free Press.

Zaheer, A., . McEvily, B., & Perrone, V. (1998). Does trust matter? Exploring the effects of interorganizational and interpersonal trust on performance. *Organization Science*, *9*, 141-159.

APPENDIX A

As of October 2007 PQMD members include (in alphabetical order):

Abbott Laboratories

AmeriCares

BD

Boehringer Ingelheim Cares Foundation, Inc.

Bristol-Myers Squibb Company

Catholic Medical Mission Board

Direct Relief International

Eli Lilly and Company

Genzyme

GlaxoSmithKline

Heart to Heart International

Hospira

Interchurch Medical Assistance (IMA)

International Aid

Johnson & Johnson

MAP International

Medical Teams International

Merck & Co. Inc.

Mercy Ships

National Cancer Coalition

Pfizer Inc.

Project HOPE

sanofi-aventis US

Schering-Plough Corporation

U.S. Fund for UNICEF

World Vision

Wyeth Pharmaceuticals

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

1. What do you see as the main function or purpose of PQMD? (Watch for words like Network, partnership, tight knit group… ask to define)
2. In what ways, if any, has PQMD impacted your organization?
    a. If YES: Could you describe in more detail an area that PQMD has had a big impact on your org.?
    b. If NO: Why do think this is the case? (Why do you stay w/ the org then?)
3. Do you think your organization interacts with other NGOs/nonprofits in a different way because of PQMD? How so? Can you provide examples?
    a. In what ways did you interact with the other NGOs in PQMD during [Hurricane Katrina and the Asian tsunami]?
    b. Did PQMD influence how you responded to the Asian Tsunami or Hurricane Katrina? In what ways?
    c. Do you think being a part of a partnership like PQMD has enhanced the degree to which you trust other NGOs (meaning the ones in PQMD) during disaster response situations? Why or why not? (probe on how they define trust)
    d. Do you think being a part of PQMD has enhanced the degree to which you trust donor agencies during disaster response? Why or why not?