

The Paradox of Coordination and Conflicts in Organisations

Thesis submitted for PhD by

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Introduction

Coordination and conflicts unarguably have significant consequences on workplace dynamics. Coordination has always been at the centre of organisation theory (Argote 1982, Endstrom and Galbraith 1977, Kraut et al. 1982, March and Simon 1958, Okhuysen and Bechky 2009a, Taylor 1916, Van de Ven et al. 1976). The importance of intra-organisational coordination, i.e., coordination among organisational actors is increasing as organisations are facing more and more volatile and uncertain environments characterised by discontinuous change (Bourgeois and Eisenhardt 1989, Brown and Eisenhardt 1997). Furthermore, as organisations are increasingly relying on multidisciplinary teams or workgroups to achieve their goals in such environments (Cunha and Louro 2000, Edmondson 1999, 2002, Edmondson and Nembhard 2009, Oborn and Dawson 2010), coordination has shifted from being considered a structural, designable mechanism (Argote 1982, Galbraith 1977, Lawrence and Lorsh 1967, Malone and Crowston 1994, Thompson 1967) to an emergent process contingent on knowledge integration and management of task interdependencies (Bechky 2003, 2006, Bechky and Chung 2018, Faraj and Xiao 2006, Majchrzak et al. 2007, 2012).

Conflict is as much an inevitable and pervasive aspect of organisational life as coordination is (Pondy 1967, Johnson and Stinson 1975, Katz and Kahn 1978, Lawrence and Lorsch 1967). Lipsky et al. (2003, p.8) define organisational conflict as *'any organisational friction that produces a mismatch in expectations of the proper course of action'* of organisational actors. North (1968) defined that *'a conflict emerges when two or more persons or groups seek to possess the same object, occupy the same space or the same exclusive position, play incompatible roles, maintain incompatible goals, or undertake mutually incompatible means for achieving their purposes'*.

As organisational tasks are becoming increasingly complex requiring different individuals to work together in performing such tasks and achieving organisational goals, the potential for incompatible goals, courses of action and tensions among them also increase. As a result, a paradoxical relationship exists between coordination and conflict that organisational actors need to balance on a thin line. On one hand, they need to coordinate with each other to combine and build on their skills, expertise and knowledge. On the other hand, when they work together, various sorts of disagreements, discrepancies and conflicts

arise between them that act as hurdles for efficient coordination. While the pieces of literature on coordination and conflicts independently looked at these dynamics in organisations, we lack a holistic, coherent understanding of how they both go hand in hand. In this thesis, I ask the overarching research question: *'How do organisational actors working together towards common objectives balance the paradox of coordination and conflicts?'*

The three papers of this thesis together aim to answer this question from different perspectives; the first paper uses a lens of organisational routines, the second builds on Erving Goffman's concept of impression management, and the third explores the representational gaps arising in cross-functional, multidisciplinary teams. I will first discuss the paradoxical nature of coordination and conflicts in organisations and then briefly introduce the three papers before going to the next papers.

The paradoxical nature of coordination and conflicts in organisations

Coordination — managing interdependencies among activities (Malone and Crowston 1994) — is one of a firm's most formidable challenges (Bruns 2013). Two streams of inquiry exist in the literature that explore coordination in organisations. One stream explores coordination in practice by organisational actors; scholars have studied how organisational actors achieve coordination in practice (Bechky 2003, Carlile 2002, 2004, Kellogg et al. 2006, Faraj and Xiao 2006) through various approaches such as using boundary objects (Carlile 2002), product hand-offs (Bechky 2003) and other coordination practices (eg. Faraj and Xiao 2006, Kellogg et al. 2006). The other stream focused exclusively on coordination in cross-functional teams; coordination is a key process for group and team effectiveness as well (Cohen and Bailey 1997, McGrath and Argote 2001). Coordination improves team performance in innovative tasks (Hoegl and Gemuenden 2001) while ineffective coordination leads to process losses and negatively affects the team's outcomes (Steiner 1972, Wilke and Meertens 1994). The first two papers of this thesis contribute to coordination in practice approach while the third focuses on coordination in cross-functional teams.

Earlier research on coordination has elaborated on planning and communication as basic mechanisms of coordination in organisations; they were considered *explicit coordination* as members use them intentionally to manage their multiple interdependencies (Espinosa et al. 2004, Malone and Crowston 1994). For instance, March and Simon (1958) introduced 'programming' as coordination via planning while other scholars have talked

about impersonal coordination (Van de Ven et al. 1976) and administrative coordination (Faraj and Sproull 2000). However, as Rico et al. (2008) state, this focus on explicit coordination offered a static picture of group functioning. It enables organisational actors to manage stable and predictable aspects of work, and avert conflicts in formalised contexts with clear goals, processes and interdependencies. However, organisations no longer enjoy the advantage of such clear, distinct goals and interdependencies in today's complex world characterised by uncertainty, industry disruptions and increasing agency of employees. Rico et al. (2008) talk about another form of coordination, namely *implicit coordination*, that, unlike explicit coordination, reflects the team's capability 'to act in concert'. Thus, team members predict the requirements to perform the task and adjust according to the tasks' needs, and even behaviors and actions of other team members (eg. MacMillan et al. 2004), without the need for explicit communication (Espinosa et al. 2004, Fiore et al. 2001, MacMillan et al. 2004). Along these lines, Bruns (2013) defines coordination as an ongoing process of addressing emerging and potentially unprecedented circumstances.

Implicit coordination comprises of two basic components: *anticipation* in terms of expectations and predictions of their teammates' actions and needs as well as the task demands without being directly notified of them; and *dynamic adjustment* where team members consistently and continuously change and adapt their behaviours and actions based on ongoing progress and changes in the team's tasks (see Rico et al. 2008). These two components appear across the literature in different forms. Among the most common were the concepts of collective mind (Weick and Roberts 1993) and habitual routines (Gersick and Hackman 1990). The collective mind is a pattern of heedful interrelations among organisational actors and their actions (Weick and Roberts 1993). Collective mind captures the collective action of the team, with no clear distinction between cognition and action (Rico et al. 2008). Similar to but distinct from the collective mind, habitual routines are patterns of responses to predictable situations (Gersick and Hackman 1990). They capture the repetitive patterns of action under particularly similar situations and contexts.

While Rico et al. (2008) point out collective action and habitual routines as static as well, and implicit coordination as a distinct, dynamic process, we have come far from the partial understanding of collective action and habitual routines. We know they contribute to achieving implicit coordination. The distinction between collective cognition and collective

action, and the distinction among the cognition and actions of individual team members is effectively explained by the social identity theory today (Gaertner et al. 2012, Sluss and Ashforth 2008, Ashforth and Mael 1989, Terry et al. 1999). Similarly, we have identified that routines are not merely mindless, habitual actions but they are enacted with conscious effort and specific goals in mind (Feldman and Pentland 2003, Salvato and Rerup 2018, Howard-Grenville and Rerup 2017). However, with such conscious, deliberate actions of individuals arise the possibility of differences among them and the ensuing interpersonal conflicts.

As much as achieving coordination is a challenge in organisations, so are the interpersonal tensions and conflicts among organisational actors. When members from diverse backgrounds, skills, experiences and functional expertise come together to work towards common objectives, their diversity creates space for potential conflicts. Interpersonal conflict emerges from the perceived incompatibilities or differences among organisational members (De Dreu and Gelfand 2008). This interpersonal conflict comprises of task, process and relationship conflicts (Amason 1996, Jehn 1994). Task conflict entails disagreements among the members of the group about the content and outcomes of the task, i.e., what is the definition of the task and what the goals are. Process conflict entails disagreements about how to perform the task and establishment of responsibilities. Relationship conflict involves disagreements on a more personal level, such as personality, values and norms (Jehn and Bendersky 2003, De Wit et al. 2012).

Conflicts can be of latent or manifest forms. Latent conflict is not directly expressed and does not necessarily surface in the day-to-day work environment. However, it can negatively affect the performance, productivity and environment of the workplace (Kolb and Putnam 1992, Pondy 1967). Manifest conflict is expressed by the organisational actors in various ways, either complaining to other actors or directly expressing to the person one has disagreements with (Lipsky and Seeber 2006). With the decline in the hierarchy and the increase in proactive employee participation, empowerment and teamwork in today's organisations, managing conflicts have become an important concern for organisations (Batt et al. 2002, Colvin 1999, Lipsky et al. 2003, Stone 2004).

Most organisations manage such conflicts through formal processes, or by avoiding or ignoring them, yielding to the demands of the employees, or negotiating and collaborating (see Lipsky and Seeber 2006, Aldag and Kuzuhara 2002, Fairhurst et al. 1984, Hellriegel et

al. 2003). In most organisations, conflicts are not resolved but are managed or controlled (Boulding 1968), so that they do not lead to detrimental effects on the organisational functioning. For instance, in hospitals which comprise the empirical context of the first two papers of this thesis, when conflicts ensue, not only do organisational actors such as doctors and nurses face challenges in performing their tasks, but patients face problems too. Similarly, when cross-functional product development teams experience conflicts within, the very purpose of their formation — to achieve creative, innovative solutions — gets derailed (Carlile 2002, 2004, Cronin and Weingart 2007). As such, it is important to understand how such groups can manage task, process and relationship conflicts.

By managing and overcoming these conflicts alone can organisational actors achieve effective coordination. Conflicts need not be explicit to derail any attempts of coordination. Even latent conflicts arising from the misinterpretations regarding others' perceptions and viewpoints can make individuals less willing to share information with them, understand their perspective, and coordinate with them. As such, coordination and conflicts comprise a paradoxical relationship within organisations that need to be balanced. The various concepts — organisational routines, impression management, identity, and representational gaps — that the three papers of this thesis explore contribute to our understanding of this paradoxical relationship. I briefly summarise the three papers below and elaborate them in the next papers of this thesis.

Coordination, conflicts and routines

The first paper, *'A double-edged sword: Routine dynamics in conflict-ridden organisational contexts'*, illustrates how organisational routines, initially designed for achieving coordination (Becker 2004) and conflict resolution (Bertels et al. 2016, Kaplan 2015), can also act as conflict-generating sources. Defined as *'repetitive, recognisable patterns of interdependent actions carried out by multiple actors'* (Feldman and Pentland 2003, p.95), routines play a vital role in addressing recurring organisations problems (March and Simon 1958). Feldman and Pentland (2003)'s seminal paper on the ostensive and performative aspects of routines has paved the way to understand routines as mechanisms for coordination, conflict resolution and change.

Extant literature has also foregrounded the multiplicity of ostensive and performative aspects of routines. Multiplicity in the ostensive arises from the different patterns that guide

actions (Feldman 2000) and differences in how routine participants interpret the ostensive (Feldman and Pentland 2003, Howard-Grenville and Rerup 2017). The multiplicity of performances depend on routines being strongly or weakly embedded in organisational contexts (Howard-Grenville 2005), responses to problems or opportunities arising from previous performances (Rerup and Feldman 2011), routine participants orienting towards the present or the future (Howard-Grenville 2005) and temporal patterns and strategies in routine dynamics (D'Adderio 2014, Turner and Rindova 2012, Howard-Grenville and Rerup 2017).

This distinction of ostensive and performative aspects helped us capture the potential variability manifested when actors perform routines differently in different contexts (Dionysiou and Tsoukas 2013). This has led to our understanding of how routines lead to flexibility and change. However, the very variability that is an inherent characteristic of routines can also lead to conflicts, and little attention has been paid to this. The literature on routines has established that the ostensive and the performative never totally align; each performance is unique and, even though it is anchored in the ostensive aspect, it is nevertheless performed with some deviation from the ostensive. When this deviation becomes too extreme, it could lead to disruptions in the routine. For instance, if a routine participant acts in a way that contradicts or restricts the performances of another participant (Reynaud 2005), tensions could ensue between them. Thus, this paper explores the routines as sources of conflicts.

Based on the data collected at a large, multi-national hospital headquartered in India, we illustrate that multiple sources of conflict can lead to extreme deviations in routine performances, which, in turn, generate further conflicts. These sources include the interdependencies among the participants enacting the routine (within-routine interdependencies) and also between multiple routines the same individuals perform (between-routine interdependencies). Furthermore, we also found that individuals manipulate routine performances to exert or garner power as well as engage in political contests. These further contribute to the deviations between the ostensive and the performative when the individuals enact routines too far from the ostensive, in ways that restrict or contradict with the performances of other actors.

This case study also illustrates that the very nature of routines as flexible performances also enable resolution of these conflicts by opening up space for workarounds and avoidance

tactics. Workarounds are ad hoc tactics used to bypass a problem or go around a limitation and get the work done. Avoidance tactics are used in anticipation of a problem where routine participants engage in actions that enable them to avoid potential conflicts. Both workarounds and avoidance tactics are possible because of the previous experiences with performing the routines and when resolving the underlying problems is not easily possible.

Thus, the main contribution of this paper is illuminating the double-edged sword nature of routines and reframing routines as both conflict-generating and conflict-resolution devices: the very nature of the ostensive-performative duality of routines that lead to flexibility and change can also result in conflicts if the variations, i.e., the deviations in performances from the ostensive, become too extreme. In support of this argument, the paper argues that interdependencies between and within routines combined with power contests and political agendas of routine participants lead to these extreme variations, which can then be resolved through workarounds and avoidance tactics which are essentially variations in performances.

Impression management and its place in coordination landscape

In the first paper, we see how organisational actors pursue their agendas and in doing so, disrupt the intended performance of routines aimed at achieving coordination and resolving conflicts. Several of the power play and political contests they engage in, disruptive actions they enact, and contradictory goals they pursue result from the need to achieve some form of self-enhancement or personal gratification. In the same empirical context where these actions were studied, I also observed a different phenomenon; a different way of pursuing this self-enhancement or personal gratification. I observed that organisational actors engaged in a set of behaviours that were aimed at presenting themselves in a better light, intending to make their audience perceive them as superior. This set of behaviours is studied widely, although with some caveats, in the literature on 'Impression Management', introduced by Erving Goffman in his seminal work 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' (1949, 1978). This second paper, "*I, Me & Myself.*" *Impression Management at workplace*' explores this dynamic of self-presentation and associated effects.

Impression management has looked at the assertive and defensive tactics an individual uses to manipulate one's image at work. Specifically, one uses different tactics to create, manipulate, project and protect a specific image one desires that others associate with oneself (Bozeman and Kacmar 1997, Jones and Pittman 1982, Bolino et al. 2008). Despite

impression management being a common phenomenon in organisations, and despite several scholars studying the various ways of impression management (Kacmar et al. 2004, Higgins and Judge 2004, Bolino et al. 2008, Tedeschi and Melburg 1984, Wayne and Ferris 1990, Jones and Pittman 1982), our understanding of the role of impression management in everyday organisational life, particularly in the context of coordination, is limited for several reasons.

Firstly, the extant literature has almost exclusively studied impression management in dyads where one individual — the actor — engages in impression management with the other — the target or the audience (Leary and Kowalski 1990). Secondly, following this, the studies on impression management were limited by the empirical approaches they have taken. The most common empirical contexts were interviews, performance evaluation and supervisor liking (eg. Higgins and Judge 2004, Kacmar et al. 2007, Treadway et al. 2007, Wayne et al. 1997). These empirical limitations further accentuated the focus on dyads and limited the understanding of impression management dynamics in teams or groups. This is an important limitation because impression management unfolds differently in an everyday organisational context where there is not just one actor or target but a multitude of individuals interacting in complex social situations and taking up different roles at different times. As such, impression management in teams, groups or social contexts is quite different to that in dyads (Jones 1990); it is a much more cyclical and dynamic process (Jones 1990, Bozeman and Kacmar 1997) which we know very little about.

Finally, such an approach to impression management, anchored in the need to manipulate one's image and obvious motivations, kept us from understanding the role of impression management in coordination dynamics within organisations. Organisational actors must share a sense of belongingness, mutual trust and respect for them to be willing to efficiently coordinate with one another (Edmondson 1999, Baer and Frese 2003). Excessive engagement in impression management not only hurts these feelings but even negatively affects the image of the individual engaging in impression management. I have observed that when the doctors engaged in excessive impression management, particularly in blaming or defaming, other actors were more reluctant to work with the doctors. They not only felt less inclined to share their opinions and suggestions but also less motivated to coordinate at all.

Thus, impression management can lead to substantial, negative consequences in contrast to the aims of the individuals engaging in it.

Nevertheless, individuals continue to impression manage as an attempt to build a desired identity. Impression management thus becomes a tool for organisational actors' identity construction process or identity work (Kreiner et al. 2006, Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010). Despite impression management potentially leading to negative consequences including deterioration of one's identity, one could continue to engage in impression management because of her/his need to construct the desired identity. This paper sheds light on such dynamic where individuals engage in impression management without reflection, i.e., without perceiving the feedback in the form of their target audiences' observable, behavioural responses (Bozeman and Kacmar 1997), or selectively perceiving and attending to the feedback based on its relevance to their goals and intentions (Klinger 1977).

Thus, the main contribution of this paper is that it captures the unfolding dynamic of impression management in the everyday workplace, rather than the dyadic infrequent contexts of interviews and performance appraisal. By illustrating how organisational actors use impression management in their everyday actions and interactions, this paper argues that impression management is a much more important and consequential phenomenon than previously assumed. This paper also contributes to the literature on identity work by illustrating how organisational actors use impression management as a tool to construct and manipulate the desired identities.

Representational gaps and identification

Organisations are increasingly relying on cross-functional, multi-disciplinary teams to tackle today's complex challenges in uncertain economic environments. The advantage of such teams is that organisations can tap into the skills, experience and cognition of individuals with specialised yet diverse backgrounds (Van der Vegt and Bunderson 2005). However, research shows that diversity does not always lead to better performance (eg. Bantel and Jackson 1989, Simons et al. 1999). When members of such teams from different functions and with different backgrounds and institutional norms interact, 'representational gaps' emerge at the boundaries of their cognitive frames (Cronin and Weingart 2007, de Dreu and Weingart 2002). These gaps result in the task, move and relational conflicts among team members and become hurdles for collaboration and coordination among them (Cronin and

Weingart 2007). In this paper, '*Relational vs Collective Identification: Resolving Representational Gaps*', I look at how these representational gaps can be resolved.

Several factors contribute to the emergence of representational gaps. The first is that people give priority to the issues they see as most uncertain in the future, i.e., what they do not see, they do not consider them (Dougherty 1992). If they cannot understand the uncertainty and concerns of their team members because they lack the functional or domain knowledge of others, they will be unable to give priority to the concerns of their team members. Thus, people often ignore the activities and priorities of the other actors and do not understand the complexities of their work (Dougherty 1992).

Secondly, each actor has her/his perspectives and cognitive lens of looking at an issue and these cognitive frames are influenced by the institutions they come from such as cultures and norms of their organisations, or even their functional domains, their goals and utility functions (Rowley and Moldoveanu 2003). This acts as rigid hurdles for them to open up to the perspectives and cognitive frames of others and thus fail to understand the representations of others. Dougherty (1992) argues that people do not ignore or disrespect the opinions or perspectives of others voluntarily, rather they fail to do so because of these representational gaps. As such, if implicit coordination is to occur, i.e., organisational actors are to be able to anticipate others' opinions and moves and thus adapt to the changes, representational gaps should be minimised. If not, they act as wide abyss between team members' mental models thus not only limiting implicit coordination but also leading to conflicts. Closing this abyss, i.e., bridging representational gaps is thus an important concern for organisations.

Several scholars have shown that overcoming these differences in representations or thought worlds is crucial for cross-functional teams to be successful in achieving their goals (eg. Sanderson 2012, Carlile 2002, Dougherty 1992, Purser et al. 1992). However, how these representational gaps can be resolved is yet understudied. Cronin et al. (2011) identify cognitive and affective integration as two ways to resolve these gaps. While most of the studies had focused on cognitive integration, only a few had looked at affective integration which, besides being more efficient, also is necessary to achieve cognitive integration.

More specifically, I posit that affective integration can be achieved by understanding the role actors' social identification plays in their interactions with their team members. Affective integration refers to the interpersonal relationships among the team members,

specifically related to liking, respecting and trusting (Cronin and Weingart 2005, Chaiken 1987, Cronin 2004). It motivates people to agree to what others think if they like, respect and trust the said others. To overcome representational gaps, team members should not only focus on the team's interests but also be motivated to learn about the goals, concerns and perspectives of other team members (Pearsall and Venkataramani 2015). Social identification provides such an effective lens through which we can understand what makes individuals willing to put themselves in the shoes of their team members, and understand their cognitive frames, representations and concerns, thereby narrowing representational gaps.

Turner et al. (1987, 1994) contend that there are multiple self-concepts at different levels and they might be incompatible representations of the self. However, Deaux (1992, 1993) argue that social identification is integrated into one's personal self-concept and thus there is a duality to identification; different representations of the self are in conflict with each other but also are integrated into one's self-concept. I focus on one of the polarised pairs of identification widely studied in the literature: collective and relational identification. While collective identification reflects how an individual identifies with groups, teams or organisations (Mael and Ashforth 2001), relational identification reflects how she/he identifies with individual members of a group or organisation and the interpersonal relationships she/he has with them (Sluss and Ashforth 2007).

In this paper, following an in-depth literature review of representational gaps, I develop propositions that argue that if members of a group have strong relational identification, they would try and even deliberately put efforts to bridge representational gaps between themselves and their teammates. On the contrary, those with strong collective identification would focus more intently on their mental models believing that they will help the team achieve its goals and thus contribute to further widening of representational gaps. I develop these propositions by considering the four most common motivations for either collective or relational identification: the need for self-enhancement, belongingness, self-expansion, and uncertainty reduction.

The main contribution of this paper is developing a more nuanced view of representational gaps by positioning the concept as an issue of information sharing and cognitive-emotional structures. Furthermore, this paper discusses how they can be resolved through the identity theory.

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Paper 1

A double-edged sword: Routine dynamics in conflict-ridden organisational contexts¹

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Abstract: Despite long knowing that routines act as conflict management devices, our understanding of routine dynamics in highly interdependent and conflict-ridden work settings remains limited. Building on an in-depth qualitative study conducted in the cardiology department of a hospital, we show that the distance or misalignment between the ostensive and performative aspects of a routine leads to both tensions and conflicts among routine participants as well as provide space to resolve such tensions. Specifically, we explore how within-routine and between-routine interdependencies open up space for tensions and conflicts among routine participants. We then show how the strategies that routine participants use to further their agencies can cause disruptions in the routine. Then we show the negative effects of interpersonal rivalry and power conflicts among routine participants on the routine performances. Finally, we identify workarounds and avoidance tactics as two ways to temporarily resolve these disruptions and perform the routine, albeit temporarily. Thus, we provide insights into how routines can be both conflict-generating and conflict-resolving devices.

Keywords: Coordination, conflicts, organisational routines, temporal interdependencies, organisational power and politics, workarounds.

¹ This paper has been written together with Gerardo Patriotta (Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK) and Andrea Prencipe (Department of Business and Management, LUISS Guido Carli University, Rome, Italy).

Introduction

Routines, defined as *'repetitive, recognisable patterns of interdependent actions carried out by multiple actors'* (Feldman and Pentland 2003: 95), play a vital role in addressing recurring organisational problems (March and Simon 1958). They are important regulatory mechanisms, serving as a source for balancing organisational goals (Salvato and Rerup 2018), presiding over processes of stability and change (Feldman 2000, Howard-Grenville and Rerup 2016, Zbaracki and Bergen 2010), and acting as conflict management devices (Bertels et al. 2016, Canales 2013, Kaplan 2015, Nelson and Winter 1982). Routines also ensure coordination among individuals sharing the same resources (Becker 2004).

In recent years, scholars interested in the micro-foundations of routines have emphasised the dynamic and situated aspects of routine performances. Routines have been seen as effortful accomplishments (Pentland and Reuter 1994), sources of change (Feldman 2000), and incorporating agency and structure (Feldman and Pentland 2003). In particular, the dynamics of routines have been linked to the distinction between ostensive and performative elements (Feldman and Pentland 2003). While the Ostensive is the 'abstract, cognitive regularities and expectations that enable participants to guide, account for, and refer to specific performances of a routine', the Performative is the 'actual performances by specific people, at specific times, in specific places' (Feldman and Pentland 2003).

By focusing explicitly on the agency, the performative view has usefully paved the way for a more micro-oriented account of routines, aiming to capture the potential variability manifested when routines are enacted in particular contexts over time (Dionysiou and Tsoukas 2013: p. 181-182). This had led to our understanding of how routines can result in flexibility and change. However, little attention has been paid to routines as a source of conflict. This is an important omission because, when the variability in routine performances becomes too extreme, it could lead to tensions among routine participants. For instance, if a participant performs the routine in ways that could restrict or disrupt how others can perform the routine (Reynaud 2005), tensions can ensue between them.

In particular, conflict related to routines may arise because of the lack of alignment between ostensive and performative aspects of routines. The extant literature has established that ostensive and performative are never totally aligned and this is in fact why routines comprise flexibility, variability and change. Each performance is unique and, although is

rooted in the ostensive, it is nevertheless performed with some deviation from the ostensive. However, when this deviation becomes too large, i.e., the performance is too far from the ostensive, it could lead to disruptions in the routine itself. This consideration highlights the need for theorising the conflict dynamics underpinning routine performances. Current theories, however, do not adequately explain the dynamics surrounding routine breakdowns, especially in the contexts where the need for coordination is high and conflict is more likely to arise. The purpose of this article is to reframe the conversation around organisational routines by taking conflict dynamics into account. In particular, we ask: *'How do organisations maintain the integrity of their routines when routine participants engage in ongoing conflicting performances?'*

We address this question through an ethnographic study conducted in the cardiology department of a multi-speciality hospital headquartered in India. Our findings illuminate the double-edged sword nature of routines as both conflict-generating and conflict resolution mechanisms. Multiple sources of conflict in the work setting can result in extreme deviations of routines performances from their ostensive element, which, in turn, generate further conflicts. These extreme deviations mainly occur because of routines interdependencies, and power play among routines participants. Furthermore, we find that the same deviations between the ostensive and the performative also open up space for conflict resolution. In the case observed, conflict resolution was primarily achieved through workarounds and avoidance tactics.

In the rest of the paper, we first present a brief background on organisational routines. We identify a few problems that persist even after the extant literature has contributed immensely to our understanding of routines as conflict management devices. We then describe the research design, empirical setting and research methods underpinning our study. In the findings section, we present the routine dynamics observed in the case organisation. In the discussion section, we articulate the paper's theoretical contributions by showing how our findings map into, and extend, the current literature on routines. We conclude by discussing future research directions and practical implications.

Organisational Routines and Conflicts

Initially conceptualised as performance programs or standard operating procedures, routines have long been associated with stability, predictability and rigidity (Cyert and March 1963, Nelson and Winter 1982). As such, much of initial research on routines focused on their design because the actual performing of routines was assumed to be automatic, mindless and involving little agency, if any at all (Ashforth and Fried 1988, Cyert and March 1963). However, contemporary research has foregrounded the central role of agency in routines. This has resulted in a conceptualisation of routines as effortful (Pentland and Reuter 1994) and emergent accomplishments (Feldman 2000). In their seminal paper, Feldman and Pentland (2003) distinguished between ostensive and performative aspects of routines to capture their flexible, emergent nature. The ostensive aspect refers to the general and abstract pattern of routine, which provides routine participants with a shared understanding of how the routine should be performed. The performative aspect refers to how a routine is executed by its participants, which is unique and situated with each iteration. This differentiation between the ostensive and the performative has shed light on routines' potential to bring about change, produce flexibility, and meet the challenges of the dynamic organisational environment (Parmigiani and Howard-Grenville 2011, Feldman and Pentland 2003, Dönmez et al. 2016).

The performative view has also foregrounded the role of '*intentions*' of routine participants and their pursuit of particular '*ends*' through any '*means*' (Dittrich and Seidl 2018). Changes in these '*ends*' and '*means*' contribute to the variations in performances as well as, in cases, changes in ostensive patterns (eg. Feldman 2000, Howard-Grenville 2005, Deken et al. 2016, Bruns 2009). Even when the '*ends*' remain the same, routine participants can perform the routine differently, i.e., using different '*means*' (eg. Rerup and Feldman 2011, Feldman 2000, Cacciatori 2012). Thus, routine participants can induce variations in their performances depending on whether their '*means*' suit the '*ends*' or not, and on whether '*ends*' change. However, changes in '*means*' could affect modifications with '*ends*' as well (eg. Feldman 2000, Howard-Grenville 2005, D'Adderio 2014). If anything, these scholars have shown that the interplay between '*means*' and '*ends*' in routine performances is much more complex and dynamic than previously assumed (Dittrich and Seidl 2018).

The performance of individual routines occurs within larger organisational contexts which infuse the routines with specific meanings and provide the background for their execution. Changes in factors extraneous to the focal routine — changes in the larger organisational environment — have the potential to induce variations in performances as well. Indeed, Howard-Grenville (2005) has shown that routines are embedded in other organisational structures, such as coordination or technological structures. This enables routine participants to pursue their goals through flexible performances of routines without altering the routines permanently (Howard-Grenville 2005, Turner and Rindova 2012, Dönmez et al. 2016). This is possible because routine participants rely on the ostensive to determine what variations they can induce in the performative so that they can execute the routine in ways that enable them to achieve their goals. Thus, ostensive is a prescription or a narrative about the routine that is neither coherent nor consensual; different people can interpret and build on the ostensive in different ways to pursue their goals. Thus, each performance is unique and provides an opportunity for participants to act out their agency (Pentland and Feldman 2005). This very nature of routines makes them a source of, as well as a solution to conflicts.

Routines and conflict

Routines enable coordination among organisational actors, resolve or suppress tensions and conflicts, and provide a standard set of expectations regarding how tasks should be performed (Nelson and Winter 1982, March and Simon 1958, Kaplan 2015, Bertels et al. 2016). As such, routines have been defined as conflict management devices in organisations. Nevertheless, conflicts are never completely erased by routines. Indeed, organisations rarely have stable routines with no conflicts among routine participants (eg. D’Adderio 2014, Salvato and Rerup 2018, Turner and Rindova 2012, Zbaracki and Bergen 2010). In particular, conflict is likely to arise in organizational contexts characterised by high levels of interdependency between routine participants and routine performances. (Sele & Grand 2016, Spee et al. 2016, Kremser and Schreyögg 2016). Furthermore, the stability of routines is sensitive to power play among routine participants. Scholars agree that performing routines across time and space could lead to people developing different understandings of each others’ actions as well as the appropriate next action (Feldman and Pentland 2003). Different routine participants understanding, interpreting and performing different parts of the routine

in different ways could easily contribute to confusions and conflicts, and negatively affect routine dynamics (Howard-Grenville 2005, Zbaracki and Bergen 2010).

While variation in routine performances and its impact on flexibility and change has been extensively studied, another important consequence of the ostensive-performative duality is the possibility of conflict. Yet, our understanding of routines as conflict-generating mechanisms is limited. Considering variations in routine performance as a potential source of conflict illuminates further aspects of routines. From this perspective, the ostensive aspect defines the abstract patterns of how the routine should be performed, the purpose being to limit deviations that could disrupt the execution of the task. As such, it is expected that the performances of the routine do not deviate extremely from the ostensive, despite them being flexible and unique. In contexts of high complexity, ambiguity and heterogeneity, routine participants are often pressured to achieve their own goals by enacting routine performances flexibly. Moreover, as the ostensive is an abstract idea, it can be interpreted differently by different people. As such, people can engage in performances that collide with those of other participants. Conflicting views and goals of routine participants cannot be readily consolidated or harmonised within a single high-level ostensive pattern (Feldman and Pentland 2003), especially in presence of strong and competing organisational '*characters*' (Birnholtz et al. 2007).

In organisational contexts characterised by low interdependency, where the misalignment between the ostensive and the performative is minimal, tensions among routine participants are low in intensity and can easily be resolved through the coordination mechanisms built into the routine itself. Thus, the routine is *self-regulating*. However, when this misalignment grows larger, tensions among routine participants can escalate into interpersonal conflicts thus impeding the effective performance of the routine. Under these circumstances, the coordination mechanisms in place are likely to fail to resolve the differences among routine participants and the ensuing work disruptions. The routine ceases to be self-regulating and instead requires external interference. This could be in the form of the top management interfering to resolve the conflicts (eg. Zbaracki and Bergen 2010) or the routine participants themselves finding ways to do so (eg. D'Adderio 2014).

Overall, these considerations suggest that, while performances are variable and physiologically deviate from the ostensive, when this deviation becomes too large, to the

extent that the performance disrupts the routine itself, and contradicts or restricts performances of other participants, tensions and conflicts could ensue among routine participants. In complex environments, characterised by high routine interdependence and power play among routine participants, routine performances could lead to potential disruptions in the routine itself.

Conflict resolution

Scholars interested in the micro-foundations of routines have argued that routines are not only a locus for accomplishing work but for flexibly working out organisational conflict (Pentland and Feldman 2005, Salvato and Rerup 2018). March and Simon (1958) recognised that conflicts arising out of differing interests of routine participants are seldom fully explicit because of the implicit truces among them (Nelson and Winter 1982). Thus, the literature on truces explains, in part, how and why conflicts are rendered latent in routine performances; *'routines are stable and are adapted only incrementally when participants explicitly or implicitly agree to suspend conflict and collaborate to accomplish a single common goal, even when their interests are conflicting'* (Salvato and Rerup 2018).

Salvato and Rerup (2018) argue that when multiple, often conflicting goals exist, conflict can escalate to a point where no truce can hold the conflict under control. Under such circumstances, conflict is overcome usually by either creating new routines, often by management who is not involved in the routine performances (eg. Zbaracki and Bergen 2010, Kaplan 2015) or by separating goals across time and space (eg. Gilbert 2006, D'Adderio 2014).

There are some apparent problems with these approaches to routines and conflicts. Firstly, with the recognition that organisational actors pursue multiple goals simultaneously comes the issue of multiple routines colliding with one another. Secondly, the approaches excessively used to study how conflicts can be resolved, including spatial and temporal strategies as well as the role of truces, work on an underlying assumption that routine participants will be willing to work towards resolving the conflicts and reestablishing the truce. However, this might not always be the case, especially when the political agendas and agency of routine participants take centre stage compared to the performances of routines.

The extreme deviations between the ostensive and performative aspects of routines do not always necessarily lead to change in the routine despite contributing to conflicts.

Resolution of conflicts does not necessarily rely on changing the ostensive or replacing the routine altogether. Routines can persist despite the presence of conflicts as long as conflicts are resolved somehow. This persistence of routines *'arises from the way the work is organised, structural features of the situation, and the cognitive models of the participants'* (Pentland and Reuter 1994, p.504). Feldman (2003) showed how routines can be reproduced even when its participants intended to change it. Thus, routines seem to open us space for variability that could potentially resolve conflicts without the need to replace a broken truce or the entire routine itself. Scholars exploring the political and motivational aspects of routines (Lazaric and Raybaut 2005, Gibbons 2006) have indeed shown that routines, rather than suspending conflicts, establish the context for negotiating that conflict (Salvato and Rerup 2018). When unexpected interruptions arise in the regular flow of routine enactments, a 'cognitive switch' is required from routine to mindful processing (Patriotta 2003, Patriotta and Gruber 2015). Routine participants need to find ways to resolve conflicts within the constraints of the interdependencies they are working in and the agency they are enacting, and we need a better understanding of how this is achieved.

Summarising, as much as we understand that routines act as conflict management devices by suspending conflict among routine participants, our understanding of the micro nuances of routine dynamics is limited, especially when interpersonal conflicts among routine participants take centre stage. The extreme misalignment or deviations between the ostensive and performative aspects could lead to the routine breaking down. Whenever routines break down, space opens up not only for conflicting interactions among routine participants but also for the search for new ways to resolve conflicts and ensure effective routine performances. How this is achieved is something we do not totally understand yet. Our case study of Jupiter illustrates this dual role of routines, as a generative source of conflicts as well as a conflict resolution mechanism.

Methodology

Research Setting

We conducted an ethnographic study in the department of cardiology of Jupiter (anonymised), a multi-speciality, multi-national hospital, headquartered in India with several hospitals, speciality clinics and diagnostic centres located across and outside India. Our

specific focus was on the Catheterisation Laboratory (CCL). CCL was a broad wing consisting of two labs comprised of the Catheterisation machines, equipment and consoles to do the interventional procedures in cardiac, neural, radiology and orthopaedic domains. There was a console room between the two labs where people hung out when not doing procedures in the labs. As such, this was where most of the informal interactions happened. Different type of actors in CCL included: physicians/consultants who did the procedures for their patients; technicians who helped the consultants with the equipment and were responsible for maintaining the machinery; nurses who helped the consultants in controlling the flow of the contrast medium and monitoring the vitals; and the CCL coordinator appointed by Jupiter's management to manage the scheduling of the labs and resolve the conflicts between the consultants.

Data Collection

Non-participant observations and informal conversations. The first author acted as a non-participant observer spending more than 600 hours in Jupiter over two phases spanning across eight months in 2017-18. The first phase was between June and September 2017 while the second phase was between March and June 2018. The first author spent the initial few days observing everything and gaining an understanding of the work done in CCL in particular and Jupiter in general. A normal day in CCL lasted between 8 am and 8 pm with the peak timings between 10 am and 4 pm. The researcher on the field made sure to be in CCL during peak timings and often beyond that during the weekdays. He often walked with the consultants on their rounds visiting their patients, sat in their out-patient offices and spoke to them over coffee.

Most of the interactions were informal, owing to the culture of the organisation and the fact that almost everyone was receptive of him as a researcher. When something interesting happened, such as a delay in performing a routine, a conflict between consultants, or the coordinator trying to resolve a disruption, the researcher on the field would talk to them and discuss what had happened and why in real-time. While observations helped us capture the performances of the routine *in action*, informal interactions helped us probe deeper and capture the viewpoints of multiple actors engaged in or witnessed the event. The researcher on-field often made notes as soon as an event had happened; if not possible, at the end of the day.

Semi-structured interviews. The first author also conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with 16 of the consultants involved. Most of the interviews were conducted in their out-patient offices with some done over lunch or coffee. The first author started with questions about the interviewees' experience and position in Jupiter, and then moved on to focus how work was done in CCL, how did the interviewees manage their work, and what did they think about the problems in CCL. The main aim was to let the interviewees lead the conversation. Thus, even though a template of questions was used, he probed further on specific issues or topics that were revealed during the interviews.

Some of the consultants (who did more procedures in CCL and thus engaged more in CCL) were interviewed twice, the second time in the second phase of data collection. Of course, we were constrained by whether some of them were willing to give interviews or not. Also, consultants of non-cardiac domains were not interviewed again, except for one, as they did not use CCL as much as cardiac consultants did. The questions for the second round of interviews were updated to probe deeper into the ideas and concepts we had developed from analysing the data from the first phase of data collection. The interviews were transcribed at the end of the day or within a few days. Almost all the interviews were recorded except four. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the interview template including the updated questions.

Archival documents and artefacts. The first author also had access to the registers that recorded schedules and plans for procedures, and also artefacts such as the computers that were used to track procedures done, delays occurred and overlaps between different consultants' work. One of the important artefacts was the *schedule* that allocated labs to different consultants and which played a vital role in the routine disruptions. We will describe this in detail later.

Data Analysis

The first phase of data collection was used for identifying the focal routine and its boundaries, the key actors performing the routine, and the types of conflicts that arose within its performances. After this initial stage, the first author zoomed in on the events pertaining to the key concepts identified in initial data analysis as well as discussing them in more depth during his informal conversations in the second phase. We followed an iterative process, moving back and forth between the data analysis, emergent theory, subsequent data collection and the literature (Locke 2001, Glaser and Strauss 1967). This process enabled us to identify

emerging concepts from the analysis of data and then collect data pertaining to these emerging concepts subsequently. We analysed the data in three main phases, always returning to literature and further data collection whenever needed.

Phase 1: We coded the data following Strauss and Corbin (1998) to define the first-order concepts rooted in the empirical context. For observations and informal interactions, we coded the events observed, actions taken, the assumptions underlying the actions and the visible outcomes. For instance, when a consultant moved his patient into the lab and went out to his out-patient office, we coded it as ‘leaving after the patient has been moved in’. Then when the consultant who had the next slot came and had to wait because the lab was not yet available, we coded it as ‘blocking lab for others’. For interviews, we coded line-by-line trying to extrapolate as much nuance data as possible to understand not only the views of the interviewees but also their beliefs and agendas. For instance, when an interviewee mentioned that “you listen to a commander when he is above you”, it not only reflected his impression about the power differences between consultants and the management (the commander in this case) but also his belief as to why some consultants did not respect the management’s orders.

Phase 2: In this stage, we analysed the first order codes to form categories that were more abstract and theoretical based on the similarities and differences among first-order codes (Strauss and Corbin 1990). We also tried to understand the characteristics and relationships between various categories that would holistically explain the routine dynamics. Often, upon noticing how various first-order codes resulted in a specific category, and when some codes conflicted with each other, we went back to the field and collected additional data through informal conversations and interviews that clarified our understanding of those concepts. Thus, while first-order analysis enabled us to capture actors’ understanding and intentions, the second-order analysis helped us move the findings to a theoretical level (Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991). As such, phases 2 and 3 were never really delineated but went almost together.

Five second-order categories emerged from our data analysis. (1) *Interdependencies in routines* showed how within- and between-routine interdependencies opened space for conflicts among routine participants. (2) *Disruptive performances* essentially comprised of actions and tactics that routine participants used that negatively affected the routine enactment in CCL. (3) *Power play* shed light on the role of formal and informal power

structures in organisations and the power contests among routine participants. (4) *Workarounds* showed how people went around the rules and others' orders/requests to get things done. (5) *Avoidance tactics* reflected how routine participants tried to be proactive and follow the rules to perform the routine as intended and avoid any conflicts and disruptions.

Phase 3: In the final stage, we abstracted higher-level theoretical concepts from the second-order categories to develop the model and theoretical contributions. The two aggregated theoretical dimensions, *Routines as conflict-generating devices* (first three categories) and *Routines as conflict-resolution devices* (next two categories), reflect our metaphor of routine as a double-edged sword. Finally, we developed a theoretical model that depict the associations between the second-order categories as a tension between the two higher-level dimensions. Please refer to Figure 1 for the data structure.

Figure 1 around here

The focal routine

The main task in CCL was doing the interventional procedures for the patients. This was a pretty much formalised routine with a well-established sequence of interdependent steps. 1. The routine technically began when a consultant saw the patient in their out-patient office and decided if an interventional procedure was required or not based on tests and diagnosis. 2. The consultant scheduled the procedure for a specific time and day in agreement with the patient based on the availability and urgency. 3. The patient arrived on the day at the registration desk and was sent for blood tests to check creatine levels and assess the patient's suitability for the procedure. 4. The patient was then sent to the Recovery Room, across the floor from CCL, where the nurses entered details into the file, took consent from the patient, and prepared the patient by inserting IV drips and giving any necessary medications.

5. As soon the blood reports came back, nurses informed the consultant that the patient was ready for the procedure. The consultant told them when to move the patient into the lab. 6. The technicians from the lab moved the patient into the lab, made the patient lie down on the procedure table, and connected the equipment such as BP and Heart rate monitors. The coordinator or the technicians informed the consultant. 7. The consultant arrived and performed the procedure. 8. Once the procedure was completed, the consultant wrote the

report regarding the next course of action. At that point, the technicians moved the patient out of the lab, either into the ICU or back to the Recovery Room, and moved in the next patient, of the same consultant or a different one, into the lab when ready.

This entire series of steps fit the broadly accepted definition of routines: it was repetitive, included recognisable patterns, and was carried out by multiple actors (Feldman and Pentland 2003). Understandably, not always was the routine performed in the same way or following the same order of steps. As with any routine, each performance was unique in itself and given the complexity of the procedure, which consultant and other staff were involved, what kind of procedure was it and what equipment was used, and if any additional steps were required or some steps were unnecessary, the performance of this routine for every individual procedure could be enacted in different ways. We consider the enactment of all or a few of these steps to do a single procedure as a single, unique performance of the routine. Thus, different consultants performed several versions of performances of the same routine when they did a procedure in CCL. The description we presented above was the ostensive of the routine; how the routine was performed in general, or the prescription of how the routine was supposed to be performed. Moreover, when asked how a procedure was done, almost all the consultants provided a similar description. Figure 2 presents the ostensive of the routine. We now present our findings regarding how the routine was disrupted and how these performances were anchored in tensions and conflicts among consultants.

Figure 2 around here

Routines as conflict-generating and conflict-resolution devices: Findings from a case study

We present our findings in two parts. First, we present evidence of how routines failed to self-regulate and emerged as conflict-generating devices in Jupiter. We discuss the two major reasons for this emergence: *interdependencies* and *power dynamics*. Then we show how the tensions were handled and how the routine was performed at an acceptable level, even though not in the intended, efficient way, by the routine participants through *workarounds* and *avoidance tactics*. Thus, routines acted as conflict-resolution devices as well. Thus, Jupiter's CCL offered a unique perspective to study how routines come

to be a double-edged sword. Given the spatial restrictions of a journal article, we provide only a few examples of different dynamics we observed in Jupiter.

Routines as conflict-generating devices

Routine interdependencies

A routine is not performed in isolation from the rest of the organisation. A routine is not only embedded in larger organisational structures (Howard-Grenville 2005) but is also affected by many other organisational elements. In Jupiter, the CCL routine was characterised by two levels of interdependencies.

Between-routine interdependencies. The nature of the consultants' work constituted the between-routine interdependencies, between the CCL routine and another routine — the out-patient routine. Jupiter's consultants were not strictly salaried employees of Jupiter; rather, they worked on a fee-for-service model. Jupiter equipped them with an office to see the out-patients in, and access to all the resources needed to do tests and treat the patients. They earned whatever consultation fee they charged for the patients in out-patient and a share of all the procedures they did. Thus, the more patients they saw in their out-patient office, the more CCL procedures they could do and the more they could earn. However, not all out-patients went to CCL, rather they needed other tests, diagnoses, and treatments. Thus, while the out-patient work acted as the first step of CCL routine, it was also an altogether different routine on its own. Thus, consultants juggled both CCL and out-patient routines simultaneously thus rendering them interdependent.

Within-routine interdependencies. The within-routine interdependencies arose because 20 consultants vied for the two labs in CCL. A consultant could only do her/his procedure if the consultant who was using the lab before her/him handed over the lab in time. This was a major issue because the nature of the procedures meant that consultants could not just stop the procedure when their time ended and hand over the lab to the next consultant. Moreover, consultants often did not start on time itself and often used the labs when it was not their turn. Thus, any consultant's effective performance of the routine relied on the timely hand-off of the labs.

To manage these hand-offs of the labs and to ensure the coordination among consultants, Jupiter's management had put in place two coordination mechanisms in CCL.

Firstly, the labs were allocated to different consultants using a *schedule* (see Appendix 2). The schedule divided each day into several 1-hour or 2-hour slots and each consultant got the slots at specific times each day. The slot system helped consultants plan not only their procedures in CCL but also their other tasks outside the CCL like out-patient. This was possible because the schedule was relatively fixed so that consultants knew when they were supposed to do CCL procedures and could plan their out-patient during other times. Thus, the schedule, printed out and pinned to a wall in CCL, acted as a *regulatory mechanism*.

Secondly, a coordinator was appointed to resolve lab allocation problems in CCL. Despite the schedule, consultants often demanded the lab whenever they wanted and several consultants' demands often colluded. Moreover, it was a common occurrence that a consultant who had the slot came only to find that her/his lab was blocked by some other consultant. The coordinator's responsibility was to act as a liaison between the consultants, resolve the conflicts, and shuffle and reschedule the slots to accommodate everyone.

Thus, performances of the CCL routine by multiple consultants were characterised by two types of interdependencies, and associated coordinating mechanisms, that facilitated cooperation and coordination but also opened up space for tensions and conflicts. We will now present one such example of how tensions ensued in Jupiter because of these interdependencies.

Example 1

C7 had the 12:00-14:00 slot but did not use it. At around 14:00, he called the coordinator and asked for the lab insisting that he had two or three procedures and he wanted to finish them and leave. Upon pressuring, the coordinator adjusted the schedule around and gave him lab I. Meanwhile, C4 had a procedure too and asked for the lab.

C7 arriving at 15:00, an hour later, started yelling at the technicians. "You moved a different patient. This is a complex one. C6 should come for this. If you had moved the one I told you, I would have finished it by now. C6 is anyway coming, so we wait." He left the console room. The coordinator and technicians tried calling him several times but he did not respond. The patient was complaining about why it was taking so long and that he cannot lie down longer. The coordinator asked the technician to go and tell him that they were waiting for some equipment to come.

Coordinator: [to me] “We cannot tell [the patient] that the consultants are not coming and they are making him wait. Then the patient will go and complain to the management. This is always the same story. What would the patient’s attendants be thinking outside?”

At 16:00, C7 sent his assistant, a medical student, who said Consultants 6 and 7 were coming soon. He went into the lab I, inserted the sheath and stood there twiddling the equipment. At 16:30, C7 came and said C6 was on his way and he would start the procedure by then. The coordinator said that they always did this. C6, being the head of the department at a public medical university, would always be there. When they had a procedure, C7 would call him and ask him to come. Until C6 arrived, C7 would stall by doing things like these.

Meanwhile, C4 came into the console room again and said, “I had asked for the slot more than two hours ago. You said they have a procedure and that they wanted to do it. You said they would finish an hour ago. Now it is almost two hours. I would have finished in an hour if you had given me the slot.”

Coordinator: “What should I do? We moved the patient into the lab immediately. They said C6 is coming but he never came.”

C4: [looking into the lab I] “What are they even doing? They are not doing anything. Just wasting time.”

C6 finally arrived at 15:25 and finished the procedure at 16:00. Thus, the lab was put on hold for 2 hours without other consultants being able to use it. Not only C4 had to postpone his procedure but the subsequent procedures of other consultants got delayed too due to the unavailability of the lab.

As seen in this example, consultants in CCL resorted to various strategies or tactics that resulted in disruptions in the routine. Unless a consultant (C7 in the above example) handed over the lab to another (C4), the latter could not do his procedure. Additionally, procedures of other consultants who had subsequent slots were delayed too. Furthermore, such disruptions had an effect beyond the CCL as consultants often planned other works around their CCL slots. Thus, such disruptive behaviours threatened not only within-routine interdependencies but also between-routine interdependencies. As one consultant pointed out:

“If you’re making the patient lie down and we are seeing around, you are not there, that’s not nice....everybody according to their slot, they arrange their [out-patient]. So if they are not getting the slot at their time, you know, their entire schedule is disturbed.” [C18, 16.03.18].

Such disruptive behaviours affected not only the CCL’s work environment but, crucially, Jupiter’s image too. In the above example, C7 made the patient lie down in the cold lab for almost two hours just so that he could hold on to the lab. This was not only an

ethically relevant problem, but frequent occurrence of such events would lead to a bad image for Jupiter. Consultants were aware of the implications for the patients, but they were also aware that once the patient had been moved in, and connected to the IV drip and other monitors, it was inconvenient to move out the patient. This often motivated them to opportunistically move the patient in and then leave, thus blocking the lab.

To hold on to the lab and avoid overt complaining by others, consultants frequently sent their assistants who would go into the lab and twiddle with the equipment thus stalling until the consultants came, as C7 did in example 1. Another tactic they used was to inform the coordinator that they were coming and ask him to move their patient into the lab. However, they would not show up until later, and when they did, they would claim someone else called them or some urgency came up. A final tactic consultants used was moving in their patient at the last moment of their slot. For instance, if C3 had a slot from 10-12 am, he would move the patient at 11.30 or even 11.45, knowing he could never finish the procedure by 12. He would claim that it was still his slot and so he was allowed to move in the patient.

“I ask them if they are really ready. If they are going to come as soon as we keep the patient. They say they are on their way and will be here even before their patient comes. Half the time, I know they are lying. They are probably still in [out-patient] or even at home, sometimes.” [Coordinator, console room, 04.08.17].

One of the reasons why consultants resorted to such behaviours was the need to juggle both the CCL and out-patient routines. Given Jupiter’s fee-for-service model, consultants were more eager to sitting in out-patient and seeing more patients there so that they could earn more and also convert more patients into CCL procedures. As all the consultants’ out-patient offices were located next to each other on the same floor, if a patient was made to wait for long, he/she could easily go to another consultant. As C18 remarked, *“Today, it’s a very competitive world. If you say you can’t do today, the patient will go away.”* [interview, 16.03.18] Furthermore, attending to a patient quickly was a way to make a good impression on the patient which led to good word-of-the-mouth marketing. As such, consultants prioritised their out-patient over CCL which was a way to justify their actions that led to disruptions in CCL routines.

“.... everyone they want to do their best but the thing is the external pressure also almost has an effect because one patient who is leaving you from [out-patient] saying that you are not seeing.... it’s not about the single patient. That patient goes and talks it outside and it will affect

your [reputation] so that's why they tend to, procedure can be little late but they don't want to miss the patients." [C16, 02.04.18]

For the consultants, out-patient routine and CCL routine often overlapped and even colluded as the consultants had to juggle both these tasks simultaneously. They were not performing one routine at a time, which would have been easier, but they were performing two routines simultaneously which led to misplaced priorities, confusions and problems not only for them but also for others whose performances relied on them completing their procedure and vacating the lab in time.

The schedule was supposed to help them plan their day by informing them about when they were supposed to use the labs. As such, the schedule represented the ostensive aspect of the CCL — how the consultants were to use the labs to avoid overlaps and conflicts. However, consultants outright ignored it. As almost all the consultants were victims of these competing demands, delays and confusions just added up within CCL. Moreover, this need to prioritise out-patient was directly associated with the power play among the consultants.

Power play among routine participants

One of the most striking observations for us in this case study was the complex, often skewed power relationships within Jupiter. In traditional organisations, such disruptive behaviours by employees would have not been tolerated to such an extent. The top management would have interfered and resolved these issues, as most of the prior studies on similar topics have found. However, because of Jupiter's fee-for-service model and the high status of the consultants' profession, CCL was characterised by two levels of power hierarchies that contributed to the distance between the ostensive and the performative in significant ways: power differences between the consultants and Jupiter's management, and power contests among consultants themselves. We will first present an example that captured these power dynamics.

Example 2

It was around four in the evening when C11 started doing his procedures in lab 1. He always used evening slots and being the head of the department, no one objected to him. He usually did around six to ten procedures a day and so, once he started, the lab was unavailable for extended periods of time. On this particular day, C1 was supposed to do his two procedures in

the morning slot but could not as he had some personal work. The coordinator said he could use lab 2 in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, C3 too came into the console room and asked the coordinator for the lab. The coordinator said he had to wait because Consultants 11 and 1 were using the labs and it would take some time. C3 complained, "He [C11] started? That's it, no one will get the lab now. He always blocks that lab. Why do you always give him that? He can use other lab too, can't he?"

Coordinator: "He prefers it because the machine works well."

C3: "So others should not be able to use it? You only give him because you all are scared to talk to him. Also, why is C1 getting a lab now? [He looks at the schedule pinned on the wall] He had the slot in the morning, no?"

Coordinator: "Sir did not come in the morning. He had some personal work."

C3: "Then he should do his procedures tomorrow or after everyone else had finished theirs. You cannot do this. You cannot take our slots and give them to him. You always do this, you are all scared of these people."

He went to the Medical Superintendent and the CEO and complained that the coordinator was not giving him slots when he had emergency procedures. In fact, he did not have any emergency procedures that day and when the CEO called the coordinator, the coordinator tried to explain this to him but the CEO was not listening. After disconnecting the call, the coordinator told me, "See, even he [CEO] does not listen to me. This short man with short temper [referring to C3] went and complained to the CEO and he calls me immediately to tell me to give him the lab. From where should I bring the lab? Is it in my pocket? They cannot question [C1] and cannot control these people [C3] and so they pounce on me. What was the need for this short man to go and complain to the CEO? He does not want to talk directly to [C1] and so he went to the CEO."

As the consultants worked under a fee-for-service model and were not salaried employees of Jupiter, the usual hierarchical power structure we observe in the majority of organisations was absent in Jupiter. The consultants felt like bosses of their own work and in fact, several consultants commented that it was because of them that Jupiter benefitted. As such, consultants felt superior to Jupiter's management. As C3 remarked, "*In olden days, doctors ran clinics. There was no management. No managers. Hospitals can work without managers but not without doctors.*" This seemed to be a common view shared by a majority of consultants in Jupiter.

Most of the consultants also worked in other organisations. So, if they were no longer interested in working at Jupiter, they could easily move to another organisation and take their

patients with them. Thus, Jupiter's management was reluctant to do anything that might lead to conflicts with consultants. As C3 and C1 remarked, management was quite passive. This is also evident from example 2 above when the coordinator remarked that the management asked him to manage the conflict but did not question the likes of C1. As a consultant explained:

"...local CEO, they all are inferior to these consultants, what happens is they can't directly talk to the cardiologists, ... [consultants are] older and more senior than these people, so they can't question." [C14, 03.04.18]

Nevertheless, Jupiter's management still had some power, being a renown brand and several patients coming for the brand as well. While the passiveness on behalf of the management encouraged consultants to engage in disruptive behaviours more frequently because they knew that the management could not take any action against them, consultants did desire one thing from the management: a preferential treatment, that led to interpersonal rivalry among the consultants.

A consultant's skills, performance and capability to attract patients were important in Jupiter and as such, some consultants, like 1, 5, 6 and 11, were given privilege by the management because patients came to them irrespective of the hospital they worked in. Specifically, this privilege included discounts to consultants' patients which was important for consultants to attract patients and keep the important ones happy, more number of junior assistant doctors and medical residents, and in general, leeway in how the consultants worked in the hospital. But most important of all, in line with our case study, the preferred consultants more than often got the CCL labs whenever they wanted. In example 2, C1 was given a lab in the evening when other consultants were waiting. Similarly, C11 was given a lab for entire evenings altogether because he did a large number of procedures and he was also the head of the department.

As certain consultants were given special treatment, others felt increased rivalry towards them. In example 2, C3 was angry as he had to wait for the lab because of C1 and so he went to complain to the management despite knowing nothing would come out of it. It was a way for him to emphasise that he too mattered. This rivalry had eventually become a hurdle for the enactment of routine as intended. We noticed that those who envied the consultants who were treated specially by the management often engaged in disruptive

behaviours frequently, especially when the slots after them belonged to the famous consultants. Moreover, a way for the consultants to increase their status was to do more procedures and show the management that they too mattered. They took on more work than they could handle and scheduled too many procedures a day without concern for the schedule — how these could be accommodated within CCL. It usually took half-an-hour for simple angiograms and an hour or more for angioplasties based on the complexity of the procedure. But as consultants posted a lot more procedures than they could do within one or two hour slots, sometimes even up to half a dozen, this often led to overcrowding of the schedule.

“They post all the procedures they have on the same day. ...not all the procedures are urgent and need to be done today itself, you can wait until tomorrow... but no, they want to do all of them today and that puts pressure on us.” [Coordinator; 04.02.18].

Routines as conflict-resolution devices

Despite the recurrence of disruptions and escalation of tensions in Jupiter, one could say that the routine was nevertheless performed. Patients were troubled, procedures rescheduled, and Jupiter’s staff struggled with tensions and frustrations, which were unarguably undesired things in a hospital, but patients were eventually treated. So, how did the Jupiter’s staff managed to perform their routines despite the disruptions, and the ever-present conflicts? We observed two ways how this was accomplished, thus showing how routines act as conflict-resolution devices.

Workarounds

When disruptions and confusions ensued, or it seemed they were about to ensue, coordinator and others engaged in *workarounds* to ensure the routine was performed as intended. A workaround, in common language, is a temporary fix to bypass or go around a problem or limitation to finish the task at hand. In Jupiter, we have noticed that workarounds were frequently used to avoid escalation of disruptions and resolve any confusions or tensions related to consultants’ demand for labs. It was mostly the coordinator who engaged in workarounds. An example of a workaround is presented first.

Example 3

It was around 1500 on a busy day when C7 came and told the coordinator to move in his patient and left. It was not even his slot but he insisted he wanted a lab. The coordinator said, "He will not come back any time now." C5 had been asking to give her the lab for a few minutes for a simple angio. As it would take around 10-15 minutes and she had already called the coordinator several times, he gave her the lab instead. So C5's patient was moved in and she started her procedure. C7 came and asked the coordinator why he did not move his patient. Coordinator: "[C5] had been asking for a while now. Her procedure would take less time. It's a simple angio. You said your procedure will take more time. Don't worry, I will move in your patient next."

C7: "It is a simple procedure. It will take just a few minutes. Keep my patient next after her's. I will come in a while."

After he left, C3 came in and asked the coordinator to give him the cathlab for one procedure. The coordinator said, "[C7] had already asked for the slot. Now [C5] is doing a procedure. In this lab, they need more time. I will see what I can do." After C3 left, the coordinator told the technicians to move in C3's patient next and went out.

C7 came and got angry at this. He asked the technicians why they had moved in another patient. The technician present there said, "I don't know. [coordinator] told [another technician] but either of them is not present here now." C7 called the coordinator and spoke very angrily. The coordinator came to the console room and told C7, "I don't know who moved in C3's patient. I told them [technicians] to move in your patient. I don't know what happened here. But now you have to wait anyhow until C3 finishes his procedure."

If a consultant, infamous for causing delays, blocking labs or causing disruptions in general, asked for the lab, giving the lab to him/her meant that the consultants next in line would probably face delays too. The coordinator tried to avoid this by giving labs to someone who was much probable to finish his/her procedures in time and vacate the labs. In the above example, the coordinator realised the implications of giving the lab to C7 and instead decided to lie to C7 and give the lab to C5 and C3.

The coordinator was subordinate to C7 in terms of power and so he could not simply tell C7 that he could not give him the lab. This would have led to severe tension between C7 and management. Thus, the coordinator had to manipulate the slots around C7 so that he could give the lab to C5 and C3 without showing disrespect towards C7. Furthermore, the

technicians, who were also aware of C7's history of causing disruptions and who recognised the coordinator's position, also helped him.

This was possible because of the presence of the schedule. Even though the schedule itself was ignored by the consultants, it helped the coordinator know which consultants could potentially ask for the lab or create problems. As such, even under normal circumstances, the coordinator kept an eye out for when such consultants who were infamous for causing delays and holdups had slots. Before they could move in their patients, the coordinator would call other consultants to find out if they had any procedures scheduled. If yes, he would give them the slots and tell the infamous consultants that others had started long before and it might take a while now.

Another workaround we noticed was when the patients of consultants who were known for sticking to their slots came, the coordinator would often prep and move the patient into the lab before doing the paperwork. This not only saved time but also enabled the consultants to start their procedure before others came competing for the labs. Thus, the coordinator would do the registration and other formalities later on, thus working around the established procedure.

"I know they [team C6] won't start on time anyway. If I wait for them to come and do the procedure, others won't get the lab anytime soon. I do this a lot. Well, whenever I can without irritating them. I ask some other consultant, like [C12] now, if they have a procedure. Why not let them use the lab first?" [Coordinator, console room, 30.03.18]

A final type of workarounds we noticed was when the coordinator used the same strategy that was used to hold up the labs, i.e., when a consultant known for sticking to the slots had a procedure but was a little late, the coordinator would find a resident or a junior and ask them to start the procedure. By the time they prep and arrange everything for the procedure, the consultant would come. Thus, the coordinator used the same strategies disruptive consultants used but to avoid them taking over the lab. Workarounds like this became a norm to perform the routine in CCL. Without them, combined with the fact that the consultants outright ignored the schedule, efficient hand-offs of labs were seldom possible. As the coordinator had to keep an eye on which consultants had the slots and how can he move them around, these workarounds relied on the schedule.

Avoidance tactics

A few consultants recognised the importance of following the schedule. They understood that it was easier to avoid situations that could lead to conflicts rather than resolve them once they arose. The below example sheds light on how they did this.

Example 4

C16 took four hours for two procedures on 02.07.18. She had essentially blocked lab 1 and thus C2's slot. C2 waited patiently for twenty minutes until another consultant finished his procedure and lab 2 became available. He did two procedures in lab 2 by the time C16 had finished. C2 immediately called the coordinator and found out that no consultant was going to use lab 1 for a while. He asked to move his next patient into lab 1 to save time by prepping the patient in lab 1 while he was still doing his procedure in lab 2. Then while he did his procedure in lab 1, he made his next patient prepped in lab 2. This way, he finished six procedures within two hours instead of the average time of three hours.

While this was happening, C4 came in. He had no slot that day but his patient had come from far away and so he wanted to do the procedure. He called the coordinator who said he can use one of the labs then, quickly, before other consultants came.

C4 immediately grabbed a technician and sent him to bring in the patient. He said, "Bring the patient soon, we will prep him here, he does not require much prepping. Also no medicines or anything. I will give everything here and we can start ASAP." He went to the equipment room and brought the required materials himself. He waited until C2 finished his procedure in lab 1 and confirmed with him that he could use the lab. By the time the technician had brought in the patient, C4 had called his assistant to help him in the procedure, grabbed a nurse and made her scrub and be ready, pushed another technician to calibrate the machine and lay down all the material ready to use, and he himself scrubbed and changed into his gown.

The CCL routine was complex and comprised of several interconnected tasks as we have already seen. It was important to identify the weak links in the chain where there was a high probability of delays and disruptions to occur. While one way to resolve these disruptions was to handle them once they arose, some consultants felt it was better to avoid them altogether. In example 4, C2 knew that one of the weak links was actually moving in the patient. So, instead of resorting to conflict or arguments with the coordinator, C2 waited patiently while C16 ran late and when he saw an opportunity when both the labs became

available, he planned to move in the patient into the lab while he was doing a procedure in the other so as to utilise the time more efficiently.

During the case study, we noticed that most consultants resorted to arguments with the coordinator during such situations or, alternatively, went and complained to the management. However, a few consultants, like C2 in the above example, and also C1 and C4, often remained calm and planned their work accordingly. They often called the coordinator beforehand to find out about the availability of the labs, follow up if their patients were prepared and ready, followed the technicians and pushed them to arrange the equipment required, or they themselves took care of it so that the procedure could be finished before others demanded the lab.

Consultants understood that nothing got done in CCL unless one proactively pushed people and things around. The major problem was that consultants usually told the coordinator or the technicians which patient to move into the lab and then never followed up. However, consultants like 4 and 12 took matters into their own hands to ensure no delays occurred at the bottlenecks of the routine. For instance, in C4's previous organisation, entering the details of the procedure into a register was enough to ensure everything was ready on time. However, in Jupiter, he often informed the coordinator in the morning itself, or even the day before, so that the coordinator could plan. We also notice in example 4 above that C4 was pro-active in ensuring everything went smoothly so that he could start and finish his procedure on time.

"...you saw now, how I was running around calling everybody. No one listens here. If you look aside, someone else will put in their patient. No one cares. You have to follow up yourself, you have to move in your patient yourself, you have to get the materials yourself, and you have to find technicians and nurses yourself. You do all that. Then you can use the lab quickly." [Consultant12; interview; 21.08.17]

To avoid overlaps of the slots, both consultants 1 and 4 scheduled procedures at around 7-8 am so that they could do them in peace before other consultants came and fought for the slots. They also went through the coordinator whenever they had problems instead of arguing with other consultants. They let the coordinator adjust their slots without complaining a lot even though it meant that they did not always get the slots they wanted. Consultant4 commented "I think [coordinator] does his job very well. It is just... impossible for him to convince some of the other consultants. You see, they are not going to listen to anyone. It is

impossible. They think they are the boss here. So, instead of fighting with them, it is better to let him do his job. We have to understand his situation also. How much can he do? If I let him give my slot to them when they are troubling him too much, he will give me the slot I want next time. It is useless to argue with them anyway.” [28.08.17]

Even the coordinator engaged in avoidance tactics. Whenever consultants scheduled a procedure a priori, the details appeared on the computer in CCL; most of the consultants also informed the coordinator in the morning itself or even the day before. Thus, the coordinator usually had an idea of which consultants had procedures to do. When the labs became available and no one with the slots asked for the labs, the coordinator himself called the consultants and asked them if they could do their procedures then. Thus the coordinator not only took advantage of the empty labs but also avoided crowding of the labs later during peak timings. As C4 mentioned, “*After [coordinator] came, he is finding these gaps, he is trying to fit cases. He will call and ask, ‘there is a half an hour gap and the doctor is going to come after one hour, though it is his slot, he is going to come [...]’. So he will call and when I tell him I have a case to do, he will ask me how long does it take, he will ask me to do now.*” [12.09.2018]

While the coordinator and consultants realised that following the ostensive — represented by the schedule and representing the need to coordinate — would make their work easier, they also knew that it was not possible to do so because of the nature of the work and also because some consultants were not willing to do so. As such, they tried to keep their performances as aligned with the ostensive as possible. By avoiding overlaps with others’ slots, sticking as close to one’s slot as possible, and not resorting to performances that might further inflate the deviations with the ostensive, these workarounds and avoidance tactics were attempts to decrease the gap between the ostensive and performative of the CCL routine.

Discussion

We started this paper by asking the question, ‘*How do routine dynamics unfold when routine participants engage in ongoing conflicting performances?*’ Our premise was that the very nature of routines that facilitates variable performance, i.e., the deviations between the ostensive and performative aspects would also lead to generation and resolution of conflicts. Using a case study where conflicts and tensions among routine participants were ever-

present, we explored this dual nature of routines. Thus, our paper makes important contributions to our understanding of organisational routines, specifically how the ostensive and performative aspects render the routine as both conflict-generating and conflict-resolution device; i.e., a double-edged sword.

Firstly, we show how the deviations between the ostensive and performative aspects of routines can lead to increased tensions and conflicts among routine participants. Our case study shows that when the performances deviate extremely from the ostensive, which they easily can, they would disrupt the enactment of the routine itself. Secondly, we identify two major reasons why these deviations between the ostensive and performative can arise. One of them is the interdependencies within and between routines that can render performances of one routine restrict the performances of others. The other reason constitutes the power play and political contests among routine participants which would lead to participants performing the routine in ways that suit the pursuit of their own goals but disrupt the routine for everyone else. Finally, we identify how these deviations can be minimised through workarounds and avoidance tactics which, along with the mechanisms established in the literature like truces and temporal strategies, help routine participants perform the routine as close to the ostensive as possible.

Routines as the conflict-generating mechanism

The extant literature has shown that ostensive and performative do not completely overlap because of human agency (Pentland and Feldman 2005, Orlikowski 2000) and this misalignment between ostensive and performative aspects lead to change (Feldman 2000, Feldman and Pentland 2003, Howard-Grenville 2005). This *'recursive relationship between the ostensive and the performative is essential for the ongoing accomplishment of the routine, and generates a new understanding of routines as emergent structures'* (Giddens 1984, Howard-Grenville 2005). However, missing from this view of routines as a recursive relationship between the ostensive and the performative is an empirically based elaboration of how this relationship unfolds resulting not in change but in ongoing adjustments, alterations and modifications that are not always welcomed and rather result in tensions among routine participants. Our paper shows how variability in performances could lead to disruptions and conflicts in routine dynamics.

In Jupiter, consultants pursued different ends (Dittrich and Seidl 2018) and used the CCL routines as a means for that. While some variability was expected in their performances, arising because of the complexities of the procedure and delays because of the availability of equipment or patient's own actions, the deviations from the 'prescribed course of action' we observed in Jupiter were of the consultants' own accord. In the pursuit of their agency, they not only ignored following the schedule or the 'rules' of the lab, but they also deliberately engaged in actions that led to disruptions for everyone's work. Despite this, the way the procedures were scheduled and done did not change in its ostensive but was performed with various variations, workarounds and disruptions.

Thus, the deviation between the ostensive — the prescribed way to work — and the performative — the actual way an iteration of routine is enacted — can be extreme. More importantly, these deviations are seldom involuntary; while it is common for organisational actors to perform a routine variably because of the situation or the challenge at hand, the goal is presumably to achieve the goals the routine is intended for in the most efficient way. However, scholars have shown that routines are indeed used for self-serving purposes (Bertels et al. 2016, Reynaud 2005, Cacciatori 2012, den Nieuwenboer et al. 2017, Dittrich and Seidl 2018). In such cases, these deviations can become too extreme because of the lack of concern of routine participants and can lead to increased tensions with others performing the same routine.

Extant literature has considered this 'intentionality' (Dittrich and Seidl 2018) or 'translation' in routine dynamics (den Nieuwenboer et al. 2017) as a feature of variability that results in change. However, change occurs only when all the routine participants are more or less on-board with the flexible performances (eg. D'Adderio 2014) and these performances are aimed at achieving efficiency. However, as seen in the case study presented in this paper, when flexible performances are enacted for selfish and agency reasons, they result in interpersonal tensions, confusions and conflicts among routine participants. Thus, routine participants can take advantage of the very flexible nature of routines without actually being considerate about how the routine is performed. This is an important finding because routines are a central aspect of any organisation and they are aimed at achieving coordination and reduce the potential for conflicts. However, if they can be sources of conflict, organisations must understand this dual nature of routines.

Routine interdependencies as a source of conflict

Studying routines within the larger context of interdependencies is important because the organisational context includes both the local complements of the routines and the broader environment that was not produced for the routine but in which the routine is embedded (Cohen et al. 1996). When we study a routine — how it is designed or performed — within the boundaries and context of the routine, we miss out on the effect of the interdependencies between the focal routine and other routines which impact or are impacted by the focal routine. Only recently have scholars shifted focus from single routine performances (eg. Feldman 2000, Zbaracki and Bergen 2010) to multiple, interdependent routines (see Kremser and Schreyögg 2016, Sele and Grand 2016 for clusters and ecologies of routines). Our paper contributes to this literature by extending our insights into how routine performances, specifically temporally interdependent performances, unfold and open up space for both coordination and conflicts.

We showed that tensions could arise in both situations; when the same routine is performed by multiple actors in different iterations (within-routine interdependencies), and also when the same individual needs to perform different routines and thus struggles with investments of time and efforts (between-routine interdependencies). When routine participants have incentives to follow their agency, they could disregard the need for coordination and engage in performances that further their goals. Such moves by certain routine participants could restrict the moves others could make thus leading to confusions and tensions among routine participants.

Our case study highlights temporal interdependency, where successful performance alone is insufficient but timely performance is required. In Jupiter, only when a previous routine performance was performed within time and the lab was handed off to another consultant, the next consultant was able to perform the routine as intended. Causing any delays, holdups or disruptions, i.e., not following the temporal order as set out in the schedule meant that consultants not only could start their procedures as planned but they also had to postpone or cancel them; even their other tasks beyond CCL got disrupted. Thus, performances by different actors were temporally interconnected, anchored in the need to share the labs and follow the schedule.

Besides within-routine interdependencies, we also showed the role of between-routine interdependencies. It is quite common in today's organisations that employees are a part of more than one team, workgroup or project, thus handling more than one routine at a time. This is a drain on the employees' cognitive and emotional capabilities and it is expected that they would prioritise one task or routine over others at any given time. They would direct less effort and focus into the other routines thus rendering them ineffective, at least for the time being. This might not always be an optimal solution, for example in hospitals, crisis management teams or time-bound tasks such as large projects and new product development. Recognising that interdependencies among routines anchored in shared resources, human or otherwise, could potentially lead to tensions and problems is important for any organisation.

The literature seems to consider between-routine interdependencies as purely indirect. For instance, Kremser and Schreyögg (2016) posit that, while actions within a routine are directly related to and are reflective of each other, relations between routines are much more indirect: *'they anticipate each other in their performances, and one routine performs as if the other routine would be performed in a certain way (without checking in real-time)'* (p. 716). Thus, between-routine interdependencies are assumed to be *'accounted for without having to rely exclusively on ad hoc coordination of actions'*. We show that this is not always the case and between-routine interdependencies can be as intricate as within-routine interdependencies, if not more. In Jupiter, CCL and out-patient routines were so intricately related that increased focus on one routine led to problems for the other. Different interdependent routines consist of different and contradictory ostensive aspects and the individuals performing such routines not only have to interpret different ostensive aspects but also weigh them against one another. Thus, routine participants do not define their performances solely based on their interpretation of the ostensive but also in lieu of various other aspects that put pressure on their decision making. Our case study shows that both, within- and between-routine interdependencies significantly impact the enactment of any given routine.

Power play in routines

Another reason why the misalignment between the ostensive and the performative might increase is the routine participants' need to engage in power play. A crucial assumption in the routines literature is that enacted patterns of routines suppress conflicts between

otherwise competing parties and conflicting goals (Nelson and Winter 1982, Zbaracki and Bergen 2010). Routines presuppose that actors with heterogeneous preferences respect each other and respect the ostensive of the routine. However, *'actors' preferences are rarely stable as often assumed'* (D'Adderio 2014) and they often change with changes in the situation, actors' needs and goals. Dittrich and Seidl (2018) note that their ends-in-view are more flexible, provisional and dynamic than the literature typically portrays. Thus, actors define their performances not solely in-line with the ostensive but use routine performances to strategically pursue their personal goals (Howard-Grenville 2005). Scholars have shown that power, agency and routine dynamics are interrelated and the relative power and position of routine participants influence the routine's actual use (Feldman and Pentland 2003, Howard-Grenville 2005).

However, how the power of routine participants materialises to influence the routines was not explicitly observed. Our study extends this literature by showing how power dynamics influence how routines unravel. The embeddedness and the interdependencies around routines provide the landscape for the power play to come into action. The more strongly embedded a routine is in other structures, the greater command an actor must have over these structures (Howard-Grenville 2005). In CCL, some consultants were given more importance by the management because of their relatively high status in terms of skill and fame even though, in reality, all the consultants were equal in the terms of qualifications and roles. On the contrary, the consultants who were inferior to these preferred ones felt a sense of rivalry against the latter and tried to exert power to stand out as well.

Our study also highlights the distinction between formal and informal power, which is almost absent from the routines literature. While some scholars have looked at the power of leaders or CEOs with formal power (eg. Kaplan 2015, Zbaracki and Bergen 2010), they have not explored the role of informal power of the routine participants, those that perform routines. In CCL, informal power became more salient as the consultants were not direct subordinates of the management (with the formal power); rather they were independent actors with their own power bases and complex relationship with the organisation and the management. Such informal power gives the actors enough leverage to choose to bend or break the rules especially when they need to pursue their own goals. Informal power also provides a mechanism through which agency materialises. If the power relationship between

routine participants and top management is skewed, routine participants resort to various political actions either to exert or gain power.

The very nature of routines often fails to presuppose this rivalry and power conflicts among routine participants. By considering all the participants equals, routines set up a standard rule or procedure that could be followed by anyone and everyone in the intended fashion. This was seen in CCL where the schedule was designed with the perception that all consultants would equally follow the slots.

However, routines are never performed as such because routine participants are eager to manipulate, bend and change the routines to fit their pursuit of power and agency. They strategically use any means or resources available for them to achieve this. For instance, we have seen consultants using their assistants and patients to block the labs so that they can use the lab whenever they want; the goal was to increase the number of procedures they do to position themselves as more important and powerful within the organisation. Similarly, consultants more than often manipulated and used the schedule to forward their ideas and views. What we discussed in the previous section, about how routine participants can affect temporal relations between routines and act in disruptive ways is possible because of the power dynamics among routine participants. Thus, the pursuit of power can encourage routine participants to disregard and deviate from the ostensive in their performances.

Not only the pursuit of power but also existing control over power can disrupt routines. Participants with more informal power or political standing in the organisation have more leniency in making changes to the routines. They would face fewer repercussions from the management and others would be less inclined to question them. Moreover, their power and political standing give them legitimacy to bend or break the rules as they see fit. For instance, consultants 1 and 11, being not only the heads of the lab and the department which gave them a formally superior position but were also quite skilled and famous bringing in more patients and earnings to the organisation. As such, when they wanted the lab out of schedule or when they took more time and blocked others' labs, everyone felt that it was justified. Thus, power differences among routine participants contribute to the deviations between the ostensive and performative as well.

Resolving tensions through performances

Our paper revealed how routine participants use their performances to both create disruptions and tensions in routines but also, perhaps, more importantly, to address or resolve them. We have observed that the routine participants were essentially using workarounds and avoidance tactics to get things done in Jupiter. Workarounds are ad hoc tactics that are used to bypass a problem or a limitation to get the work done. Often the underlying problem that results in routine disruptions might not be easy to resolve. In such circumstances, workarounds and avoidance tactics help. For instance, the power contests or the perceived rivalry in CCL were not something one could address easily. Total passiveness of the management did not help either. Hence, to avoid the routine coming to a total halt, the coordinator had to find ways to go around the conflicts and ensure the consultants did their procedures.

Identifying the problem at hand, potential consequences and viable alternatives is an important step in using workarounds. Workarounds could include lying, as used by the coordinator in our case study, but also changing the temporal order of the steps in a routine, adding or removing steps, finding alternative ways to perform the routine, or manipulating objects and artefacts used in routine performances. Irrespective of the strategy, the aim is to go around the problem and get the work done. However, it is important to recognise that workarounds are only temporary solutions to the problem, implemented on an ad hoc basis. The root of the problem needs to be addressed to resolve it once for all. This is usually not an easy task, like in Jupiter, where even knowing what the problem is cannot guarantee it could be solved. Until then, workarounds do offer a viable way of overcoming tensions and conflicts in routine performances.

While workarounds help resolve problems once they arise, avoidance tactics are effective in preventing the situations that could lead to conflicts. Routines are not one-off events; routines are repetitive patterns of action (Feldman and Pentland 2003) performed over and over often under different circumstances. As such, routines result in knowledge and experience that result in generalised solutions to recurring problems (March and Simon 1958). With this experience comes a capability to anticipate potential disruptions or conflicts that might arise when certain routine participants engage in certain actions. Planning for these eventualities can help one mitigate the disruptions. Similarly, recognising the bottlenecks in

the sequence of steps in a routine and avoiding problems at those bottlenecks is as important, if not more, as using workarounds or any other strategies. Thus, our paper proposes workarounds and avoidance tactics as further ways of ensuring resolution of tensions and conflicts in routine dynamics, besides truces (Nelson and Winter 1982, Kaplan 2015) and temporal differentiating or sequencing (D'Adderio 2014, Turner and Rindova 2012).

The ostensive-performative relationship plays a vital role in using workarounds or avoidance tactics as well. These two tactics are effective and possible because of the presence of an ostensive in the first place that guided how these steps could be taken. For instance, in their study on news stations, Patriotta and Gruber (2015) showed that the news program crew were able to edit or adjust around breaking news, adapt and change their schedule because they initially started with a plan — an ostensive if you may — that guided their decisions and actions. Similarly, in Jupiter, because a schedule was present, the coordinator was able to move around slots, lie and give them to someone else, or even proactively plan procedures. The presence of an ostensive idea of how the CCL routine was supposed to be performed made it easier for the coordinator and other consultants to introduce variations into the performances. Without an ostensive, even in its distorted, disrespected form, routine participants would have no anchor to plan their performances around and this could easily end up in chaos.

Our paper showed that the more the deviations between the ostensive and the performative gets, the more intense conflicts could get but also the more the routine participants can interfere to decrease these deviations. Getting closer to the ostensive becomes the ideal goal. They can, of course, choose to change the entire routine or make sure the contextual forces that lead to the disruptions are discarded but this is not always possible. For instance, discarding the fee-for-service model or curbing power contests in Jupiter is not something Jupiter can eliminate because their very competitive advantage lies in them. In such situations, routines fail to self-regulate and resolve the conflicts and the routine participants engaging in various performances to decrease these disruptions becomes the only possible solution. Thus, the fact that routines comprise of ostensive and performative aspects render routines as both conflict-generating and conflict-resolution devices, hence our metaphor of routine as a double-edged sword.

Conclusion

As with any qualitative study, our paper has some limitations that call for future research. While our study is based on a single case study, the nature of dynamics and work practices observed can easily be generalisable to a wider range of organisations. Furthermore, routines and interdependencies within and between them is an attribute shared by any organisation. Nevertheless, future research studying different types of organisations with different levels of interpersonal rivalry, temporal interdependencies and coordinating mechanisms can reveal more routine disrupting and repairing strategies than we now know. Moreover, while we did study the impact of power conflicts within routines, future research should look at contexts where such conflicts have a wide-range impact on the organisation. For instance, power conflicts among top management teams might lead to unrest within the organisation.

Finally, diverse contributions of artefacts are beginning to be understood as the focus for negotiation and interaction between different professional groups (Bechky 2003) or for mediating boundaries between different communities of practice (Carlile 2002, Sapsed and Salter 2004), for instance. In routines literature, scholars have looked at how artefacts affect routine practices (D'Adderio 2001) and as formal representations (D'Adderio 2003) and in the contexts of process innovation (Lazaric and Denis 2005, Howard-Grenville 2005). We observed how the schedule was manipulated and selectively used by the consultants to suit their needs. Future research can look at artefacts that have a much more dynamic role to play, such as computer software or physically manipulable artefacts.

Our paper also offers practical implications. The managers need to identify the bottlenecks in routine performances that are susceptible to actors' agentic behaviours and resolve them. By minimising the possibility for routine participants to pursue their selfish ends, managers can minimise disruptions in routine performances. Secondly, managers need to impose stringent rules that are less susceptible to actors' whims and desires. If there was a system in CCL that scheduled the procedures automatically on a first-come-first-serve basis, most of the conflicts would have been avoided. Several consultants had recognised the need to introduce a different system that was better than an abstract slot system printed on a piece of paper. Thirdly, organisations should develop a culture that instils the sense of the right way to behave. The management should focus on an organisational culture that encourages

camaraderie, coordination and positive reward structures rather than goal achievement, individual performance and pursuit of selfish ends. Strong focus on individual performance without taking into consideration how the individual's relationships and group performances are would tend to encourage the actors to behave in a more self-centric manner and develop a lack of trust and appreciation in the practices of the top management.

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Figure 1. Data structure

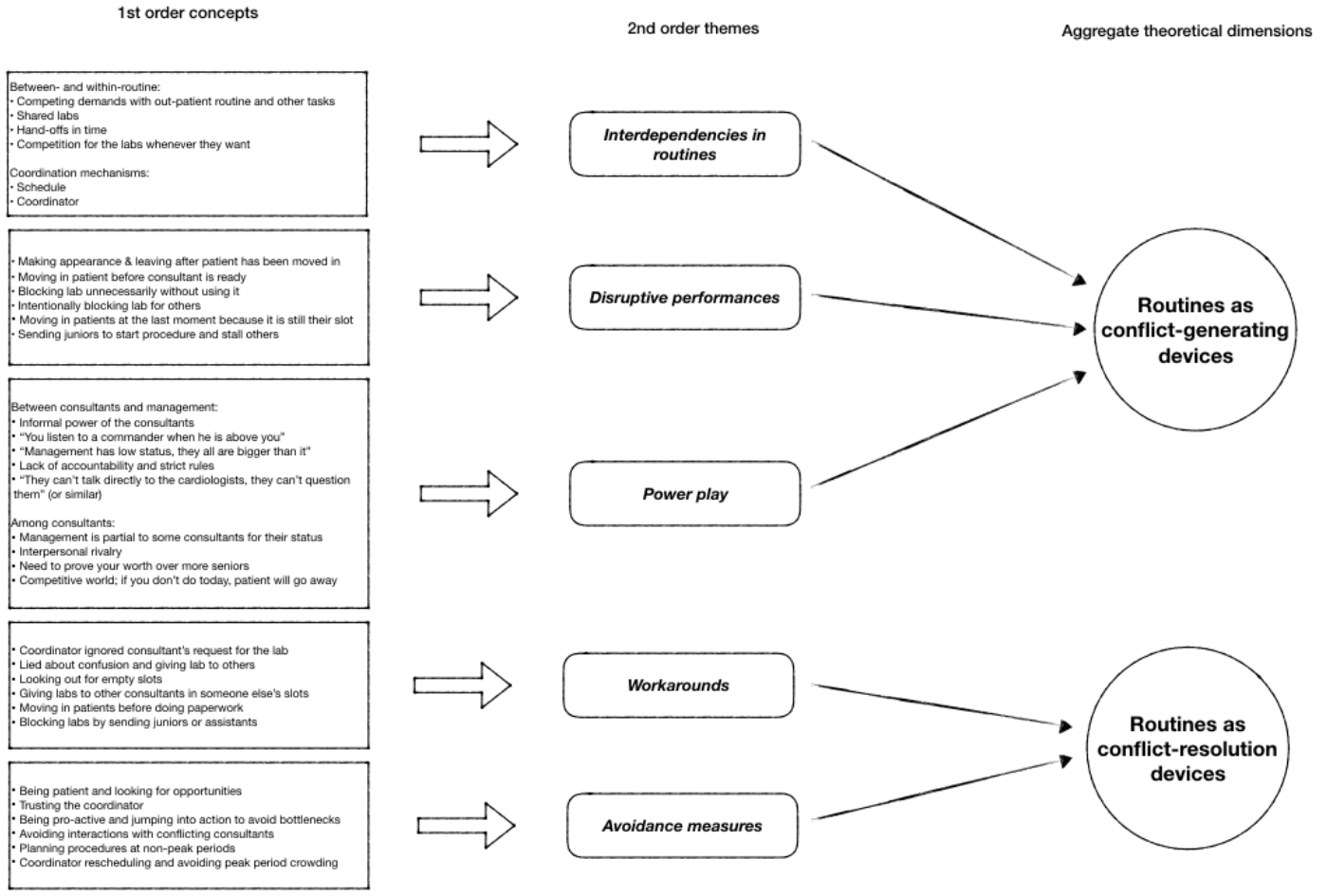
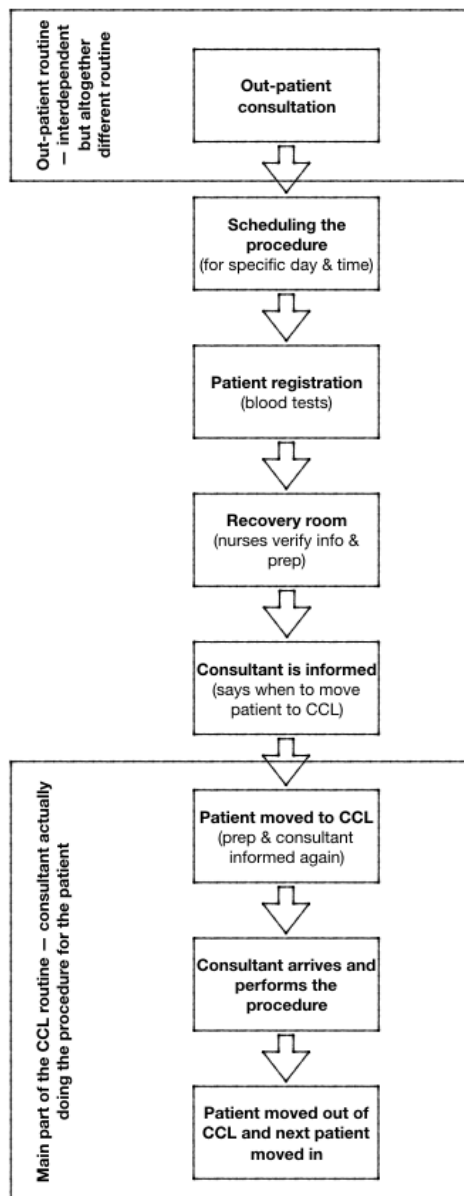


Figure 2. Ostensive of the CCL routine



Appendix 1. Interview template²

A. Demographics

1. What is your role in Jupiter? What kind of procedures do you do?
2. Since when have you been a part of Jupiter?
3. Do you consult only here or do you work in other organisations too? If so, what are they and what roles do you play there?

B. CCL

4. Since when have you been doing procedures in the cathlab?
5. What do you think about how the cathlab is run regarding slot system? Are you satisfied about the allocation of the lab to you?
6. How was the cathlab before [coordinator] came? What changed after?*
7. Do you or did you work in other cathlabs? If so, how is/was it there? What is/was the system to allocate labs and how did everyone coordinate there?*
8. Can you think of the ideas better than the slot system?
9. Can you describe a recent event where you had troubles getting hold of the lab? Why was it? Did others create problems? What did they do? What did you do to resolve them?
10. What do you think are the major reasons for conflicts in CCL?
11. How do you feel when consultants move in their patients and then leave for a long time?
12. How many times a week do you often need to wait for a lab? What are the most common reasons for that?
13. Does everyone understand that they need to consider and collaborate with each other in CCL?

C. Other tasks and their effects on CCL

14. Can you briefly explain your usual day? What is your routine like?
15. Do you see OP at the same time you do the procedures? How do you manage? Can you separate them and focus on one instead? How? Why? Why not?

² This is the initial interview template. Some of the questions were adapted based on how much the interviewee has shared through informal conversations before. Some of the questions were also adapted in subsequent interviews with the same interviewees but the focus remained the same. Any further questions that arose based on the interviewee's information were used in other interviews and some of them were added to this template (for example, those indicated with an asterisk in the end).

16. How many referrals do you get everyday? How many times do you go on rounds?*

17. What comes to your mind when you think about managing cathlab procedures and OP and other things simultaneously?

18. Can you explain how managing these competing things affect your efficiency? Do you feel this causes problems to cathlab slot utilization also?*

19. If your procedures get delayed, what is the most common reason for that?

20. If it is not getting the lab on time, what is the most common reason for that?

D. Power contests

21. What do you think about the take of management on CCL problems?

22. Do you think everyone follows the rules in CCL? What is the management doing about them?

23. Do you think the competition among consultants is also a reason? Doesn't management know this?*

24. Do you think a salary based model will help curb these conflicts? Do/don't you think the fee-for-service model will be changed?*

Appendix 2. CCL Schedule

CATH LAB I ROSTER APPLICABLE FROM DECEMBER-16 (OLD) FD10								
	8-10 AM	10-11 AM	11-12 PM	12-2 PM	2-3 PM	3-4 PM	4-5 PM	5-6 PM
MON	MANOJ	SUNIL K	P S/BADRI	KMK	RAYUDU	RADIO/ NEURO	P S/BADRI	RAYUDU
TUE	SUNIL K	P S/BADRI	TRIPTI DEB	ASLAM	ASLAM	ASLAM	P C RATH	P C RATH
WED	PED CARD	PED CARD	RAYUDU	SUNIL K	TRIPTI	MANOJ	KMK	KMK
THUR	SRIDAR	KMK	KMK	RAYUDU/ MANOJ	TRIPTI	JAY K	JAY K	JAY K
FRI	PED CARD	PED CARD	TRIPTI DEB	P C RATH	SUNIL K	ASLAM	ASLAM	ASLAM
SAT	MANOJ	RAYUDU	TRIPTI DEB	ASLAM	ASLAM	ASLAM	P C RATH	P C RATH

CATH LAB II ROSTER APPLICABLE FROM DECEMBER 16 (NEW) FD20								
	8-9 AM	9-10 AM	10-12 PM	12-2 PM	2-3 PM	3-4 PM	4-5 PM	5-6 PM
MON	P S/BADRI	P S/BADRI	MANOJ	TRIPTI	P C RATH	P C RATH	P C RATH	P C RATH
TUE	KMK	KMK	MANOJ	PS/ BADRI	P C RATH	P C RATH	RADIO/ NEURO	RADIO/ NEURO
WED	P S/BADRI	P S/BADRI	MANOJ	SRIDAR	P C RATH	P C RATH	P C RATH	RADIO/ NEURO
THUR	MANOJ	MANOJ	P S/BADRI	TRIPTI	P C RATH	P C RATH	P C RATH	P C RATH
FRI	MANOJ	MANOJ	P S/BADRI	KMK	P C RATH	P C RATH		
SAT	SRIDAR	SRIDAR	P S/BADRI	SUNIL K	P C RATH	P C RATH	P S/ BADRI	

Note:

1. Requesting all the consultants to follow the rota strictly unless it is primary or

Paper 2

“I, Me, & Myself.” Impression Management at workplace

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“The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited.”

— Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*

Abstract: Impression management is a range of assertive and defensive tactics that individuals use to protect, maintain and enhance their image at work. However, the literature on impression management is undermined by the limitations in theoretical and empirical approaches. Empirical contexts are mostly limited to how people manage impressions in the contexts of interviews, performance evaluation, and supervisor liking while theoretical approaches are limited to studying dyads and taking a one-sided ‘others-as-audience’ approach. This paper extends both theoretical and empirical knowledge of impression management through a case study and makes three main contributions. Firstly, I explore the plurality of impression management by distinguishing both deliberate/conscious and habitual/subconscious impression management. In doing so, I identify defaming and blaming as lesser known impression management tactics that are more consequential than previously studied tactics. Secondly, I show how impression management becomes a tool for organisational actors in their attempts at identity work. Finally, I show the negative, detrimental effects impression management can have when actors engage in identity work without reflection.

Keywords: Impression Management, identity work, self-presentation, conscious impression management, subconscious/unconscious impression management, qualitative research.

Introduction

How we are seen and perceived as is an important aspect of our psyche. Individuals try to present an image and construct an identity that they desire others to see, and this is a crucial aspect of both personal and professional life. This has been studied in the literature under the concept of ‘Impression Management’, first introduced by Erving Goffman in his seminal work *‘The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life’* (1949, 1978). This is not any less true in organisations either. Organisational actors engage in such behaviour on a routine basis aimed at enhancing one’s image at work (Bolino et al. 2008, Bozeman and Kacmar 1997, Jones and Pittman 1982). It is all about projecting a desired image of the self at the audience and then maintaining, protecting and manipulating that image.

Impression management is a common phenomenon in organisations. Anyone who ever worked in any organisation, including academic institutions, are aware of how individuals put time and efforts into portraying and constructing specific images of themselves. They engage in impression management to impress their peers, get access to resources, engage in coordination with others, and, in general, to achieve their goals. They choose the types and extent of impression management based on their goals, the context, resources available, and their audience at the time. Thus, impression management is not just relevant but also a salient phenomenon in organisations.

However, the literature on impression management is undermined by theoretical and empirical limitations (Higgins and Judge 2004, Kacmar et al. 2004, 2007, see Bolino et al. 2016). Theoretical approaches were limited to studying impression management as a concept of dyadic relationships and taking a one-sided approach where one individual — the actor — uses impression management tactics on others — the ‘audience’ or the ‘target’ (Leary and Kowalski 1990). Following this, empirical contexts were mostly limited to how people manage impressions in the contexts of interviews, performance evaluation and supervisor liking. Thus, impression management was studied in contexts with immediate goals for the actor engaging in these tactics and where the real-time assessment of the effects of impression management was possible. However, individuals also engage in long-term impression management with other goals such as constructing a desired image or achieving access to organisational resources. Furthermore, impression management manifests in

complex social situations as well such as in groups or teams (Jones 1990). The same individual would often use different impression management tactics with different people.

Such a perspective of impression management as a multifaceted phenomenon in organisations — in everyday workplace contexts — is not only missing but it is also important to understand its role in enabling coordination among organisational actors. Despite the extant literature studying how supervisors or interviewers get influenced by impression management tactics (eg. Ellis et al. 2002, Higgins and Judge 2004, Kacmar et al. 2007, Treadway et al. 2007), the role of impression management as a constituent of workplace dynamics and how it shapes the workplace is largely missing from the literature. In this paper, I develop a more nuanced picture of impression management as a phenomenon that arises out of workplace dynamics as well as a phenomenon that shapes workplace. As such, this paper aims to answer the question *'How does impression management unfolds in, and shapes, the everyday workplace context?'*

This question is explored through three subquestions: 1. What are the different types of impression management tactics used in conjunction with each other in the workplace? 2. How does impression management unfold as a process? 3. What are the consequences of impression management on the actor enacting it and, more importantly, on her/his audience? Based on a case study conducted in a hospital, this paper looks at how people in a highly complex and high-status organisational context use different impression management tactics to pursue their own ends. I have identified different types of impression management tactics, some previously explored in the literature like self-promotion and ingratiation but some less known like defaming and blaming that have a more profound impact on workplace dynamics. Furthermore, I distinguish between conscious and subconscious impression management, i.e., enacting impression management deliberately with some ulterior motive vs enacting habitually or even when there is no need for it.

Additionally, this paper also shows that impression management is a tool actors use in constructing desired identities (Alvesson 1994). Identity is not only how one sees oneself but also how others see her/him (Kreiner et al. 2006). Thus, organisational actors use impression management that aligns with their larger identity work goals. However, there is a thin line between impression-managing as a part of identity work and impression-managing without reflection. Specifically, when they impression-manage without reflecting on its effects, they

could elicit an image in their audience that is in contrast to what they intend to achieve, i.e., a negative image. They can also make their colleagues feel less psychologically safe to share their ideas and opinions, and less motivated to work with them. Such a dynamic could have catastrophic effects on the workplace if coordination is important and actors rely on others' support for efficient working. Thus, this paper extends our theoretical understanding of both impression management and identity work as well.

In the rest of the paper, I present the literature review of impression management and then describe the research design, methodology and organisational setting in the methods section. In the findings section, I present the different types of impression management observed and how impression management materialised as a process of identity work. In the discussion section, I elaborate on the contributions and implications of the paper. The conclusion section offers boundary conditions and future research directions.

Background

Impression Management

Introduced by Erving Goffman in his seminal work *'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life'* (1949, 1978), impression management is a conscious or subconscious process where an individual attempts to influence the perceptions of other people about her/himself. In organisational contexts, employees want to create, maintain and protect an image they prefer to be seen by their peers, colleagues, and more importantly, their supervisors (Rosenfeld et al. 1995). This impression management consists of an ecology of assertive and defensive tactics that individuals use to enhance their image at work (Bolino et al. 2008).

Several scholars have proposed different theoretical frameworks of impression management (eg. Bozeman and Kacmar 1997, Jones and Pittman 1982, Tedeschi and Melburg 1984). Wayne and Ferris (1990) developed an empirically driven model of impression management studying how tactics and performance affect supervisor-subordinate exchange quality. Jones and Pittman (1982) was a seminal work recognising the different assertive and defensive impression management tactics in the clinical psychology field. Bolino and Turnley (1999) empirically validated Jones and Pittman's taxonomy and developed the measuring scales.

The literature typically identified five assertive and two defensive impression management tactics. *Ingratiation* is praising others through flattery, confirming their opinions, or doing them favours to appear likeable. *Self-promotion* is taking credit for positive events and making sure others are aware of one's accomplishments. *Exemplification* is appearing as dedicated by going above and beyond the call of duty. *Supplication* is showing weaknesses, discussing limitations and appearing as needy. Individuals could also try to *intimidate* others through threatening. Scholars have also observed *apologies* and *justifications* as defensive tactics used to justify one's actions after a mistake, reduce the blame and improve supervisor confidence (Crant and Bateman 1993, Wood and Mitchell 1981).

Thus, theoretical approaches were limited to defining impression management as a unidirectional process, i.e., one 'actor' using impression tactics on her/his 'target' in contexts facilitating the real-time assessment of reactions. This was further supported by the empirical contexts that were limited to dyadic relationships and, often, power differences between the 'actor' and the 'target'. People continuously monitor how they are perceived by others, often without any attempts to manipulate their image. But under certain circumstances, they could be motivated to control how others perceive them (Leary and Kowalski 1990). This led to studies exclusively focussing on the contexts of interviews (Ellis et al. 2002, Higgins and Judge 2004, McFarland et al. 2003), performance appraisal (Barsness et al. 2005, Kacmar et al. 2007, Treadway et al. 2007), and career success (Judge and Bretz 1994, Wayne et al. 1997). Impression management tactics have been shown to influence important outcomes such as hiring decisions, performance evaluations and career advancement (Bolino et al. 2008).

Despite scholars having recognised several types of and developing different theoretical frameworks for impression management, our understanding of impression management as an organisational level phenomenon is lacking. Impression management plays an equally vital role, if not more, in group dynamics. Compared to dyads, achieving one's image goals is more complicated in work teams/groups because impression management is a cyclical and dynamic process (Jones 1990) in that the members of a team or a group not only manage their image but also form impressions of their teammates. Repeated interactions among different

actors, contextual factors, and group dynamics affect the evolution of impression management dynamics over time.

Furthermore, it is relatively easy to impression-manage in dyads as an individual can easily track the responses and reactions of her/his target and then choose a tactic she/he thinks is suitable for her/his goals. However, in groups, an individual might often need to use different tactics with different targets. Moreover, an individual might not be just the impression-managing actor but also a target for someone else. For instance, while a manager might be trying to protect and maintain her/his image with her/his supervisor, she/he might also be a target of, say, her/his subordinates who would be trying to manage their own image.

Impression Management and Identity Work

While previous research has looked at several antecedents of impression management, including situational and dispositional factors (Bozeman and Kacmar 1997, Kacmar et al. 2004) and personal traits (Bolino and Turnley 2003b, Higgins and Judge 2004), our knowledge about the association or relation between the organisational environment and the individual's inclination to use, or not use, impression management remains largely unexplored. Moreover, the limitations in the empirical contexts and theoretical lenses discussed above also distance the individuals from the overall workplace environment; thus, we miss out on how the impression management dynamics materialise within the individual-organisational relationship.

I posit that the lens of social identity helps us understand impression management as a phenomenon arising out of the individual-organisational relationship. Social identity (Tajfel 1978, 1981, Turner 1975, 1982, Tajfel and Turner 1986) has long been studied as a concept that explains how individuals define themselves as a part of a group, may it be a whole organisation or particular departments or groups within that organisation. However, identity is not a singular, monolithic concept; it is rather a continuous process where an individual tries to answer the question “*Who am I?*” amidst all the “*This is who we are*” messages she/he encounters in the social context (Kreiner et al. 2006). Thus, any member of a social group engages in *identity work* to negotiate and optimise the boundaries between personal and social identity (Kreiner et al. 2006).

While scholars have looked at the inward cognitive processes of identity creation and maintenance, some have taken interest in the issues of image preservation (eg. Bartel and

Dutton 2001, Roberts 2005, Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock 1996) examining the externally driven aspects of identity — what individuals do with and to *others* in order to negotiate image and reputation (Kreiner et al. 2006). Impression management is an inherently important way to manage this external identity work. Alvesson (1994) explored the relationship between the use of language, the constitution of identities and a basis for impression management showing that impression management is associated with, and a part of, one's identity work. Even Goffman's original work underlined the recursive relationship between identity and impression management. However, our understanding of the dynamics and effects of impression management in the everyday workplace, especially in teams or groups that are characterised by complexity and interrelated tasks, is limited; we know little of their effects on the audience. Looking at impression management from an identity work perspective helps us understand the consequences of impression management as a process.

Summarising, our understanding of impression management in organisational contexts is stifled by limitations in empirical approaches and theoretical lens used. Dyadic relationships, interview and performance appraisal settings, and agent-focused analyses dominate the literature. Most of the extant literature considered impression management to be a static process and neglected the dynamic role it could play in complex, multifaceted everyday life in the organisations. How impression management unfolds in the everyday workplace context, specifically within interactions and relationships between different people, and what effects does it have on the organisations as a whole is a question that elicits us. The case study presented in this paper answers this question.

Methodology

Research Design

I conducted this case study in the department of cardiology of a multi-speciality, multi-national hospital, coded as Jupiter. Located in a major metropolitan city in India, Jupiter was a branch of a global hospital chain, maintaining standards of any internationally acclaimed hospital. I specifically focused on the Catheterisation Laboratory³ of Jupiter. There were two labs that were shared by around 20 physicians based on a schedule. The work environment

³ For a brief information about what Catheterisation Laboratory is and what kinds of interventional procedures are done in it, wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cath_lab) page is the best. For a more formal information, check out the webpages of AHA (<http://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-attack/diagnosing-a-heart-attack/cardiac-catheterization>) or BHF (<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/medical/watch-an-angiogram/what-to-expect-in-a-cath-lab>).

was complex and involved several actors: physicians who did the procedures for their patients; technicians who helped them with the equipment; nurses who helped with controlling the flow of the contrast, monitoring the vitals and alerting the physician in time. Finally, there was the coordinator appointed by the management to manage the scheduling of the two labs that around twenty physicians shared.

Data Collection

I acted as a non-participant observer spending more than 600 hours in Jupiter over two phases spanning across eight months in 2017-18⁴. It was rather easy to interact with everyone and I had often walked with the physicians on their rounds visiting their patients, sat in their out-patient and spoke to them over coffee. Most of the interactions were informal, owing to the culture of the organisation and the fact that almost everyone was receptive of the researcher.

The main sources of data were observations, given the nature of the topic studied. Impression management is a situated-action process; individuals impression-manage based on the situation, tasks at hand, their audience and ease of engaging in impression management tactics. As such, much of the data regarding impression management dynamics came from observations, then supported by interviews where I asked the interviewees what they thought about certain individuals behaving in certain ways⁵. I also conducted informal semi-structured interviews with 16 of the physicians involved. Most of the interviews were conducted in their out-patient offices with some done over lunch or coffee. I also had access to archival data including the computers and the registers that helped me understand the workplace better.

Data Analysis

Both observations and interviews were transcribed retaining as much rich data as possible. The observations were usually noted down immediately after an interesting event or a conversation had taken place. The day was not always busy and had periods where nothing much happened which allowed me to note down the observations and also interact with others to know their versions and opinions. The interviews were transcribed at the end of the

⁴ The first phase was between June and September 2017 while the second phase was between March and June 2018. The phases were selected to give time to analyse the data collected in the first phase and focus on interesting aspects in the second phase.

⁵ Care was taken not to mention impression management overtly so as to avoid any negative connotation it might elicit.

day or within a few days. Almost all the interviews were recorded and the data was coded following Strauss and Corbin (1998) to define certain concepts that are rooted in the empirical context and then analysed to form categories that are more abstract and theoretical. As is common in qualitative research, I had to move back and forth between the coding, literature and findings to understand the emerging theory holistically. The categories are then analysed to form themes which talk to the existing literature.

I started first by coding the data for different impression management tactics used, the circumstances in which they were used, who the actors, targets and audience were, and what effect did they have on the audience. This enabled me to identify six second-order categories, reflecting six impression management tactics: *bragging*, *showing-off*, *story-telling*, *ingratiation*, *defaming* and *blaming others*. I also coded for whether there was any immediate goal for the actors for engaging in impression management, also considering the individual's power, social standing and position in the organisation. This enabled me to distinguish between conscious and subconscious impression management behaviours.

I also coded for the organisational and situational factors that seemingly facilitated impression management and whether the actor achieved her/his goal as a result. I then coded for the motivations of impression management; various reasons that could have led the physicians to engage in impression management. Most of these codes came from the interviews of the physicians but also from the opinions and impressions of the technicians, nurses and the coordinator, who were the audience for the physicians' impression management attempts. As such, these codes also captured the effects of such attempts. These set of codes resulted in two categories, *motivation for impression management* and *identity work without reflection*.

In the final stage of coding, I abstracted from the second-order categories to derive higher order abstract, theoretical constructs. The first six categories reflect the construct *Impression management in the workplace* and the latter two categories reflect the construct *Impression management as a tool of identity work*. The coding scheme is presented in figure 1.

Figure 1 about here

Impression Management in the workplace: Findings from a case study

Impressions and image are important in any organisation and the same holds for hospitals, if not even more. Scholars have already shown that impression management plays an important role in hospitals (Lewin and Reeves 2011) but how it unravels and materialises is something we do not know about. In Jupiter, actors used impression management not only for maintaining their image but it also clearly had significant consequences. I will start with an example to understand how impression management materialised in action. I will then discuss different impression management tactics and provide examples for them.

On the 23rd of August, Physician2 had an AST procedure scheduled. It was rather a complex procedure and usually, the physicians did not do it very frequently.

“This is the first time I am doing this procedure after coming to Jupiter. Of course, I had done them before when I was working at the university. But that was long ago. See, I will do it in 10 minutes now,” Physician2 said laughing and went into lab I.

Physician13 came and saw that Physician2 was doing AST. Physician13 was a junior physician while Physician2 was one of the most experienced physicians in Jupiter. Physician13 went in asking, “Doctor, can I stay and help you? This is my first time. You are so experienced and is the right person to see doing this.”

The scrub nurse punctured the artery and Physician2 inserted the sheath. Then he came out into the console room where the coordinator and other technicians and nurses were present. “I inserted the sheath in 2 minutes, see? Now in 10 minutes, I will finish the procedure. You keep time,” he said and went in. A technician started the clock on the computer.

The positioning of the device took more time and the entire procedure took 13 minutes. Physician2 came out and said, “I would have finished it sooner if not for that useless technician. If they did their work well, it would have taken less than 5 minutes. They did not put the correct sized sheath... you saw no? There was no size 14. So I had to use size 13. You saw no?”

Physician13 followed Physician2 out of the lab and said, “You did a wonderful job. I learned a lot.” Then he turned to the coordinator and said, “Did you see sir, how cleanly he did the procedure?”

After everyone had left, I asked the coordinator, “Was it really that complex procedure?”

He said, “It is not easy. But it is not a great feat to do in 10 minutes. Even other experienced doctors like Physician1 or Physician11 take the same time, even less.”

I asked, “So why were you all praising him?”

He replied, "What can we say? Can we say, 'no it is simple'? No, right? He likes to feel like that and tell stories about himself as long as we are here to listen."

[observational notes; console room and lab I; paraphrased; 23 Aug]

This event was an example of how impression management was a common occurrence in Jupiter. Firstly, Physician2 was eager to convey the image that he could do even complex procedures within no time. Not only did he claim that verbally, but he was also compelled to come out in the middle of the procedure to reaffirm that. He was thus not only bragging but also physically showing-off through his actions. On the other hand, Physician13 was trying to offer Physician2 flattery. Finally, Physician2 tried to blame the technicians for the delay and reaffirm that he could have finished the procedure within 5 minutes if the technicians did not do any mistake. It was Physician2 himself who had chosen the smaller sized sheath before as the sheath of required size was not available. He tried to push the blame onto others to maintain the image he had claimed for.

In a single example, we could identify bragging, ingratiation and even blaming being used as impression management tactics. I will now discuss these different impression management tactics and their dynamics observed. A model of impression management dynamics is presented in figure 2.

Figure 2 about here

Impression Management Tactics

Various impression management tactics were observed in Jupiter, including bragging, showing-off, ingratiation, and story-telling. While the extant literature has explored these tactics in previous studies, albeit in dyads and simple empirical contexts, this case study revealed two other tactics that were not recognised in the literature; defaming and blaming others. Moreover, I also observed that not all these tactics were used with a conscious plan to achieve an ulterior goal, rather some physicians also used them habitually.

Bragging. Self-promotion has long been recognised as an impression management tactic in the literature. However, the case of Jupiter revealed that self-promotion could be of different types as well. The first was bragging, a tactic that was often used to promote oneself

and thus, it constituted self-promotion. It was probably the simplest behaviour enacted by the actors in CCL. Let us return to our example above. Physician2 was eager to convey the image that he could do such a complex procedure within no time. Similar ways of self-promotion ranged from making simple statements about one's own experience, skills and knowledge to making broader claims and behaving in a way that highlight's one's self-image. Another example makes this clearer.

One day, Physician1 and Physician3 were discussing how to do a particular procedure that C3 had scheduled later in the day.

Physician1: The best way to do it is to enter through femoral.

Physician3: I read all the literature yesterday. Everything there was. What to do and how to do it. So I have planned the strategy already. You know. I always plan what strategy to use before coming to the procedure.

After Physician1 left, Physician3 turned towards a technician and another Physician14, and commented about a different procedure he had just finished, "It was a hard procedure. The patient was not ready. I had to give him [...] I had to work very hard. It was tough. I think I was great. The patient was lucky. I think it was tough job and now I had done it." [console room; 11.08.2018]

In this short example, we can see how Physician3 bragged to another physician about how prepared he always was for procedures and immediately bragged to a different audience about how good a job he had done on a different procedure. While this was an example of simple bragging, physicians often yelled at the patients and their attendants⁶ too. For instance, one day, a patient's attendant asked Physician2 a question about something he did not understand. Physician2 shouted in the crowded console room,

"Are you educated? Do you know Harvard Med school and Stanford? Have you heard of them? They do not allow people like you even at the gates. I went to them in those days when they did not even allow people with high IQ. I have 30 years of experience. I can see what questions you are thinking or you are going to ask even before you think about them." [console room; 03.08.2018]

Showing-off. While bragging consisted of verbally boosting one's image, actors often engaged in non-verbal actions too that were aimed at showing off one's image in a better light. Physician2 keeping time of his procedure in the example from before was a non-verbal

⁶ Patient's attendants are people who come with the patient to the hospital, such as family members or relatives. Physicians often speak to the attendants and explain the procedure done and also the next course of action because, one, the patient might be weak, unconscious or tired to go through all this, and two, attendants would be the ones who take care of the patients and give medications.

version of self-promotion. Similarly, some physicians such as 3, 7, 8 or 9 would often come out of the lab into the console room in the middle of the procedure and spend time looking and pointing at the procedure on the computer discussing the procedure with senior technicians or other physicians present in the console room, even those who were not involved in the procedures, including me. Statements like “*see, how complex this is, I can do this/I have done many like this before/it is not easy task but I did it, you see how I did it*” were often repeated, usually with a higher pitch so that others could hear them. The surprising thing, though, was that they did this despite knowing that others were capable of seeing if the procedures were complex or not and if the physician showing-off indeed did a great job or not. Some physicians thought it satisfied their egos.

“This is a corporate set up, so people will obviously try to highlight themselves, it’s common in corporate set ups. People who are learned will know it is not a complicated procedure whereas people like, you know, nurses or technicians who may not know the things, they do not know certain things, [...] it does have the impact on the group 3 and 4 workers, people who are working there. Obviously so they say that [physicians] are better than others. Sometimes it satisfies their ego.” [Physician19; interview; 19.03.2018]

Story-Telling. While bragging and showing-off were used to present one’s image in a better light, it was not always possible to use such explicit self-promotion. They instead resorted to story-telling as a more implicit and less pretentious way of managing their image. Story-telling was often used when the actors did not want to come across as too aggressive along the lines of bragging and showing-off; it was a more casual narrative. While story-telling is a common phenomenon in organisations used to share knowledge, stories and culture, physicians in Jupiter used story-telling not to impart knowledge but to portray themselves as intelligent and superior. They told stories, often several times to different actors, that highlighted their virtues, skills and characteristics. For instance, Physician2 often told stories of his experience where he had stood up against a superior or a powerful person and stayed true to his values.

“He came and showed his card. He was some deputy director of some governmental department. I told him, ‘You are government servant no? Go to a governmental hospital. Why come to me if you did not even take an appointment?’ See, I see patients until 5 pm and it was after 5. If he had requested, I would have seen him. But he tried to use his power, now, even if he gave me a million, I won’t see him. Why should I see him? That’s why I always follow my approach. No one can tell me how to live my life. I have worked hard. I have made myself

qualified. I will work as I prefer. Who are you to think you can come and control me. No one can tell me what to do. I am experienced, skilled and respected. I do not have to heave to someone's power." [Physician2; console room; 02.08.2017]

Ingratiation. Physicians, and often even technicians, did not only brag about themselves but also engaged in ingratiating others to impress them. Going back to our example of time-keeping the procedure, Physician13 was offering Physician2 flattery to win his attention. Physician13 was junior to Physician2 and tried to stoke the senior's ego by praising him. Similarly, when senior physicians ask junior physicians to show and explain to the patients' attendants about the procedure, juniors would repeatedly use phrases such as "*Doctor has done a good job/Doctor has done a very good procedure/It was very hard but you see how wonderfully sir has put the stunt/You are lucky because sir has done the procedure, it was very hard*" or something along these lines, during the explanation to the attendants, in such a way that the senior would hear.

Senior physicians sometimes diverted simpler procedures to junior physicians for the sake of time. As such, juniors tried to impress the seniors to do more procedures. Moreover, assisting senior physicians in their procedures was a way for the juniors to learn doing complex procedures. Being associated with famed physicians also lifted the social standing of the juniors. As such, junior physicians always tried to impress and win appreciation by seniors despite everyone being equal in education, professional status and title.

Defaming or manipulating other's image. This was a more surprising finding; an impression management tactic seldom observed in extant literature. Some physicians in Jupiter were even willing to defame others to highlight their own image. When defaming others, their main goal was to isolate a behaviour or action of the target, compare that attribute to one's own attribute and show how one was better than the target. This was relatively easy because the procedures done by all the physicians were stored on the computers and anyone can access them. As such, a physician would open up someone's procedure, point at it and discuss all the mistakes done in that procedure. She/he would come up with ways how she/he would have done the procedure and claim those ways to be better. The more complex the procedure was, the more strongly a physician could defame someone else and present her/himself as better. Such discussions were often done with technicians, or sometimes nurses, usually openly without the concern that the targets might come to know

about this. So strong was their goal to boost their image that they considered the consequences as immaterial.

Some physicians even attacked their peers on a personal level, resorting to comments behind their backs and criticisms about them as individuals. For instance, Physician3 often targeted Physician1 and commented how he came from a different state and became powerful in Jupiter, how he did not have more diverse skills but rather focused only on certain types of procedures, and how Physician3 himself was better than him even as a person. Physician13, who was once an assistant to Physician1, would often join in and support Physician3's claims. A short example makes this clearer.

Physician13: You should not let people like him [Physician1] near you. They give negative vibes.

Physician3: I am not even going to his cabin these days. [Physician2] told me he too doesn't like him [Physician1]. The other day, we were talking about him. See, I don't want to say bad about anyone. So I said, 'Why? He is good no?' Then [Physician2] said, 'Some people look like that. But they are not good.' No. No. He didn't say good. Not reliable. He [Physician2] said [Physician1] is not reliable. [console room; 10.08.2017]

Blaming. Similar to defaming others, blaming was a surprising finding as well, especially in an organisational context that was supposed to be highly professional and ethical. Some physicians would usually blame others for mistakes or delays, technicians and nurses being the usual victims. Physicians would claim that particular equipment was not available or a nurse did not give the contrast correctly whenever something went wrong. Even the physicians' assistants/junior doctors were not exempted. Of course, when everything was right, they would brag what a wonderful job they had done and would never acknowledge others. For instance, one of Physician3's patient had gone into a complication one day.

Coordinator: [to Physician14, laughing] You are lucky. You dodged a bullet.

Physician14: [laughing] Yes.

Technician: [looked confusedly]

Coordinator: Physician14 was supposed to do the procedure of Physician3 today. The one where the patient went into VT? But he was in class and so he did not start it. If he had done it and the patient would have gone into VT, Physician3 would have surely blamed him. [console room; 29.08.2017]

Even a few technicians had commented that they usually did not want to work with Physician3 because of this reason. While not always to such a serious extent, other physicians too blamed their juniors or non-physician staff for the errors or delays in the procedures. This could also be seen in our very first example where Physician2 blamed the technician for giving a small sized sheath even though it was Physician2 who himself took the sheath.

Other physicians admitted in the interviews that blaming was really a bad tactic to use and it was instead useful if they could learn from the technicians rather than trying to pin their mistakes on the technicians. Technicians were much more experienced than the physicians because of working exclusively on the procedures while the physicians worked on a myriad of different things in the hospital. Moreover, they worked with different physicians and thus were exposed to different types, strategies and complexities of procedures. Several physicians, including those who blamed the technicians, indeed relied on the technicians a lot during the procedures for guidance.

“If you play blame game or escaping, it will not do..... There are two things, actually. You can learn from technicians, [...] because, when I am doing a procedure, I will see only my procedure, I don't know how the other people do, what techniques they use I don't know, so if you are with the technician, senior technician, he will see everyone's work, so he knows that this one tried, this one worked and this one didn't, so he will tell you, so actually you take their advice.....” [Physician4; interview; 16.03.2018]

Thus, I have observed various impression management tactics in Jupiter, some recognised in the extant literature while the others were new. Whatever tactics were used, actors impression-managed based on the audience they were targeting, the situation they were in and the opportunities they could find to exploit. Most of these tactics were used to achieve something in return. It could be to satisfy their egos, impress patients or their coworkers, or be considered superior and get access to resources. They either praised someone else or supported their views or opinions to win favours that they could use later on. Some physicians bragged about their procedures and shared stories that presented them in a better light. However, not always did the physicians engage in impression management with such conscious, ulterior motives.

Conscious vs subconscious impression management. I have oftentimes noticed that actors impression-managed even when they had nothing to gain out of it. For instance, Physician10 did only a few procedures a week and thus did not have to fight a lot for the

resources. Similarly, the same Physician2 who was the one most engaging in storytelling was one of those who did very few procedures in the CCL and was also very senior and had several awards and accolades under his belt. There was no materialistic reason for them to impression-manage to achieve their goals. Similarly, Physician11 was the head of the department and others did not compete with him over the labs. He often sent his assistants first to make everything ready and then just walked in. His assistants did most of the procedures. Nevertheless, Physician11 frequently engaged in storytelling too.

All these findings indicate the presence of an inherent, internalised factor motivating the physicians to impression-manage, often without even realising they were engaging in such a practice. Some CCL actors thought that this was probably because of the environment those physicians worked in. Individual behaviours sometimes also stem from identity/image norms of the profession and have observable consequences. There was also an effect of the cultural component that could not be ignored. In India, like in several countries, doctors are considered great because of the nature of their job. They are not only highly respected in professional communities but also in society at large. Doctors are also considered egoistic for this very reason⁷. As such, physicians in Jupiter would have gone through a stage where they had to engage in impression management to attain and keep up this high image. They could have bragged in several instances, praised their seniors, and even used story-telling to market themselves as superior. This could have internalised the practice of impression management into the very psyche of the physicians.

Moreover, with increasing competition between doctors in Jupiter and beyond, even the senior physicians might have become exposed to excessive impression management. The way physicians such as 1, 2, 10, and 11 engaged in impression management without consciously attempting to get something done adds support to such assumptions. In either case, several physicians impression-managed subconsciously, as if it was a habit. Bragging and story-telling were often the frequent tactics used subconsciously while blaming and defaming could have been hard to use as such. It often requires a level of reflection and planning to defame

⁷ Whether doctors are egoistic or not is an argument open for debate. While the scientific studies cannot seem to decide in either way, there are studies that look at whether doctors behave altruistically or in their self-interest (eg. [Bishop and Rees 2007](#), [Prudil 2008](#), [Glannon and Ross 2002](#)). Some popular media seem to ponder over this question as well and claim that doctors can indeed act egoistically and opportunistically as well ([Guardian 2016](#), [Guardian 2015](#)) while some think otherwise ([Independent 2016](#)). As such, the argument I make here in this paper that doctors do have a component of ego and opportunism, because of how highly they are respected in Indian society and also how they feel about other doctors, arise from my personal experiences and also this case study. Whether such an argument and its relation to the motivation to impression-manage remains questionable. But such an assumption feels justified at least in the case of Jupiter, with its fee-for-service business model, rivalry among physicians and power differences.

someone else and present one's self in a better light, or to blame a mistake or a delay on someone else to escape negative image. As such, recognising when a physician engaged in blaming or defaming out of habit rather than a deliberate attempt to manage image was difficult in this case study. I will elaborate on this in the discussion section but the findings nevertheless point to a clear distinction between conscious or deliberate and subconscious or habitual impression management.

Impression management as a tool for identity work

After observing the frequent impression management tactics in CCL, I have wondered what might be the factors that were motivating the physicians to engage in impression management on such a profound level. The coding process revealed specific dynamics that the existing literature on impression management could not explain. It also revealed the specific organisational factors that had contributed to such behaviours by the physicians.

For instance, most of the studies in the extant literature had explored instances where the goals were pretty much clear. Those who impression-managed either wanted to pass the interview and get a job or impress their supervisors and get a good job appraisal. These goals drove their actions. Of course, the goals were clear to some extent in the case of CCL too, like getting hold of resources or getting more respect. Nevertheless, such goals did not fully explain why the physicians engaged in frequent impression management, especially in the case of subconscious or habitual impression management where there were no apparent goals. Furthermore, the tactics physicians used did not always have the desired consequences. In most cases, the effects were often detrimental to the very physician using impression management. Nevertheless, the physicians continued to impression-manage, over the long term, without realising the negative image they were building for themselves.

These findings led me to search for theories that could explain the physicians' behaviours, particularly concerning impression management. I went back to Goffman's work on self-presentation in everyday life and the assumptions underlying his work which led me to the literature on *identity work* that turned out to explain the physicians' behaviours to a large extent. I will elaborate on this aspect now, thus revealing impression management as a tool for identity construction or identity work.

Motivation for impression management

Individuals do not enact their professions in a vacuum, rather they respond to various expectations of different stakeholders and sometimes these expectations drive the individuals' behaviours. Most of the impression management observed in this case study was possible because of and was facilitated by certain institutional factors. In traditional organisations with formal hierarchy, certain behaviours would probably be not tolerated. For instance, while ingratiation or bragging might be entertained to some extent at the workplace, non-verbal showing-off, defaming someone else and blaming others for one's failures would be looked down if they become too explicit. However, this was not the case in Jupiter.

The first and most obvious reason was perhaps Jupiter's business model. Such defaming and blaming when pointed out could easily be curbed by the top management in any organisation. From generic meetings to interventions to drastic actions such as firing, organisations do have an arsenal of tools to tackle such behaviours. However, exerting formal control over such behaviours was not easy in Jupiter because of the fee-for-service model they use. Physicians were relatively independent; they worked as consultants and as such, there were no formal performance evaluation mechanisms in place other than the physicians' procedures. This had decreased any possibility of sanctions on the physicians thereby enabling them to engage in such behaviours. Moreover, physicians not only belonged to Jupiter but also worked in other organisations and Jupiter's management was unwilling to frustrate them because they could easily go to other organisations, taking their patients with them.

“Even if it's a management driven thing, physicians will have their own individual thinking process where, sometimes, management should be very passive on this.” [Physician16; interview; 02.04.18]

The nature of the physicians' work was also highly competitive; they tried to get a good name so that more and more patients were referred to them and this was the only way they could earn more working on a fee-for-service model. Thus, building a desirable image, that of being highly skilled and successful, was important for the physicians. Attaining such an image was also important to satisfy their egos; the competition between the physicians had become a competition between their egos. Combined with the pressure to survive the competition within CCL and do more procedures to earn more income and respect from the

management, this had led the physicians to increasingly focus on themselves and their identities as perceived by others.

Moreover, the medical profession has historically been considered of high prestige and status, which led physicians to believe they were superior to others because of their job, even to Jupiter's management. This increased sense of identity played a role in making them feel that impression-managing was justifiable. It could even be argued that they engaged in impression management to attain the high standards of prestige and status.

"...everybody wants to prove that I am the best, that is what the show is there here, and then, maybe the thing is that these people will go out and talk, ok this guy is great and he is doing great, you need appreciation.... some people who are trying to prove their mettle now, who are freshers, more enthusiastic, maybe they will talk something regarding seniors who has done 20 years of angioplasties and you are just 2 years old now, so you want to show that ok I am better than you, I am more than you, that is wrong." [Physician17; interview; 15.03.2018]

Not only did junior physicians find a need to impression-manage because they had to prove their worth but even senior physicians felt the compulsion to use some impression management because, despite being senior and more experienced, they were being compared to junior physicians who were trying to do more and more number of procedures. The management would compare how many procedures each physician had done and even though a senior physician had done a good job, if she/he had done only a few procedures, the management would compare that with the procedures junior physicians had done, and question the senior physicians why they had not done more. While recognising this as a meaningless approach, senior physicians nevertheless felt a pressure.

"Maybe it is because, you know, it's like a frustration,.... I get the opportunity to do, you know, to increase my number of procedures and my salary, so that frustration is always there, and on the other hand, you know, somebody who is less experienced than you, this guy [...] who has done more number of cases, who was more regular to the hospital, he is definitely superior to you. So [physicians] feel frustrated. How do you take out the frustration? They can't talk it out there, so somewhere it has to come, so they say, see this is what he has done wrong, this is not required,.... [comment on others' procedures]" [Physician17; interview; 15.03.2018]

This need for the construction of particular identities contributed to tactics such as blaming and defaming others. Blaming was justified because, when something went wrong, it reflected poorly on the physicians' skills. This negated their efforts to portray their desired image. To avoid this, physicians tried to blame others for their mistakes. On the other hand,

because all the physicians were competitors or rivals with each other and everyone tried to surpass others, it eventually became a competition of images and identities. As such, physicians justified defaming others and hurting their image as an important step in their identity work.

Identity work without reflection

Such a profound use of impression management tactics is bound to have some consequences on the dynamics of the workplace. I have noticed that the frequent use of impression management had both task-related and interpersonal consequences on all the actors within CCL. It is also important to note the distinction that the effect of impression management was different on physicians and non-physician staff. While the role of non-physician staff was very little in terms of impression management, and I have not focused on how they impression-managed specifically as it was less important within the workplace dynamics, they did play a vital role as the targets or audience of impression management.

The physicians seemed to believe that they could influence the non-physician staff such as the coordinator and the technicians through impression management. One of the main aims was to get priority in getting the labs whenever they needed them and this was assumed possible when the coordinator and the technicians valued the physicians highly. Another aim was to get good technicians when the physicians had complex procedures. The technicians were the ones who operated specialist equipment and provided support to the physicians which was important in complex procedures. The physicians assumed they could get hold of good technicians if the technicians valued them more and considered them very good. There were even some physicians who often praised technicians, even on smaller procedures, trying to win some favours.

While I did not observe any such effect resulting from impression management, the physicians seemed to continue this behaviour. The coordinator and several technicians commented that they knew the physicians praised them just so but talked bad about them on their backs.

He [Physician3] says like that now. But I know he hates me because I like to work with [Physician1]. He [Physician1] genuinely praises us when we do good work even though he yells at us and scolds us a lot. But this man [referring to Physician3], he comments to everyone that I am [Physician1]'s pet on my back but now talks to me like I am his best friend. [Technician; conversation; console room; 16.03.2018]

Furthermore, extensive bragging and story-telling seemed to have created a negative image in the audience, contrary to what the actors were trying to achieve. Seeing Physician3 repeatedly tell the patient's attendants how complex the procedure was and how well he did it, Physician1 commented:

If you do like that, saying to everyone that you have done a great job when it is in fact not that complex, you lose respect, you know. [Physician1; conversation; console room; 11.08.2017]

As such, despite trying to present themselves in a good light and win favours, the only thing the physicians managed to successfully achieve was creating a contrary, bad image among their audience through frequent and extensive use of impression management. It would have been fine if the consequences ended at the physicians building a negative image. Extensive bragging to take credit for the things that had gone well and blaming others for the things that had gone wrong resulted in a decline of psychological safety perceived by the non-consulting staff.

"He [Physician10] always blames others if something goes wrong. You see him telling loudly how wonderfully he did a procedure. But if something goes wrong, you will see him telling that so and so technician messed up the pressure or so and so nurse messed up the contrast. That is why none of us senior technicians wants to work with him. We always send the juniors." [Technician; informal conversation; console room]

Several senior technicians and nurses were less willing to share opinions, give suggestions and even work together with such physicians. This had important effects on the workplace because they played an important role in helping the physicians in the procedures. If they were not enough motivated, they would often be less attentive or send junior technicians even for complex procedures. Similarly, if they did not feel psychologically safe to point out mistakes to the physician, it could hurt the physician's work because it was usually technicians or nurses that noticed mistakes or things that needed attention in the procedures.

"Definitely, everybody wants to have their hold in the cathlab.... Some people have this habit of bragging, you know, but ultimately these technicians who are seniors, they know..... So the same way, even now, some senior cardiologists they take the opinions of the senior technicians, ... I don't think, in our hospital, most of the technicians, they keep [calm], even if they see something which is going wrong, or out of thing, maybe for very juniors [physicians], they [technicians] will give a very subtle, you know, opinion, sir, this you can do like this, otherwise

for most of the physicians, for seniors, they don't open their mouth, they keep quiet.” [Physician17; interview; 15.03.2018]

Despite such obvious consequences, physicians had continued to engage in more and more impression management. They were unaware of the repercussions their actions were having. The support staff would never say to a physician's face how they felt about the physician's actions because of the power differences. As such, it was hard for physicians to notice and interpret the effects of their attempts at impression management.

For instance, when a physician bragged about his recent procedure or retold a story highlighting his personal attributes, the audience would usually approve of his claims. As the physicians were above the technicians in rank, it was not easy to dispute their claim and tell her/him on her/his face that she/he was not as great as she/he claimed. They usually feigned positive feedback towards the physician's attempts at impression management. This behaviour would have been misinterpreted by the physician as positive feedback towards his impression management. He could also have easily discounted the comments he would have heard about other physicians engaging in similar actions by thinking that where their attempts did not succeed, his did.

“We can't say anything to their face. So we just tolerate. Let them say whatever stories they want to say. As long as others know the truth, it does not matter.” [Coordinator; informal conversation; console room]

Thus, impression management was observed to be a much more complex, dynamic process than previously assumed. It not only emerged as tactics individuals used to create and manipulate their image but also had significant, often detrimental effects on the impression-managing individual. Moreover, physicians often engaged in subconscious impression management which is often accompanied by further lack of attention to the feedback mechanisms. The case study of Jupiter presents impression management not only as an integral part of workplace dynamics but also as a crucial aspect of identity related behaviours of organisational actors.

Discussion

Impression management is an ever-present phenomenon in organisations. Individuals use impression management tactics to create, present and manage an image that they desire their audience hold of them. Despite the extant literature trying to understand the dynamics of

impression management, our understanding of the concept is limited both in terms of theory as well as from an empirical standpoint. By studying everyday workplace dynamics at a hospital, I have observed the dynamics of impression management as well as its role in the identity work carried out by organisational actors. This paper makes four main contributions to the literature on impression management, identity and group dynamics.

Firstly, this paper highlights the plurality of impression management and further unearths two impression management tactics that were previously unexplored in the extant literature: blaming and defaming others that are more detrimental to the workplace relationships than the usual impression management tactics we are aware of. Secondly, this paper also empirically distinguishes between conscious/deliberate and subconscious/habitual impression management. Thirdly, it shows that impression management is a process of identity construction or identity work of organisational actors. Impression management tactics seem to become tools used by individuals to construct and portray the desired image. Finally, I show how individuals engaging in impression management can get so caught up in manipulating their identities that they risk missing the feedback from their audience. The consequences of such impression management are detrimental not only to the image of the impression-manager but also to the wider organisational environment in which impression management occurs. The contributions are summarised in table 1 and elaborated below.

Table 1 about here

The plurality of Impression Management

The first main contribution of this paper is showing how impression management unravels in the everyday organisational context, specifically how different impression management tactics are used with a different audience. I show that, unlike dyadic relationships, the heterogeneity of groups affects the types and effects of impression management tactics used. For instance, an individual might manage one impression with some group members while trying to manage a different impression with others. Indeed, physicians' certain behaviours were aimed at certain actors; they used ingratiation at senior physicians, showing-off at colleagues, and bragging and story-telling mostly at non-physician staff and patients.

Thus, impression management is a complex, dynamic organisational phenomenon where individuals reflect on the situation, their goals, the audience available and the tasks at hand to impression-manage. This case study shows that individuals do not only engage in impression management when there is a need to impress the ‘target’ or manipulate the ‘target’s’ opinions and views, such as in interviews. They also seem to play a long term game. For instance, for the consultants who bragged about their skills or who told stories about their expertise, there was no immediate advantage, i.e., they did not use those tactics to immediately get access to resources or more experienced technicians in their next procedure. For them, it was a slow way of building their image and gaining an advantage in the long term. This was essentially important for the junior consultants who joined Jupiter recently and who did not have an existing image with others.

This shows that people deliberately think over and plan for the best strategies to manage their impressions given the situation, often with an ulterior motive of gaining or achieving something. They decide the course of action based on their long term goals and their assumptions about how things work in the organisation. If the organisations are more flat and hierarchical differences do not matter, impressions become an important tool for the actors that could essentially put them in a better place than their colleagues. As such, impression management extends beyond the one-off contexts of interviews and performance appraisals like the previous literature has focused; it forms a crucial aspect of everyday life in organisations.

Moreover, seeing other actors routinely engage in such behaviours can also send a wrong message that such behaviour is expected and is a way to achieve one’s goals. Especially if juniors or those who joined the organisation recently see or experience seniors and leaders engage in such behaviours, they would get the wrong idea that such behaviour is common, maybe even expected, in the organisation. They might assume that there might be some benefits of such behaviours, otherwise such seniors and more experienced, powerful people would not use them. They would be motivated to impression-manage and use the examples they see around them to justify their actions.

More worryingly, this deliberate attempts at impression management can lead to some tactics that are detrimental to the workplace relationships. I have identified two such tactics, blaming and defaming, that were previously ignored in the literature. Blaming others for

mistakes or failures hurts relationships and trust between individuals. Similarly, defaming others to boost one's own image reflects how strongly organisational actors can be motivated to impression manage. Other impression management tactics such as self-promotion and story-telling might be perceived negatively by others in the organisation but blaming and defaming outright lead to negative perception of the actor using them. As such, they are much more dangerous tactics to use in organisational contexts than other tactics explored in the literature.

Conscious vs Subconscious Impression Management

As mentioned before, this case study showed that organisational actors put a lot more time and effort into managing their image than previously imagined to achieve their goals. However, in addition to conscious and deliberate attempts to enhance their image, actors also engage in subconscious or habitual impression management even though they have nothing to gain. They enact these behaviours more habitually and intuitively rather than with an inherent ulterior aim. People are creatures of habits and engaging in impression management frequently for whatever reason could internalise it and easily turn it into a habit. Indeed even the early research has recognized that people sometimes engage in impression management without conscious attention to what they are doing because many patterns of self-presentation are learned and overtime become habitual (Hogan 1982, Hogan et al. 1985).

Working in organisational contexts where managing impressions to get noticed by the management or get access to resources can over time internalise such a mentality within an individual. Even when the individuals change organisations or climb ranks, and even when impression management is no longer necessary, they would still engage in such behaviours. This is not only seen in organisations but is a larger phenomenon in society as well. We often see individuals who self-promote or emphasise their image even when they have become well-known and hold a high position in the social hierarchy.

Not all the impression management tactics we know of are straightforward deliberate or habitual. The findings of this paper indeed show that, while self-promotion was considered to be a prominent form of impression management (Barrick et al. 2009, Ellis et al. 2002, Judge and Bretz 1994, Higgins et al. 2003), it can be decomposed into three distinct tactics; bragging, story-telling, and non-verbal showing-off, and the latter two could in fact also be enacted subconsciously. Moreover, while one can praise someone else reflexively and blame

someone habitually, this paper indicates that certain type of tactics is used predominantly in certain forms. Over time, we can expect all or most types of tactics to become habitual for an individual. Future research could look at cases where a much clearer line could be drawn between conscious and subconscious impression management. Scholars could also identify and categorise additional structural and contextual antecedents that could render impression management tactics into clearly deliberate or habitual practices.

Recognising whether an individual is engaging in impression management deliberately or habitually has implications for managers. Deliberate tactics can be curbed through strict rules and explicit communication that such behaviours are not tolerated in the organisation. However, managing habitual impression management is much harder and often requires the management understanding the psyche of the actors and addressing the internalised need for image enhancement. Controlling deliberate impression management would stop such practices from getting internalised and also borrowed by other actors as an accepted practice.

Impression management as a tool for identity work

Although scholars had long recognised that individuals need to negotiate various identities, little is known about the process of this negotiation (Ashforth 2001, Pratt 1998, Kreiner et al. 2006). Identities are multiple, mutable and socially constructed (Baumeister 1998, Goffman 1978) meanings attached to an individual by the self or by others (Ashforth and Mael 1989, Ibarra and Babulescu 2010). In an individual's pursuit of this construction of desired identities, especially by others, impression management plays a vital role. Impression management is often used by organisational actors as a means to engage in the construction of desired images. Impression management occurs because an actor attempts to create and maintain specific identities projected in social interactions (Klotz et al. 2018, Schlenker 1980) to obtain desired end-states, be they social, psychological or material (Leary and Kowalski 1990).

Scholars have indeed shown that people vary their self-presentation tactics based on the situation (Leary et al. 1994, Klotz et al. 2018) and mount credible dramaturgical performances to do so (Down and Reveley 2009). Even Goffman's original work shows the apparent relationship between impression management and identity work. Despite this apparent relationship, our understanding of how impression management constitutes the process of identity construction or identity work is limited. This paper thus brings back this

association under the spotlight and emphasises the importance of impression management in the everyday workplace.

Jupiter's physicians engaged in impression management to present themselves as superior to others. They were driven by the need to satisfy their egos and survive the competition. Clashes between egos arise because of the rivalry among actors. In contexts characterised by high interpersonal competition and rivalry, like sales teams or organisations that put a lot of emphasis on performance-based incentives, actors would feel more pressure on their interpersonal relationships and the need to foreground their self-identity; they would have more incentives to impression-manage, especially with their superiors and peers who can help them achieve their personal and professional goals. Those who are self-centric and focus on their own goals and agendas would have less motivation to be considerate of others and thus ignore the effects of certain tactics such as defaming or blaming. When the sense of togetherness is absent, like in Jupiter, either because the individuals do not identify with the organisation or they don't identify with their colleagues, they have even fewer incentives to be considerate about others.

Thus, impression management is rooted in not only the contextual and situational aspects of the organisation but also how the individual perceives her/his relationship with the organisation. How individuals define themselves as a part of a group or the organisation, in turn, defines how far they can go in managing and manipulating their identities. In attempting to answer the question "*Who am I?*", they not only try to project the desired identities but could also ignore the "*This is who we are*" messages they encounter in the social context (Kreiner et al. 2006). Impression management also helps us understand the nuances of how individuals engage in external identity work — how they negotiate and manipulate image and reputation as perceived by others (Kreiner et al. 2006).

Identity work without reflection

Identity work is characterised by understanding one's self-definition and constructing the desired identity within the boundaries of one's social context. As such, one of the important factors that define one's impression management efforts as a part of identity work is the target audience's observable, behavioural responses (Bozeman and Kacmar, 1997). Individuals engaging in impression management try to compare the feedback they get from the audience with their own desired social identity to determine whether or not their desired

image is in effect (Bozeman and Kacmar, 1997). When the actors perceive discrepancies between their reference goal and the perceived target feedback, they further modify their impression management attempts to resolve these discrepancies between their current and desired social identities. However, individuals tend to selectively perceive, interpret and attend to the feedback based on its relevance to their personal goals and intentions (Klinger 1977, Goschke and Kuhl 1993). Thus, the intended meaning of the feedback and the view the target tried to convey might not be exactly what the actor perceives. This could lead to the actor misinterpreting the objective nature of the situation and the effects of her/his impression management attempts.

Social feedback has been shown to produce changes in one's identity because people replicate behaviours that win them approval and seek alternatives to those that do not (Dutton and Dukerich 1991). Following this argument, it should be expected that the physicians discontinue engaging in such impression management once they realise their audience are not buying into their claims. However, this was not seen in Jupiter where despite the negative image perceived by the audience, physicians continued engaging in impression management. This reflects the deeply rooted belief in people that managing one's image is of utmost importance despite evidence that the audience is aware of one's such efforts at impression management. This reflects the larger problem with our society today where the projected image is deemed more important and genuine than the real image. One does only have to look at social media or the entertainment industry to understand this.

Another factor that contributes to such behaviours without reflecting on the feedback is the feedback itself not being clear and direct. In Jupiter, technicians and nurses could not say directly to the physicians' faces that their bragging or showing-off was not true or that their blaming or defaming behaviours were not appreciated because of the power the physicians held in the organisation. As a result, whenever the physicians engaged in impression management, other staff feigned appreciation. Such false feedback provided by the audience would make the actors engaging in impression management perceive their attempts at constructing a desired identity fruitful. This would further encourage them to continue, and even increase their impression management attempts. Moreover, wrapped within the assumption that tactics like bragging and showing-off are necessary in today's noisy world to present themselves as superior to others, they can easily miss the impact they are having on

their own image as perceived by their audience. Perhaps this explains why physicians tended to continue impression-managing despite having the opposite impact on their audience.

The consequences of such identity work without reflection on feedback was evident in the case of Jupiter. Extensive bragging to take credit for the things that have gone well and blaming others for the things that have gone wrong resulted in a decline in psychological safety perceived by the non-physician staff. Several senior technicians and nurses were less willing to share opinions, give suggestions and even work together with such physicians. This had important implications because senior technicians and nurses played an important role in helping the physicians and if they were not enough motivated or did not feel psychologically safe to point out mistakes to the physicians, it hurt the physicians' work.

Extending our understanding of impression management's consequences from mere perceptions in interview contexts and supervisor liking, this paper shows that the consequences can be significantly detrimental to the workplace. In several cases, impression-managing actors not only create negative images of themselves contrary to their intentions, especially when they fail to perceive the audience feedback and continue engaging in impression management, but they also harm their relationships with their colleagues. In most of the cases, peers and colleagues of the individuals impression-managing would be skilled enough to understand the task and know whether the bragging and showing-off an individual is using are justified or not. Frequent engagement in unjustified impression management could lead to the development of negative images in the eyes of the audience. Moreover, we all prefer to work with those we like and can resonate with. When they engage in behaviours such as blaming and defaming others, we would fear that our own image would be negatively affected by associating with them.

Blaming could probably be the most damaging tactic used in organisations. When people fear that an actor would blame mistakes and failures on them, they would be less willing to work with that actor. Similarly, defaming others too develops a negative image in the eyes of the audience. When we know a person talks bad about others, we will not have a reason to think the person would not do the same about us too. Thus, while other tactics might result in a negative image or a decline in motivation of others to work with that actor, blaming and defaming when repeated would drive people away as they no longer feel safe to

be associated with that actor. Thus, this paper shows how impression management has tangible, material and substantial negative consequences on workplace dynamics.

Conclusion

In a case study to understand the dynamics of impression management in the everyday workplace, I have observed organisational actors using different types of impression management tactics used in combinations to create, control and manipulate their image. While the extant literature on impression management identified self-promotion as a common impression management tactic, I have shown how impression management tactics can be enacted consciously with a deliberate intention to achieve some ulterior goal or subconsciously as if it is a habit. Moreover, I also found two tactics, defaming and blaming others, that were not explored in the prior literature but has more deteriorating effects on workplace dynamics. I also show how impression management can easily become a frequent, important tool in individuals' attempts at constructing, maintaining and manipulating desired identities. Finally, this paper also contributes to the literature on impression management and identity work by showing the consequences of such identity work through impression management without reflecting on the feedback from the audience.

As with any qualitative research, the findings of this paper should be considered within the boundary conditions of the empirical context. However, the findings discussed and the model developed can be generalisable to any organisation with complex and interrelated work dynamics, highly skilled and motivated organisational actors and the pressure to perform. It should be noted that the weak management and lack of formal mechanisms to curb impression management facilitated a more robust and frequent usage of impression management tactics. This might not be the case in other organisations where the management is aware of such tactics and tries to curb them; however, the presence of impression management is unavoidable in any organisation albeit to different extents and levels.

The need to construct and maintain different identities, the need for the actors to feel psychological safety to share opinions and ideas, and the need for the actors to feel the motivation to work with each other are undoubtedly important in any organisations. Future research could try to formalise the relationships between impression management and the consequences observed in this paper to define under what organisational circumstances, the negative effects of impression management are more salient. Finally, different types of tactics

might be present in different types of organisations and cultures. More research is needed to identify different types of impression management tactics and the individual, contextual, cultural and organisational factors that facilitate impression management.

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Fig. 1. Data structure

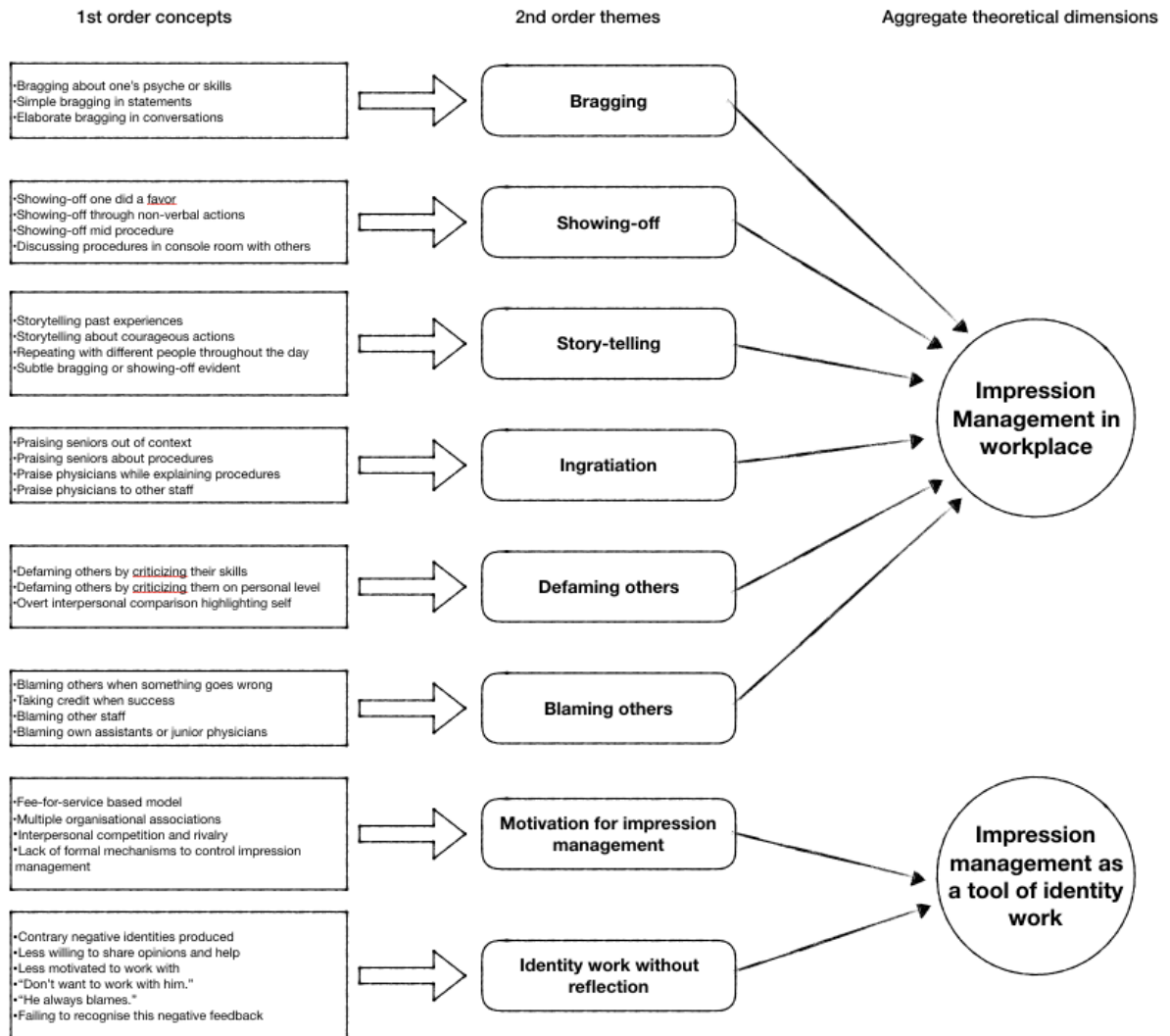


Fig. 2. Types, antecedents, consequences and relationships of Impression Management

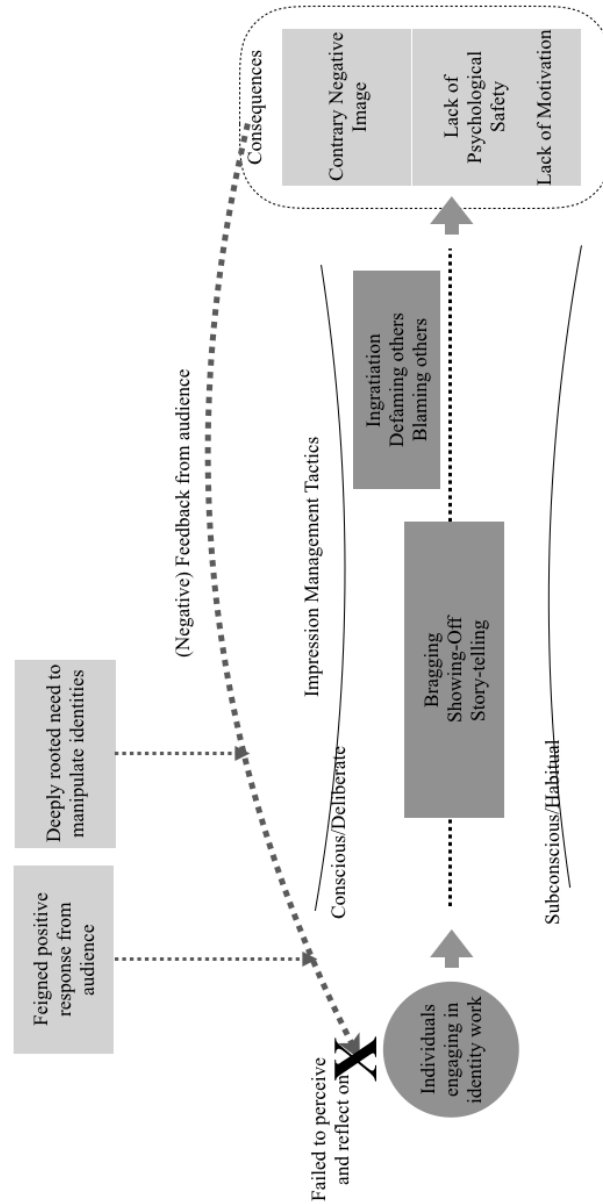


Table 1. Contributions of the paper

	Past Literature	Insights from our study
Impression management - theoretical lens	Dyadic phenomenon	Cyclical phenomenon unfolding in a heterogenous, group setting
	Agent impression-managing at Targets	An individual could be both an Agent and a Target at the same time
	Deliberate impression management tactics as used by an agent were predominantly studied; subconscious impression management was only recognised	My study distinguishes between deliberate/conscious and habitual/subconscious impression management; my study also discusses which tactics are used deliberately and/or habitually
Empirical contexts	Interviews, performance appraisal and supervisor rankings; limited in terms of complexity and everyday dynamics	This study explores the dynamics of impression management in a complex, high stakes organisational context as they unfold in day-to-day workplace
Types of impression management	Ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification are primary assertive impression management tactics	This study indicates that self-promotion indeed consists of three tactics; bragging, showing-off and story-telling; their importance and utility differs: story-telling is more implicit and less contentious form of impression-managing Defaming someone else has been recognised as a tactic that has more detrimental effects on workplace dynamics and relationships than many other previously studied tactics
	Apologies and justifications are primary defensive tactics	Blaming is an important defensive tactic that can have severely detrimental effects on workplace
Association between Impression Management and Identity	Despite Goffman’s original work and subsequent research by some scholars showing the association between impression management and identity, any further exploration was missing	This paper shows how impression management is a tool or a means for organisational actors to construct, maintain, manipulate and project their desired identities onto social contexts and interactions; they engage in identity work through various impression management tactics
	Limited understanding of the role of individual-organisational relationship in impression management	By bringing impression management and identity work together, this paper also explores the individual-organisational relationship
	Consequences suffered from the same limitations the empirical contexts suffered from; perceived image as resulting from using impression management and the effects on trust have been studied	By showing the consequences of organisational actors engaging in identity work through impression management without reflecting on the feedback they receive from their audience, this study shows how impression management can have significant, negative effects on workplace relationships and dynamics

Paper 3

Relational vs Collective Identification: Resolving Representational Gaps

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Abstract: Cross-functional and multidisciplinary teams consisting of actors from different functional backgrounds, skills, experiences, and beliefs suffer from the problem of representational gaps. Representational gaps are incompatibilities among team members' cognitive representations of the problem, definitions of the tasks, goals and solutions. They reflect the differences between team members' problem definitions, goals and agencies that affect group problem-solving. Representational gaps degrade information processing through misunderstandings and misuse of information; they result in the task, move and relational conflicts. I first review the literature on representational gaps and position them as a phenomenon of knowledge and information sharing as well as cognitive structures. Then, I posit that using the lens of social identity and identification helps us understand how the emotional and affective aspects of organisational actors address representational gaps. I define collective and relational identifications as two extremes of one's self-concept and discuss how the four major motives underlying identification process — the need for self-enhancement, belongingness, self-expansion, and uncertainty reduction — widens or bridges representational gaps among team members. In general, I posit that strong collective identification results in wider representational gaps while strong relational identification results in narrower representational gaps within teams.

Keywords: Identity, identification, representational gaps, identity motives, collective identification, relational identification.

Introduction

Cross-functional or multidisciplinary teams are important for organisations, especially in today's complex, uncertain global environment (Parker 2003, Majchrzak et al. 2012, Van der Vegt and Bunderson 2005, Edmondson and Harvey 2018). Individual employees, however specialised they are in their skills, can no longer solve the multi-faceted challenges organisations are facing. This has led organisations to rely on teams or groups of people from diverse backgrounds, specialisations, functions and experiences working together to solve such challenges. The motivation behind this is that organisations can benefit from the diversity in knowledge, expertise and experiences of the members of such teams (Van der Vegt and Bunderson 2005).

However, the empirical literature is equivocal regarding the effect of diversity on organisation's performance (eg. Bantel and Jackson 1989, Hambrick et al. 1996, Murray 1989, Simons et al. 1999). Such teams do not always succeed. The teamwork challenges in cross-functional teams become particularly intense (Edmondson and Nembhard 2009, Seidel and O'Mahony 2014) as members of such teams might not have worked together before, represent different knowledge domains, have to solve complex problems with novel demands, and work under time pressure that inhibits the development of deep ties among them (Dougherty 2001, Edmondson and Nembhard 2009, Hackman 2002, Van der Vegt and Bunderson 2005, Hansen 1999). These problems are associated with information sharing (Bunderson and Sutcliffe 2002, Lovelace et al. 2001), lack of psychological safety among team members to express their opinions (Edmondson 1999), and the tendency of groups to focus on common knowledge rather than the diversity (Stasser 1999, Wittenbaum and Stasser 1996).

More particularly, research has shown that cross-functional teams face challenges in integrating the diverse knowledge of their members (Faraj and Sproull 2000, Dougherty 2001, Edmondson and Nembhard 2009, Cronin and Weingart 2007). Because members of such teams come from different institutional backgrounds, hold different knowledge and mental models, and bring different perspectives rooted in their own experiences and skills, they look at the problems and goals of the team in different ways; their problem definitions differ which leads to inconsistencies between the ways they represent the task at hand, its challenges, team's goals, and even courses of action to achieve those goals. These

inconsistencies are known as *representational gaps* (Cronin and Weingart 2007, Firth et al. 2015). They significantly affect team's success by derailing information sharing and coordination among team members. For instance, in a comparative study of two product development teams, Purser et al. (1992) observed that the teams did not succeed in achieving their goals when they failed to overcome the barriers to representing, exchanging and reconciling the individual knowledge and ideas of the actors.

In the first part of this paper, I posit representational gaps as a problem of information sharing and knowledge management, and show how they arise because of the cognitive structures individual members of the team hold. I also show that they are paradoxical in nature; while these gaps provide important space for individuals to create unique, novel solutions by capitalising on the team's diversity, they also act as hurdles for efficient translation of knowledge and effective coordination among team members. Despite several scholars having shown that overcoming representational gaps is crucial for organisations to reap the benefits of diversity (eg. Sanderson 2012, Carlile 2002, Dougherty 1992, Purser et al. 1992), our understanding of how representational gaps emerge in such teams and about the processes and emergent states within such teams that facilitate the team members to overcome the problems of asymmetric interests and goals (Pearsall and Venkataramani 2015) is limited.

In the second part of this paper, I try to develop theory for resolving representational gaps. One of the solutions for resolving representational gaps come from the research on social identity theory and the concept of *identification*. Identification is the extent to which one defines her/his self-concept derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group (Ashforth and Mael 1989). It is a core psychological concept that affects emotion, cognition and behaviour of individuals. Social identity theory suggests that asymmetric goal problems can be resolved when the team members have high levels of team identification; when they feel belongingness with the team and associate emotional significance to those feelings (Mael and Ashforth 1992, Tajfel 1978) to such an extent that they forego their individual interests for the sake of the team (Brewer and Kramer 1986, Van der Vegt et al. 2003).

However, merely identifying with the team is not enough. In fact, Pearsall and Venkataramani (2015) argue that the collective identification alone is not sufficient and rather

its interaction with the team's collective learning orientation plays a vital role because the team members should be motivated to learn about their teammates' goals and interests. Team members are not always explicitly aware of the goal differences and diverse interests present within the team, and they can not always be able to choose to forego personal objectives for the collective benefit of the team even if they identify strongly with the team (Pearsall and Venkataramani 2015). They often tend to misunderstand others' goals and how their own goals conflict with others' (Cronin and Weingart 2007). Thus, something more than collective identification is required and in this paper, I posit that *relational identification*, another way of one's definition of self-concept, becomes more salient in such contexts.

Specifically, I build on the four common motives of identification — the need for self-enhancement, belongingness, uncertainty reduction and self-expansion (Zhang et al. 2014, Jost 1995, Jost and Banaji 1994, Reid and Hogg 2005, Hogg et al. 1995) — to argue that if a team member has a strong collective identification, she/he would pursue the team's goals more aggressively but would define everyone in the team as a common team characteristic and thus ignore the individual perspectives, goals and interests of the team members. On the other hand, if an individual has a strong relational identification, she/he would be more inclined to put herself/himself in the shoes of her/his teammates and understand their perspectives and interests. Thus, strong collective identification would lead to a widening of representational gaps while strong relational identification would lead to the bridging of representational gaps.

This paper is structured as follows in two parts. In the first part, I define what *problem representations* are and how they result in *representational gaps* among the team members, using an example of a cross-functional team where representational gaps arise that would be used throughout the paper. I discuss the theoretical framing of representational gaps, the problems caused by representational gaps and the challenges in resolving them. In the second part, I first argue why identification is an effective lens to look at representational gaps through and distinguish between collective and relational identifications. Then, in the main, I develop propositions of how the four motives of identification, depending on whether the collective or relational identification is stronger, contribute to the widening or narrowing of representational gaps. Finally, I discuss the implication of this theoretical paper, its contributions and future research directions it presents.

From Problem Representations to Representational Gaps

A brief example below, inspired from Cronin and Weingart (2007) and Carlile (2002) explains both the problem representations and representational gaps better.

Imagine an automobile company facing a decline in performance assembles a cross-functional team comprising of members from marketing, design, finance and engineering functions to come up with a new model of car that would change the performance of the company. The team sets out to define the characteristics of the car that would make it a unique model in the market. The differences in the representations of different team members start to come out for the first time.

For the member from marketing, Sara, the primary goal is that the car provides better mileage than the competitors' vehicles on the market. The marketing function has recently conducted consumer research and discovered that mileage is a very important factor for them, especially in today's world where fuel charges are volatile and concerns about climate change are increasing. She uses this research to argue that the car should provide one of the top mileage figures on the market.

For the member from design, Natasha, it is all about the aesthetic. Because of her eye for detail and passion for design, she wants the car to stand out from the competition with an aerodynamic body and minimal insides. She argues that consumers are becoming more aware of design features and especially the young generation who might be a prominent part of their consumers would pay a premium for design.

John, from finance, has a concern that the trend of the company might continue and the new car might not see enough sales to change the company around. With the millennials investing less in automobiles, and using car-sharing and renting services more, he is worried that not many people might buy the new car, especially if it has a premium price. So, he wants to build the car with as little costs as possible.

Finally, Elon, from engineering, is all about the performance. He wants to build a car that is fast, powerful and rigid. He argues that with increasing travel distances and decreasing the time for people, the rage is all about fast cars with powerful engines.

As the team sits and discusses the characteristics of the car, problems start to arise. They realise that if the car has an aerodynamic body, it would help achieve high speeds in less time with a powerful engine but it would cost more to build such a car and it also decreases the mileage. For better mileage, they need an engine that focuses on fuel efficiency and maintaining the speed within an efficient range but not on power and acceleration. Sara does not understand why Natasha and Elon are so adamant on building a powerful and posh looking car when the company is in trouble and they need to build something that sells to large population than a few who prefer looks and speed.

Natasha feels others are disregarding her opinions because she is female as well as from design function which has traditionally been considered an abstract domain. She especially feels disregarded when Elon presents a design that only partially meets her requirements because he designs it to look tough and powerful rather than posh and with curves. John, finally, is unhappy because all these designs are going to be costly to manufacture. He is the most senior in the team, with years and years of experience in finance under his belt, and so he feels that the other team members, who look young and childish to him, have no idea about the financial considerations of such a project. The others, on the other hand, worry that John is thinking only about saving money and argue that unless he invests and takes a risk, the company would not get the returns it needs.

Thus, the team comes to a standstill where they cannot decide on the design and what to compromise on. They have to choose between power and mileage, between posh, minimalist design and strong, tough-looking outer frame, between cost-efficient manufacturing and state-of-the-art features. Everyone thinks their idea is best for the company because they have their market analysis, design experience or financial numbers to support their arguments. Everyone feels that they are being ignored and their ideas disregarded in the team. The representational gaps are so salient and present that they fail to agree on even the very first steps of designing a new car that could change the trend of the company.

In this example, each team member has her or his definition of what the problem is and how they should solve it. Thus, they hold different *problem representations*. A problem representation is a cognitive map an individual holds regarding a task or a problem — ‘*its objective, the possible solutions, the actions that can lead to those solutions, and the causal chain that link the moving parts*’ (Hayes and Simon 1974, Newell and Simon 1972). Representations are simplifications of the task environment (Newell and Simon 1972) and enable sensemaking of the environment (Dougherty 1992). They direct the individual’s attention to specific details of a complex task environment to the exclusion of others. Representations arise from thought worlds (Dougherty 1992, see Cronin and Weingart 2007); thought worlds are how an individual perceives and interprets her/his environment and what relationships she/he assumes to exist.

Representations are also subjective; different people construct different cognitive models of the same problem based on their individual experiences and thought worlds. Thus, a representation is ‘*a cognitive structure that corresponds to a given problem, constructed by*

the solver on the basis of domain-related knowledge and its organisation' (Chi et al. 1981, p.122).

When actors of different problem representations come together in a cross-functional team, the team's goals, challenges and tasks are represented in different ways by different members. *Representational gaps*, at the team or group level, are thus incompatibilities among team members' problem representations that affect group problem solving (Cronin and Weingart 2007). They are not merely alternate views about what to do, instead, they represent alternate views about what the problem itself is. This is important as team members, when they perceive the problem itself differently, could come up with different courses of action and take different, potentially conflicting steps.

A representation of any particular problem definition comprises of four components: goal hierarchy, assumptions, elements and operators (Hayes and Simon 1974, Newell and Simon 1972, see Cronin and Weingart 2007). Inconsistencies among any of these components can lead to incompatible interpretation and evaluation of information which in turn leads to people selecting conflicting actions potentially resulting in coordination problems and conflicts (Cronin and Weingart 2007). Goal hierarchies and assumptions are particularly relevant for our context of cross-functional teams.

Goal hierarchies. Goals are critical in organisational contexts as organisational actors tend to define tasks based on the goals (West and Anderson 1996) and choose actions suitable to achieve them. Wang et al. (2016) argue that goals have the highest sensitivity to incompatibility because, even in cases where multiple goals of actors can be achieved, that is seldom the case because of the limited resources available within organisations that force team members to prioritise some goals over others. In our example of Sara and her teammates, it is clear that each individual has differing, often conflicting goals they define for the team. For instance, for Elon, the goal is to build a powerful and fast car which conflicts with Sara's definition of the team's goal, to build a car with good mileage.

Assumptions. Individuals pursuing different goals or ends make use of different sets of assumptions — the general restrictions, constraints, preferences and attributes that are taken as 'given' based on which individuals make decisions and act to achieve the goals they have defined (Cronin and Weingart 2007). As such, assumptions provide background information for the actors to solve the problem and are rooted in the actors' past experiences, knowledge

domain, skills and mental models. For instance, Elon holds the assumption that being fast is an essential criterion for a top-selling car whereas Natasha holds the assumption that it is the aesthetic appeal that sells the car. They are working towards the same goal perhaps, to build a car that performs well on the market, but the routes they take to achieve that goal are different.

Theoretical framing of Representational Gaps

With the above example in mind, I will now set out the theoretical underpinnings of representational gaps to better understand from where and why do they arise, what their characteristics are, and how they can be resolved. Representations are strongly rooted in information and knowledge structures of the individuals, their mental models, cognitive structures, experiences, skills, and institutional models. Representational gaps arise when these different structures and models of two or more people need to be integrated. Thus, representational gaps are strongly rooted in information sharing and knowledge interpretation domains. They arise because of problems in communicating, sharing and interpreting diverse information or knowledge from across the team members that are functionally, culturally and institutionally diverse. Members of such teams face, what Carlile (2004) calls, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic boundaries.

Syntactic boundaries manifest because of the differences in the language individuals use; a common lexicon or terminology needs to be developed for efficient exchange of ideas and views among such individuals (Carlile 2004). For instance, it is not easy for others to understand John's concerns if he continues using the language of finance. Similarly, Natasha's language of design and aesthetics is too abstract to be translated into something others can easily understand.

Semantic boundaries are more important as they become hurdles for interpretation of such diverse knowledge. In teams working under uncertainty and novel challenges, novelty obscures the members' assumptions and how they relate to others' assumptions (Skilton and Dooley 2010). Depending on the complexity of the tasks, actors' expertise and the composition of the team, each individual develops a system of interpretation rooted in their characteristics (Cronin and Weingart 2007, Dougherty 2001). They not only know different things, but also know things differently (Dougherty 1992). They look at the same phenomenon and see different problems, opportunities, challenges and solutions. More

importantly, they fail to understand how others in the team are looking at this phenomenon; as Burke (1935) noted, any way of seeing is also a way of not seeing. What this means in our example above is that the same phenomenon of millennials is considered an opportunity by Natasha and Elon because they believe millennials want aesthetic please and power while it is considered a threat by John as he believes millennials are buying fewer cars and might not pay a premium for their new car.

Finally, *pragmatic boundaries* refer to different and potentially conflicting goals, interests and agendas of team members. People follow their situated rationalities, '*regimes of worth*' (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006), and '*principles of evaluation*' (Stark 2011). The definitions of 'worthy' and 'valuable' are restricted by the institutions individuals come from, their experiences and mental models. Pragmatic boundaries also encompass power differentials and status concerns. Individuals tend to resist innovations that threaten their institutions, institutional norms and social structures (Van Maanen and Barley 1984, p.90), and ignore or contest solutions that fall outside or go against their institutions (Battilana 2011, Black et al. 2004). Institutional embeddedness also defines an individual's particular set of interests (Carlile 2002) that cause certain perspectives of interpretation to be systematically preferred or contested (Oborn and Dawson 2010). This could be seen when Sara, coming from marketing, puts more trust in her market analysis and consumer research and, similarly, when John, coming from finance, trusts the trends and graphs more.

Thus, pragmatic boundaries also encompass semantic boundaries and overcoming these two is essential to overcome representational gaps. In fact, when individuals arrive into the team, they arrive with a pre-defined set of perspectives, interpretations and at least a partial view of appropriate role behaviours, course of action and expectations of other team members. For instance, Kellogg et al. (2006) showed that professionals in a web-based, interactive marketing company joined teams with four distinct understandings of the team's priorities thus leading to conflict among roles. Similarly, all the four members of our cross-functional team working on a new car arrived with their perspectives, goals and assumptions about how the new car should be like. It was hard for each of them to understand why others hold different assumptions because they arrived in the team expecting others to have similar views and with an expectation of how others would behave. For instance, John might have

expected everyone to be considerate about financial concerns. Similar to the teams Kellogg et al. studied, conflicts ensued among them because of these representational gaps.

When pragmatic boundaries are more salient, i.e., individual team members act towards conflicting goals, team interaction becomes even more challenging. They can perceive other members as less trustworthy (Williams 2001) and be less willing to give useful knowledge (Andrews and Delahave 2000) or receive it (Mayer et al. 1995). If John has perceived others as young and passionate about power and aesthetics, he would be less willing to try to convince them about the financial situation of the company, i.e., give others his perspective. Similarly, Natasha and Elon might be unable to take Sara's perspective about high possible mileage; they might be comfortable with the level of mileage the car would achieve with Natasha's aesthetic vision or Elon's powerful engine. Thus, giving or taking representations and knowledge, what has been studied by the literature on sensegiving and sense-taking (Birolo and Rouleau 2018, Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991, Huemer 2012, Rouleau 2005, Weick 1995, Weick et al. 2005) becomes hard because of the representational gaps.

Cross-functional teams can have asymmetric goals to such an extent that the members of the team have divergent and often conflicting interests, goals and assumptions while still pursuing a shared group objective. This results in several problems that inhibit the team members from coordinating, sharing knowledge and developing novel solutions, thus taking advantage of the very reason why such teams are formed — their diversity.

Problems caused by diversity and representational gaps

Representational gaps are a process level phenomenon (Steiner 1972) negatively affecting the three core processes in group functioning: *information processing*, *coordination* and *conflict management* (McGrath and Argote 2001). Representational gaps degrade information processing through misunderstanding and misuse of information. They result in conflict when team members interpret the same information and view problem solving differently (Cronin and Weingart 2007). They render coordination difficult by creating contradictions among team members and encouraging them to enact actions that conflict with each other. As incompatible representations arise from different knowledge and value structures rooted in diverse functional experiences, culture (Hofstede 1980), personal characteristics and individual personalities (Rokeach 1979), representational gaps can occur not only in cross-functional teams but in any other form of organisational

groups including seemingly homogeneous teams. They lead to tangible problems within groups. Scholars have categorised these problems into task-related and interpersonal dimensions, albeit with the boundaries blurred (eg. Cronin and Weingart 2005, 2007, Pelled et al. 1999, Wang et al. 2016).

Task and move conflicts. Representational gaps lead to conflicts among the team members in terms of the moves or actions they choose. The most dangerous situation is the inconsistencies in goal hierarchies of the team members. If goal hierarchies differ extremely, it means the team members are working towards different desired ends. The courses of action, as well as assumptions of how to achieve these goals, might be too different that they cannot be integrated (Cronin and Weingart 2007). This problem arises because of the differences in how they interpret the objectives of the team. All the four members of our car-building team interpreted the definition of the new car differently. This led to conflicts among them regarding which course of action to take.

Even if team members interpret the information in the same way, they would still value it differently or assign different weights to different sets of information based on their representations. Thus, they would end up acting in ways that constrain or contradict their teammates' tasks and moves (Cronin and Weingart 2007). Even if Elon understands Natasha's perspective that the car should be aesthetically pleasing, he might give it a low priority thus thinking about it after he has thought about the power and performance concerns. Similarly, even if Natasha understands John's concerns about profitability, she might still argue for the use of costly materials in the manufacturing of the car to give it a posh look because she believes the aesthetics would fetch the car a premium. Thus, representational gaps can cause both information and move conflict even if the team members understand each others' concerns and interpret the information in the same way to a large extent.

Interpersonal relationship conflicts. Representational gaps might not surface until the conflict becomes too overt and the team's work and team members' relationships have already suffered (De Dreu et al. 2002, 2004, De Dreu and Weingart 2003). Relationship conflict involves disagreements about interpersonal issues, often characterised by high levels of tension and negative emotions (de Wit et al. 2012, Jehn 1995). The wider representational gaps are, the more susceptible teams are to relationship conflict; the team members would realise more inconsistent viewpoints among them as they try to achieve common goals.

Dealing with such relationship conflict is often emotionally draining (Jehn 1997, Yang and Mossholder 2004) and has much more negative effect on performance than task conflict (Lovelace et al. 2001, Pelled et al. 1999). Relationship conflict reduces collaborative problem solving (De Dreu 2006), wastes time and energy that could have been spent on the task (Evan 1965), and inhibits cognitive functioning (Staw et al. 1981). If Sara or John or someone felt that their attempts to contribute to the team are not being valued, and if arguments arise among the team members, they might be less inclined to contribute further and even lose interest in the team. Alternatively, the conflicts might escalate to such an extent that the team members end up arguing even over small things because every attack on their ideas is perceived as an attack on themselves now.

One way diversity can lead to emotional conflict is through *categorisation*, our subconscious tendency to sort each other into categories (Tajfel et al. 1971, Tajfel 1972, 1982). Based on our knowledge and beliefs about the environment around us and the people and things in it, we try to ‘*make our perceived world more predictable and controllable*’ (Zimbardo and Leippe 1991, p.236). People often strive for self-esteem by developing and justifying positive opinions of their own category and negative opinions of other categories (Turner 1975, Tajfel 1978). They perceive members of their own social category as superior, and they would stereotype and distance the members of other categories (Tajfel 1982). Those from other categories resent such stereotyping and these tensions could lead to hostile interactions, emotional conflict and other negative feelings (Reardon 1995, Pelled et al. 1999). As individuals have more interactions with members from different categories in multifunctional teams, there is a high probability that such relational conflicts become more profound. This association between categorisation and relational conflicts already sheds light on the role social identity theory plays in the contexts of cross-functional teams and representational gaps. This foreshadows the later part of this paper on how to resolve representational gaps.

Team members who dislike each other are less motivated to understand each other and invest less cognitive effort into combining their multiple perspectives into a synergistic solution. Wang et al. (2016) showed in an experiment that representational incompatibilities induce threat and cause team members to shut down instead of work towards a common understanding. Thus, representational gaps lead to both task-related and relationship-related

conflicts. However, relational and task conflicts are not exclusive. Task-related disagreements can quickly turn into emotional conflicts when people take them personally (Ross 1989). When they feel strongly that their views are correct, they may be impatient and intolerant towards others' views; when these views collide, they would feel that others do not respect their judgement (Pelled et al. 1999). In the other way around, people who feel frustrated or angry with others would have a propensity to dispute their ideas and be less agreeable than those who are cheerful (Milberg and Clark 1988). People who feel hostile towards others emotionally would be more inclined to find fault with that person's ideas (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois 1988). For instance, imagine if, in the heat of the argument, Elon commented that John is old and that is the reason he is unable to take the risk and instead wants to build traditional, cost-effective vehicle, John might always try to find fault with any of Elon's ideas from then on simply because he feels hurt and hostility from Elon.

People might not always cause conflict with malicious intent though; rather they '*gloss over the concerns of others and tend not to appreciate their complexities*' (Dougherty 1992). When this happens, they mistakenly attribute the conflict to their teammates' insufficient concern for their perspective rather than recognising that the fundamental differences exist because of the diversity and the resulting representational gaps among them. This could further lead to a deterioration in interpersonal relations as well.

Thus, representational gaps arise out of differences among the thought worlds of the team members and could potentially lead to information, task, move and relation conflicts. Cronin and Weingart (2007) argue that representational gaps create process losses that negatively impact creativity and effectiveness in teams. Unless representational gaps are resolved, Sara, Natasha, John and Elon could not agree on the characteristics of the new car and start designing it. Thus, we need to understand how these gaps can be bridged in such a way that the diversity within the team — the main reason to create such teams in the first place — is preserved but also the integration among different perspectives is possible.

Resolving representational gaps

To resolve representational gaps, it is important to understand how the underlying diversity-related differences can be managed. Integration of diverse knowledge in cross-functional teams has long been recognised as a challenge. Several scholars have posited different approaches to how this could be achieved. Majchrzak et al. (2012) categorise the

various streams of research that look at this problem as ‘traverse approach’. One stream of traverse approach focuses on the creation and sustenance of a common task understanding and a collective team orientation (Edmondson and Nembhard 2009, Okhuysen and Bechky 2009). Edmondson (2002) found that teams facing change succeeded through joint knowledge sharing before and during the change. Similarly, Van der Vegt and Bunderson (2005) found that building a collective team identification enabled teams of diverse experts to learn and perform better than the teams that did not build a collective team identification. Another stream of traverse approach posited that psychological safety within teams is important to encourage the members to take risks and engage in knowledge sharing (Edmondson 1999, Edmondson et al. 2001, Tucker et al. 2007).

The underlying assumption of this research is that the diverse experts of the team are aware of the differences in their knowledge domains, including causal models and implicit assumptions arising from their disciplinary principles and experience (Majchrzak et al. 2012). This awareness enables them to engage in a process of reflection of self and others’ knowledge (Argyris and Schön 1978). This process of reflection encourages them to share the different implicit assumptions about the problem and learn about each other’s perspective (Hargadon and Bechky 2006). Some scholars have suggested the use of boundary objects to facilitate the team members’ understanding of each others’ knowledge differences. Boundary objects simultaneously represent the information and knowledge of multiple communities (Star and Griesemer 1989). Described in various forms, as tangible definitions (Bechky 2003a) or physical products (Carlile 2002, 2004) or metaphors (Schön 1993, Tsoukas 2009), boundary objects *‘invoke the key differences in work contexts between groups’* (Bechky 2003, p.326).

However, there are some problems with this approach to knowledge integration. The crucial and necessary factor for knowledge integration in the traverse approach is that the diverse experts engage in a dialogic process of ‘perspective taking’ by deliberately and consciously engaging with the assumptions of other communities (Boland and Tenkasi 1995, Majchrzak et al. 2012) in sufficient depth (Tsoukas 2009). However, this might not always be true. More than often, team members might not even realise that the tensions among them are arising from the differences in their knowledge. In our team of four experts working on building a new vehicle, they might be arguing over whether the mileage is important or

speed, or whether they should take a risk or build a traditional, cost-effective model. However, they might not realise that the arguments and accompanying tensions among them are because they are unable to understand the others' perspectives and reasoning for arguments.

People are less likely to question whether others share their knowledge and beliefs because they tend to believe that others think as they do (Krueger and Clement 1994, Ross et al. 1977). For an individual to include others' interests, she/he has to be able to assess others' knowledge and tradeoffs to accommodate their interests. Because of self-contained thought worlds, one's interests may not be easily related or connected to those of another (Weingart et al. 2008). While some scholars showed that, as mentioned before, boundary objects can be used as a means to translate thought worlds (eg. Carlile 2002, 2004), these boundary objects themselves are interpreted through the lens of a thought world. Thus, using such objects merely shifts the focus from the object to its implications (Cronin et al. 2011).

Time pressures on such teams and the uncertainty of the environment they work in further force them to focus on the task at hand and less on how others perceive the task as. They might even strongly believe that their views and solutions benefit the team. They might not understand how others' views help the team and even if, without deliberate intentions, they might believe that others are trying to further their views at the expense of the team (Dougherty 1992).

Several scholars have questioned the traverse approach, arguing that this process of knowledge integration takes so much time and effort, and creates so much interpersonal conflict (Edmondson and Nembhard 2009) that the team becomes less inclined to engage in the needed dialogue (Hansen 1999). For instance, Carlile (2004) observed that the process took so much practical and political effort that the participants refused to engage in it thus causing the project to fail. Moreover, several scholars have shown that teams can coordinate and develop solutions without deeply sharing each others' knowledge (Faraj and Xiao 2006, Kellogg et al. 2006, Schmickl and Kieser 2008) or without using boundary objects (Dammann and Kieser 2010, Ewenstein and Whyte 2009, Faraj and Xiao 2006). If teams were to not become victims of representational gaps, especially without deeply sharing or integrating their knowledge, there must be another mechanism that helps them not fall victim to representational gaps.

Despite the advancements by the traverse approach or recognition of other mechanisms by scholars like Majchrzak et al. (2012), Faraj and Xiao (2006) or Kellogg et al. (2006), our understanding of how to integrate diverse knowledge structures and thought worlds of the members of such multidisciplinary teams, and particularly the representational gaps arising within such teams, is limited. Isolating one from one's representations is not so easy as representations are often rooted in one's experiences and beliefs and thus get internalised over time. de Dreu and van Knippenberg (2005) showed in a laboratory study that even the individuals who were randomly assigned one side of an argument instantly identified with it and internalised their side of the argument and the related ideas as '*a part of their extended self*'. When those ideas were questioned later on, they experienced an ego threat and took a retaliatory stance.

Thus, for the team members to overcome representational gaps and integrate their diverse thought worlds, they need to be able to open up to others' perspectives and integrate others' perspectives with their own. The studies that looked at problems in exchanging and integrating knowledge and diverse views have focused on communications and mechanisms of knowledge transfer (Carlile and Reberich 2003, Carlile 2002, 2004, Dougherty and Tolboom 2008, Skilton and Dooley 2010). However, the factors that would affect individuals' motivations and inclinations to engage in such knowledge exchange were ignored. Research on cross-speciality knowledge integration in teams argues that successful integration requires that the team members understand the boundaries, differences and dependencies among their knowledge structures (Boland and Tenkasi 1995, Cook and Brown 2000, Hargadon and Bechky 2006, Tsoukas 2009), and understand the implicit constraints on, and priorities for, different solution paths arising from different causal mental models of the team members (Carlile 2004, see Majchrzak et al. 2012). This constitutes, as Cronin et al. (2011) posit, *cognitive* and *affective* integration.

Cognitive integration is when an actor can analyse the situation using her/his team members' thought worlds (Cronin et al. 2011). Cognitive integration narrows representational gaps through increased shared understanding. However, it is not always possible to achieve cognitive integration for several reasons. Teams might want to use different perspectives to maintain constructive controversy (Tjosvold 1985); members of such teams often lack time or training to understand others' thought worlds; and they could still choose to prefer their view

and see others' as incorrect. Thus, we need to understand how individuals can open up and be willing to integrate multiple perspectives despite the possibility to engage in a deep cognitive integration. More importantly, they should be able to do this without feeling that understanding others' positions is tolerance (Tetlock 2000). Rather, they should be willing to change their mind. Affective integration comes into play here.

Affective integration refers to team members' interpersonal relationships including liking, respect and trust amongst them (Cronin et al. 2011). While liking enables one to become positive towards the arguments of someone familiar (see Petty and Wegener 1998 for a review), respect implies that one values others' views (Cronin 2004) and trust implies that one considers others' beliefs as true (Hass 1981). When people get lost in trying to convince each other of their respective positions, it hurts conflict resolution (Hyder et al. 2000). Affective integration avoids this and provides a basis for inferences about others' information and value, and provides motivation to consider others' views. Affective integration motivates an individual to be content to accept others' beliefs or ideas despite not fully understanding them. Thus, affective integration reduces representational gaps among team members by motivating them to understand not others' thought worlds but that differences exist between their thought worlds; thus it indirectly also encourages cognitive integration (Cronin et al. 2011).

Identification and Affective Integration

Affective identification is crucial for overcoming representational gaps in cross-functional or multidisciplinary teams. However, we need a better understanding of how affective integration can be achieved. When I reviewed the framework of representational gaps before, we have briefly seen the role played by 'categorisation' (Van der Vegt and Bunderson 2005); one way diversity can lead to emotional conflict is through *categorisation*, our subconscious tendency to sort each other into categories (Tajfel et al. 1971, Tajfel 1972, 1982). This points out that social identity theory plays a vital role in the formation and resolution of representational gaps. *Identity* is a core concept in psychological theory because of its effects on emotion, cognition and behaviour (Tajfel 1959, 1969). *Identification* is the extent to which one defines oneself socially in terms of another individual, relationship or group (Pratt 1998). *Identity* defines one's distinctiveness and enables one to internalise and integrate relationships and groups through *identification*.

Perhaps the important notion of identification is that it is not a singular concept; a diversity of identifications exists within a person. One can define her/his self-concept in terms of her/his individuality, profession, she/he being a member of a group or her/his relationships with significant others. Thus, an individual could have individual, professional, collective or relational identifications with one of them becoming more salient depending on the situation. For the purposes of this paper, two types of identification become important.

Collective identification. Collective identification is rooted in social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 1986, Hogg 2000) and its sibling, self-categorization theory (Turner et al. 1987). With collective identification, group membership is the most defining element of one's identity. Brewer (1991) states the collective identification reflects '*categorisation of the self into more inclusive social units that depersonalise the self-concept*'. Collective identification is thus associated with a *depersonalisation process* and this depersonalised group membership is based on the similarities among the group members and common group affiliation (Mael and Ashforth 2001). Thus, when individuals identify with their organisation or team or any group, they pay attention to what is common between them and other organisational actors (Brickson 2000) and engage in positive behaviour that supports organisational goals, and in-role and extra-role behaviours (Dukerich et al. 2002). Such individuals with strong collective identification value group-level characteristics and properties such as group goals and challenges very highly than they value their social relationships or interdependence with other members (Brewer and Gardner 1996, Hogg and Terry 2000).

Relational identification. Relational identification is the extent to which one defines one's self-concept as the role relationships and social connections with the group members rather than as a component of the group membership (Zhang et al. 2014). It refers to the content, i.e., what do role relations mean and what do they contain, and thus enables internalising that content as a definition of who one is (Sluss and Ashforth 2007). While collective identification enables the group members to share the group characteristics through a depersonalisation process (Hogg and Terry 2000), relational identification is achieved through interpersonal processes and expression of individuality and uniqueness through close relationships with those who share similar values, beliefs and personalities (Polzer et al. 2002, Postmes et al. 2005).

Multiple identifications — relational and collective. Relational and collective identifications are distinct concepts and are associated with different thought processes and behaviours (Cooper and Thatcher 2010). However, individuals are capable of developing multiple identifications, with multiple targets simultaneously (Johnson et al. 2006, see Ramarajan 2014). This implies that collective and relational selves are not mutually exclusive, rather they are intricately intertwined; one can have multiple identifications where one level of identity is derived from the interpersonal relationships and is interdependent on a significant other while the other level of identity is derived from membership in larger social categories (Brewer and Gardner 1996). One's identification with any of the targets — individuals, roles or groups — is not mutually exclusive (Ashforth and Johnson 2001) but one would identify more strongly with one target than with others (van Dick et al. 2008). Moreover, the same person might behave one way in one context and the other way in another context. Thus, organisational actors exhibit multiple identities simultaneously with one identification being more salient than the other (Ashforth and Johnson 2001, van Dick et al. 2008).

Not only can collective and relational identifications coexist within one's self but they influence each other as well. Collectives such as teams and groups are defined by the words and actions of their members and the role-based relationships among them (Ashforth and Rogers 2012). Identifying with a prominent member of a collective, for instance the leader, may facilitate identification with the collective as well (Carmeli et al. 2011, Hobman et al. 2011). Similarly, identifying with a collective might result in a sense of commonality that may encourage individuals to learn and know more about the members of the collective and thus identify with them based on the role-relationships (Steffens et al. 2014). Several studies have shown that active relational or collective self-concepts do not preclude identification at other levels (eg. Trafimow et al. 1991, Dukerich et al. 2002, Gabriel and Gardner 1999, Gardner et al. 2002).

Identification and Representational Gaps

The effects of social identification on group-level processes have been extensively studied. Past research on identification has suggested that social identification comprises of three distinct elements — cognitive, evaluative and emotional (see Bergami and Bagozzi 2000, Ellemers et al. 1999). Emotional component, in particular, has been shown to most

clearly '*supply the motivational force*' leading to action or '*readiness to engage in or disengage from interaction*' (Bergami and Bagozzi 2000, p. 563). Based on the research done on intergroup comparisons (eg. Hornsey and Hogg 2002, Turner 1975) and how inducing an inclusive superordinate identity leads to reduction in intergroup biases and stereotyping (Gaertner et al. 1996), and group-based biases in perception, recall and attribution (Hewstone 1990), it has been argued that members with high levels of collective team identification facilitate expertise diversity to lead to enhanced team performance (Van der Vegt and Bunderson 2005). Research also argues that, despite the assumption that low team identification would lead to biases and stereotypes and thus low performance, beyond some level of expertise diversity, where '*everybody is different*' (Gibson and Vermeulen 2003, p. 209), the bases of categorisation become so few that performance no longer decreases but instead is positively affected by diversity (Van der Vegt and Bunderson 2005). Thus, in teams with low levels of collective identification, a U-shaped relationship exists between expertise diversity and team performance.

However, this research ignores the dynamic of such teams where either the members do not identify strongly with the team or when team identification has different effects on the members' behaviours. This is the case of cross-functional teams. Social identification theory holds that functional reference group biases inhibit group identification in cross-functional teams (Tajfel and Turner 1986), i.e., as members identify strongly with the functions they come from rather than the team they are temporally members of, they would not develop a strong team identification. Research on factional groups (Li and Hambrick 2005) demonstrated that teams composed of members associated with different and conflicting research groups devolved into emotional and task conflict, behavioural disintegration and poor performance. Attribution theory supports this by arguing that team members attribute problem causes to lack of ability or effort on the part of team members or team members' reference groups. This leads to a sense of hopelessness, despair and withdrawal (Ashforth and Mael 1989). Attributing organisational ills to team member reference groups reduces team performance and group cohesiveness, increases interpersonal tension, conflict and hostility, and threatens others' self-esteem and self-identity (Schlenker et al. 2001).

Thus, strong team identification does not necessarily facilitate coordination and overcoming of representational gaps in cross-functional teams. Case studies by George and

McLean (2002) and Brittain (2001) demonstrated how team exploration of problems and root causes fostered an environment of divisiveness, anger and resentment. Another mechanism should be present that enables team members to open up to their teammates' perspectives and opinions and put in an effort to bridge the representational gaps between them. I posit that looking at the underlying motives that contribute to one's self-definition or identification sheds light on the more nuanced role identification plays in cross-functional teams.

Identification motives and representational gaps

Research has shown that the need for self-enhancement, self-consistency, belongingness, efficacy, distinctiveness, self-expansion and uncertainty reduction influence different types of identification being activated at various levels (Aron and Aron 2000, Cooper and Thatcher 2010, Hogg et al. 1995, Hogg and Terry 2000, Mael and Ashforth 2001). While how an individual satisfies her/his need for each of these depending on her/his self-concept and orientation defines how and which of identification becomes salient, the same needs can also explain how one engages with her/his team in addressing the representational gaps among them. The same needs are also inherent to the individuals' forming of representation and thus the pursuit of these needs contribute to their representations. Thus, the motives underlying the identification helps us build a bridge between identification and representational gaps. I will elaborate on this with our example of car-building team.

When Elon joined the team to build a successful car, he would have started with certain needs and motivations; he would have found this as an opportunity to show that he is more competent than his peers in engineering. Similarly, Natasha would have a need for a certain degree of self-enhancement; to show that women are skilled on par with their male counterparts and thus can contribute to the team's success. Furthermore, as young and upcoming members of the organisation, both Elon and Natasha would also find this as an opportunity to learn new skills or gain new knowledge by working on a unique, challenging task, thus expanding their skillset and expertise. Thus, everyone is trying to redefine her/his self-concept as a member of this new, multidisciplinary team where she/he interacts with people with partially or totally different identifications, thought worlds and mental models. It also enables them to pursue different identity motives — distinctiveness and self-expansion

for Elon and self-enhancement and self-expansion for Natasha — by contributing to the team's success.

This pursuit of needs of self-definition or self-redefinition reinforces the representations they have. For instance, Elon would strongly focus on the engineering aspects of the car because, only by using advanced technologies and manufacturing practices that are understood by members of his function can he show that he is on par or even better than others in his function. Similarly, Natasha would believe in her design principles even strongly as the drive to prove her worth makes her put in the effort to contribute to the team in the best way she knows, and the best way her designer peers can assess her work: by designing a car that is aesthetically unique and pleasing. Thus, their pursuit of different needs would reinforce their belief in the representations they bring from their functional knowledge, previous experiences and skills.

It could also be expected that their need for self-expansion, if strong, would help them open up to others' ideas and opinions as well. If they want to learn new skills or acquire new knowledge, especially from the unique circumstances of the team's task or from their teammates, they would realise that they need to understand why others are proposing different ideas and what the underlying principles are. Then they could see if they could internalise this new knowledge and expand their own expertise. Thus, the need for self-expansion could help them put their representations aside and put efforts into acquiring new representations. Thus, the pursuit of various identity motives has potential to either reinforce representations and widen representational gaps between them and their teammates or encourage them to put aside their representations, open up to know ideas and bridge representational gaps.

I will now elaborate on the four most commonly studied identity motives and discuss how collective and relational identifications associated with each of these needs could lead to widening or bridging of representational gaps. The four needs are the needs for self-enhancement, belongingness, self-expansion and uncertainty reduction. There are several reasons why these four needs are more important. Zhang et al. (2012) defined self-enhancement and belongingness as the two fundamental social motives that collective and relational identifications address. While self-enhancement relates to perceptive aspects such as information and image of one's self (Hogg et al. 1995), self-expansion relate to concrete

aspects such as one's skills, knowledge and experience thus making it equally important in terms of team dynamics.

Reid and Hogg (2005) argue that uncertainty reduction and self-enhancement motives are two core individual-level motivations underlying social identification processes and thus group and intergroup behaviours. Jost (1995) and Jost and Banaji (1994) implied that uncertainty reduction and stability may be a stronger motive than self-enhancement under certain group conditions. Others argued that self-esteem or self-enhancement is pursued only when one has secured a certain level of certainty in terms of one's self-concept (eg. Sedikides and Strube 1995, Taylor et al. 1995) and that self-esteem is contingent on self-certainty (eg. Banaji and Prentice 1994, Brown et al. 1988). Uncertainty reduction plays an even more important role in the contexts of cross-functional teams because of the uncertain environment the team works in and the challenges of people who do not know each other in most cases working together.

Self-enhancement

Self-enhancement is the need for favourable information about the self such as an impression of being competent or morally good; a desire to view oneself positively relative to others (Hogg et al. 1995). Ashforth et al. (2008, p.335) argue that, according to the social identity and self-categorisation theories, identification provides the basis for enhancing one's sense of self-esteem and '*thinking of themselves in a positive light*'. Being a part of multifunctional teams, especially those working on challenging and novel tasks, offers team members an opportunity to enhance their self-definition. Working in such teams is often not only demanding but also rewarding, both in terms of formal recognition in the organisational environment but also intrinsically for the individual. Furthermore, when individuals perceive opportunities to further their views or gain some tangible rewards, their need for self-enhancement is activated (Gecas 1982, Cooper and Thatcher 2010, Pratt 1998). They would try to uphold their current valued identities and acquire new identities that bring them closer to an ideal self (Ashforth 2001, Ashforth et al. 2016).

Collective identification and representational gaps. If the group members have stronger collective identification, their self-enhancement is reflected in their associations with the positive features of the group (Zhang et al. 2012). They put greater value on group-level features such as group goals and tasks rather than on their social relationships and

interdependencies with other team members (Brewer and Gardner 1996, Hogg and Terry 2000). They would believe that reaching the group's goal is their goal. The pursuit of group goals, being a part of the group, and incorporating the group characteristics in one's self-definition becomes a priority (Zhang et al. 2012). They would be strongly inclined to pursue self-enhancement by working harder towards the group goals rather than understanding if everyone else thinks in terms of the same goals or not. This leads to goal discrepancies among the team members.

If everyone has a more salient collectivistic orientation, it could be expected that everyone would work towards the group goals which would decrease the discrepancies. However, the pursuit of the same group goals does not guarantee that all individuals rely on the same assumptions and moves. Because members of such teams come from different thought worlds, hold assumptions, and represent tasks in different ways, as we have already established, the discrepancies in how they pursue the common group goals would lead to conflicts. The moves they make (rooted in their functional domains or representations) create move conflicts and can easily escalate to interpersonal conflicts because they would not be able to understand why others made those moves. Thus, the representational gaps widen further if most of the team members are collectivists.

The level of functional domain diversity of team members moderates this relationship between collective identification and representational gaps. Upper echelons theory tells us that if the team members are more functionally similar, they would have same problem-solving approaches (Hambrick and Mason 1984, in Randel and Jaussi 2003, p.765). Naturally, individuals are much strongly inclined to orient towards their own functional area or knowledge domain than towards the current team they are a part of. The more dissimilar other group members become in terms of functional diversity, the more discrepancies exist among their actions.

For instance, for someone coming from a design background like Natasha, self-enhancement would mean coming up with a product that wins awards for design, gets covered in highly reputable media and sets a standard in the industry while for someone coming from a marketing background like Sara, it would mean increasing the market share of the company as a whole and competing with their main competitors in terms of price and sales. Not only are totally different goal hierarchies evident in this case (product-level for

design vs company-level for marketing) but the underlying assumptions that drive their actions are also different (Natasha's product-specific concerns and focus on industry experts for design vs Sara's company-level performance and customer-focus for marketing). Thus, those who try to satisfy their need for self-enhancement through a more salient collective identification would, despite their belief that they were working towards the achievement of group's goals, lead to the widening of representational gaps between them and others in the group thus negatively affecting group's coordination and work in general.

Proposition 1a. Stronger and salient collective identification contributes to the widening of representational gaps through misinterpreting one's own actions as conducive to the group's goal achievement.

Proposition 1b. The relationship between collective identification and representational gaps is moderated by the number/variety of functional domains in the team.

Relational identification and representational gaps. In contrast, when group members have stronger relational identification, their self-enhancement needs are reflected in cooperative work relationships (Sluss and Ashforth 2007). They satisfy their need for self-enhancement through others appreciating them and having strong working and role relationships with others (Sluss and Ashforth 2007). They cooperate by exchanging information, constructively discussing conflicts and working collaboratively to achieve the group's goals. For them, it is crucial to develop cooperative work relationships with other members in order to achieve self-enhancement because their identity as a capable group member depends on the extent to which they engage in interpersonal cooperation (Zhang et al. 2012).

For instance, if Natasha has a strong relational orientation, she would sit with Sara and try to understand why mileage and customers' impressions are important for her. Similarly, both of them would also be motivated to discuss why a good design is important and how can it help Natasha impress the industry experts while allowing Sara to offer something more than mileage to customers simultaneously. Strong relational identification would enable an actor to break from her/his thought world and try to engage in dialogue across different thought worlds.

However, given the time constraints on cross-functional teams, individuals would focus on self-enhancement through the skills and ideas they already possess rather than put in the time and effort to try to understand others' viewpoints and thought worlds and expand her/his

mental models. As such, those with strong relational identification, as much as they want to understand each others' views, will be constrained by temporal resources. While the time constraints of cross-functional teams still limit how much one could learn from others, and while no one can learn about someone else's thought worlds completely in short time, they would nevertheless recognise that there are representational gaps between them. Even if they cannot converge on representations, they would at least know that the moves they make do not arise out of interpersonal rivalry. John would be able to understand why others do not pay as much attention to costs as he does and Elon would be able to understand that Sara is not against power but her concerns are different. As such, relationists are well positioned to narrow the representational gaps to a large extent. They would recognise that they could only achieve cooperative role relationships if they try to value each others' ideas and views and work to integrate them into their own mental models. Of course, the longer they have to interact and work with each other, the closer they would become and the more time they have to develop interpersonal relationships that facilitate translation of thought worlds.

Proposition 2a. Stronger and salient relational identification contributes to bridging of representational gaps through behaviours that are aimed at developing interpersonal relationships and understanding others' goals and aims.

Proposition 2b. Effect of relational identification on representational gaps increases the longer the team longevity is.

Behavioural issues. Relational identification has a much more important role to play in such teams than merely opening up avenues for conversations. The kind of identification that is more salient has practical implications on how an individual behaves with others in a team. When relational self-concept is active, individuals are less motivated to enhance their sense of self and are instead more inclined to evaluate themselves in terms of their interpersonal roles (Brewer and Gardner 1996). Scholars have even shown how relational identification enables individuals to change their behaviours to maintain their role relationships. For instance, Stapel and Van der Zee (2006) showed how individuals with a primed relational self-concept change their behaviors to provide dominant or submissive responses depending on whether their partners are submissive or dominant, respectively. Thus, even those who were focused on achieving self-enhancement through the pursuit of group goals before might recognise the value in interpersonal relationships when they encounter relationists. As humans hold a desire to readily form social relationships (Baumeister and Leary 1995,

Gaertner et al. 2012), people joining such teams can easily reciprocate relationships with relationists. Self-enhancement motive also plays a role in forming and maintaining role relationships because individuals tend to identify with those who exhibit increased self-esteem (eg. Vignoles et al. 2006).

On the other hand, for those with a strong collective identification, the group's image and how it is internalised in them holds an important place. Those with a salient collective identification could also perceive identity threat if changes are made in the group composition. They identify with groups that compare positive to other groups (eg. Bartels et al. 2007) and the inclusion of low-status members reduces this positive feeling towards the group. For instance, the inclusion of low-status members in terms of gender and nationality can reduce how one perceives the positive image of the group (see Cooper and Thatcher 2010, Chattopadhyay et al. 2004). When collectivists join groups or teams with diversity, they might feel a sense of identity threat arising from the diversity of thought worlds and competing viewpoints. This would encourage them to try to justify their own identity and thus identify even more strongly with the group's goals and tasks. This could lead to animosity towards others whom they could perceive as being rude and contentious. As collectivists try to self-enhance by even strongly pursuing group goals through the paths and moves they think are optimal because they rely on their functional backgrounds and thought worlds, this could lead to a widening of representational gaps.

Proposition 3a. Relational identification can lead to a change in behaviours regarding how one pursues self-enhancement. Thus, relational identification can narrow representational gaps by encouraging even collectivists to become relationists.

Proposition 3b. Collectivists could perceive an identity threat when they join diversity groups. This could lead to increased emphasis on collective identification which in turn could lead to the widening of representational gaps.

Belongingness

Belongingness is the desire to seek to confirm a subjective sense of belongingness or "being a part of" (Kohut 1971, 1978, 2013). The literature distinguishes belongingness into depersonalised and personalised belongingness (Mael and Ashforth 2001, Cooper and Thatcher 2010). Depersonalised belongingness reflects one's desire to "belong" to a group and be a part of that group (Mael and Ashforth 2001) while personalised belongingness reflects one's desire to achieve and enhance interpersonal attachments with individuals

(Baumeister and Leary 1995). Building on their definitions, depersonalised belongingness reflects a more salient role played by collective identification while personalised belongingness reflects a more salient role played by relational identification.

Collective identification and representational gaps. For an individual with a stronger collective identification, the whole group is incorporated into one's self-concept and thus, one might experience oneness with the group, the group being an indispensable part of one's self. They seek out groups in which they feel similar to other members (Cooper and Thatcher 2010) and have a less need for uniqueness (Yamaguchi et al. 1995). Over time, one's interests and goals are aligned with the group's (Brewer and Gardner 1996). Research shows that individuals with strong collective identification might even contribute to the group's goals at the expense of their self-interest (Brewer and Kramer 1986, Caporael et al. 1989).

Depersonalised belongingness stems from the knowledge and belief that others share the same group affiliation rather than from the interpersonal bonds with individual group members (Mael and Ashforth 2001, Cooper and Thatcher 2010). If an individual perceives that others are not behaving in such a way, i.e., others' behaviours do not align with the individual's perception of the group's characteristics, she/he might feel an identity threat or perceive others as not sharing the group affiliation. John would be a good example of this because he not only thinks that others do not share his concern for the costs but also that they are inconsiderate about his experience as well. This could not only lead to widened representational gaps but in turn to interpersonal animosity.

Collectivists feel a strong need for affiliation and are more inclined to connect to similar members of the same group (Hui and Villareal 1989). They relate to the similarities associated with common group membership (Swann et al. 2004). Thus, when they perceive such behaviours from some of the group's members that do not align with how they perceive the group's characteristics to be, they would look for those whose behaviours do align (Cooper and Thatcher 2010). As they interact with and identify with the team members who share similar thought worlds, views and beliefs, their perceptions of the group strengthens. They would not open up to diverse viewpoints and it would only accentuate their existing mental models and assumptions thus strengthening their confidence in their representations. It becomes even harder to break away from their representations because they feel like their representations align with those of the group's because a lot of others share them too. There is

also a risk that the goal hierarchies of similar people are similar too and thus their collective effort to achieve the goal they think is important could contradict with the goal hierarchies of other similar groups of individuals.

For instance, imagine another engineer joins our car-building team. When this other engineer shares the same interests as Elon, including the preference for power and speed, Elon's assumptions of how the car should be built get reinforced and he would believe in his representations even strongly. This would further dissuade him from seeing the value in others' ideas and opinions.

Proposition 4a. Stronger and salient collective identification leads to widening of representational gaps if other team members are not perceived to be similar; this occurs through the mechanism of depersonalised belongingness.

Proposition 4b. Those with strong collective identification will seek out "similar others" which could result in the strengthening of their representations and widening of representational gaps with "non-similar others".

Relational identification and representational gaps. In contrast, for individuals with a stronger relational identification, belongingness is enhanced through informal social relationships with other members of the group that extend beyond merely work-related. These informal interactions often are triggered by the interpersonal attraction between two individuals that stem from *idiosyncrasies* and *complementarities* (Hogg and Terry 2000). Over time, these relationships become the emotional glue that enhances one's need for belongingness and one might tend to be a part of a group because of these relationships. Baumeister and Leary (1995) posit that '*human beings are fundamentally and pervasively motivated by a need to belong*' (see also Baumeister 2012). So, they are more than easily inclined to form close relationships with other individuals in organisational settings (Dumas et al. 2013). Sara and Natasha might build friendship, being young women and trying to leave a mark in the company that might be male-dominated. This would encourage them to be more receptive of each other's ideas.

Personalised belongingness motive is satisfied through frequent pleasant interactions with group members and showing concern for each other over a long time (Baumeister and Leary 1995). Relationists are motivated to create and maintain relationships for the sake of the relationships themselves (Cooper and Thatcher 2010). They satisfy their need for belongingness by providing help to important others and sharing activities with them

(Kashima and Hardie 2000). For instance, Gersick et al. (2000) showed that respondents in their study on academic work viewed relationships with colleagues as ends in themselves rather than as a means of another goal. Thus, for relationists, developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships with individual group members takes precedence over achieving the group's goals or defending their own representations. They would be more than willing to keep aside the differences and understand and value others' viewpoints and opinions.

For instance, Sara and Natasha might also realise that there will be opportunities where they can collaborate on in the future. The fact that they are women and need mutual support to present their ideas and exploit those opportunities might encourage them to develop a strong interpersonal relationship that makes them feel as if they belong. This desire to feel belongingness in the form of interpersonal relationships with others, even those who do not share their thought worlds, would encourage them to put efforts into decreasing the representational gaps between them so that they can collaborate. However, if the group is large, it becomes harder to forge particularised and meaningful relationships with group members. Thus, relational identification can be relatively less stronger than in small groups (Brewer and Roccas 2001).

Proposition 5a. Stronger and salient relational identification narrows representational gaps by encouraging individuals to put aside differences and attempt to dialogue across thought worlds.

Proposition 5b. The effect of relational identification on narrowing of representational gaps becomes weaker as the group size increases because large groups make it harder to develop personalised relationships.

Strong relational identification can also enable one to satisfy one's need for belongingness at the group level. Even though personalised belongingness is dyadic in nature, groups comprise of a series of dyadic and subgroup interactions and relationships that act as multiple bases for the formation of identification at the group level (Cooper and Thatcher 2010). As groups offer the environment in which one could interact with and develop relationships with coworkers, a strong relational identification that is rooted in personalised belongingness motive would also contribute to the collective identification towards the group one is a member of. Such individuals would possibly try to understand even the behaviours of collectivists and attempt to decrease the discrepancies between them and the collectivists.

Proposition 5c. Relational identification could also lead to the sense of belongingness at the group level and thus inversely moderate the positive relationship between collective identification and representational gaps to some extent.

Self-expansion

Self-expansion is the desire to accrue different perspectives and resources for the self (Aron and Aron 2000, Cooper and Thatcher 2010). At the collective/group level, self-expansion is achieved by gaining opportunities for new perspectives and resources from the collective (Aron and McLaughlin-Volpe 2001). This is truer in small groups rather than at the organisational level because small groups make it easier for individuals to access resources and also get involved with expansion opportunities related to group's tasks (Cooper and Thatcher 2010, see Zaccaro and Dobbins 1989). At the relational/individual level, self-expansion is achieved by seeking relationships that expand the self in terms of resources and perspectives (Cooper and Thatcher 2010, Fraley and Aron 2004). For instance, the relationship with a charismatic coworker can be beneficial as the informal power associated with the coworker is ascribed to those associated with the coworker as well (Ashforth 2001). Thus, self-expansion is achieved in different ways based on the collective vs relational orientation of the individuals.

Collective identification and representational gaps. Those with a strong collectivist orientation focus on the shared group membership and thus strive to see themselves as similar to the prototypical group member (Cooper and Thatcher 2010). As collectivists prefer not to stand out from the group (Brewer and Chen 2007), they are less likely to self-expand by creating and maintaining relationships with others who hold different and unique perspectives (Cooper and Thatcher 2010). Bond and Smith (1996) showed a positive relationship between collectivism and conformity, i.e., acquiring skills, resources and perspectives to become similar to the group's prototype is how collectivists self-expand. Their pursuit of self-expansion would follow the group's trajectory where acquiring the skills and resources to make sure the group's goals are achieved and the group's image is improved is how collectivists self-expand. Thus, collectivists are less likely to self-expand either by taking advantage of the representational gaps (and the diversity of thought worlds associated with them that could act as opportunities for collectivists to exploit) or by trying to resolve representational gaps.

Proposition 6a. Collective identification results in lack of self-expansion through interpersonal relationships and thus has little effect on representational gaps.

Relational identification and representational gaps. Self-expansion for relationists is achieved by taking on the perspective of others and sharing information with them with an aim to reinforce relationships (Gore et al. 2006). Relationists are also more inclined to attend to and remember others' perspectives compared to individualists or collectivists (Cross and Morris 2003). One of the goals every organisational actor has is to expand her/his skills, build networks of relationships and improve her/his image. In any team, individuals also try to pursue their individualistic goals to further their growth within the organisation. The group's goals and the individual's personal goals together comprise the goal hierarchy of the individual's representations.

When people realise that they cannot use their existing assumptions and tools rooted in their incumbent thought worlds for all the problems new business environment has to offer, they would be more willing to internalise new tools. As relationists rely on interpersonal relationships with their coworkers to learn and acquire these new tools and skills, they would be more inclined to attempt to overcome the representational gaps, recognising that it is a way to achieve self-expansion. For instance, Sara, as a consumer-focused marketing expert, might indeed be more interested in what she can offer the consumers besides a better mileage, and this would encourage her to learn more from Natasha in terms of design. Thus, relationists who want to expand their mental models and thought worlds would seek out relationships with partners that help them achieve self-expansion and actively resolve representational gaps in doing so.

On the other hand, even when they did not seek out relationships to achieve self-expansion, one would feel a sense of expansion when the relationships make them feel that they have access to new resources or have new perspective on things now; they would consider the relationship they have with the partner as very close (Fraley and Aron 2004). For them, the discrepancies in knowledge structures, views and thought worlds between them and their partner are no longer hurdles, rather they would actually find value in the representational gaps that exist between them. Such relationships are valued highly when they turn out to be beneficial in terms of knowledge, power and image (see Ashforth 2001). Thus, even when relationists develop and maintain interpersonal relationships with other

team members for the sake of the relationships, like we have discussed before (Kashima and Hardie 2000, Gersick et al. 2000), they can still achieve self-expansion when they realise those new relationships are helping them expand their thought worlds.

Proposition 6b. Those with stronger relational identification seek out interpersonal relationships that help them self-expand and thus actively resolve the representational gaps.

Proposition 6c. Those with stronger relational identification feel a sense of self-expansion specifically because of the representational gaps.

Uncertainty reduction

Individuals have an epistemic motive that reflects a need for meaning, knowledge and understanding of self and self's position in the social world (Hogg 2000) and thus a desire to reduce uncertainty regarding one's position or place in the social world (Hogg and Terry 2000). Uncertainty about one's attitudes, beliefs, feelings and perceptions is aversive (eg. Fiske and Taylor 1991, Lopes 1987) and is associated with reduced control (Hogg 2000). Uncertainty about one's relationships with others in a group can provoke mistrust and paranoia (Kramer and Wei 1999).

Multifunctional, multidisciplinary teams formed to tackle complex problems often face a higher level of uncertainty both in the environment around them and within the teams themselves. The challenges the team members face, complexities they need to overcome, and the need to come up with unique solutions and ways to achieve their goals comprise the environmental uncertainty. The fact that the team members need to coordinate with each other, build on each others' experiences and knowledge, and overcome interpersonal differences (representational gaps) of various sorts comprise the within-team uncertainty. Reduction of any type of uncertainty produced by contextual factors that render people's cognitions, perceptions, behaviours, and ultimately the sense of self uncertain forms an important motivation for individuals trying to (re)define their self-concept (Hogg 2000). Analysing how collectivists and relationists achieve uncertainty reduction in lieu of diversity and representational gaps in cross-functional teams is not as straightforward as it was with the three identity motives we have discussed so far. How individuals attempt to reduce uncertainty depends mainly on whether the individuals are certainty-oriented or uncertainty-oriented than on whether they are collectivists or relationists.

Uncertainty vs certainty orientation. People can be uncertainty- or certainty-oriented (Sorrentino and Roney 1999, see Hogg 2000). Uncertainty-oriented people seek out information that may raise uncertainty further and strive to resolve it to achieve self-satisfaction. Certainty-oriented people are more focused on maintaining the status quo and try to avoid uncertain situations. Under uncertain situations, they defer to others or use heuristics to resolve uncertainty quickly (Hogg 2000).

Thus, uncertainty-oriented people might be more inclined to welcome new information and revel in the additional uncertainty that offers them an opportunity to resolve the problem at hand more efficiently and satisfy not only their need for uncertainty reduction but also self-enhancement and self-assessment (Sorrentino and Roney 1999, Hogg 2000). This means they welcome the discrepancies between their own knowledge and experiences and those of others in the group; they understand that these discrepancies add to the uncertainty but in fact, can also help them resolve the problem more efficiently. Thus, uncertainty-oriented people would consider representational gaps within their groups as a resource that needs to be exploited.

On the contrary, certainty-oriented people would tend to fall back to what they already know and what their existing mental models hold under uncertainty. Alternatively, they rely on others within the group or use heuristics to reduce the uncertainty and resolve the problem at hand (Hogg 2000). Certainty-oriented actions pose two problems for such groups: firstly, certainty-oriented people, when relying back on heuristics, would be constrained by the limits of their own thought worlds and representations thus contributing to the strengthening of the already existing representational gaps within the group; secondly, when they rely on others in the group to achieve certainty, it usually is someone who is prototypical of the group from the certainty-oriented individual's eyes, which would again add to existing representational gaps. This second problem becomes clearer below.

Proposition 7a. Uncertainty-oriented people take advantage of representational gaps and the diversity of thought worlds in the group to achieve certainty.

Proposition 7b. Certainty-oriented people add to further strengthening or widening of representational gaps.

Group prototype and identification. When one identifies with a group, they define themselves in terms of the defining characteristics of their group prototype that provides a guide for their behaviours (Hogg and Terry 2000, Reid and Hogg 2005). Identification with

the group is stronger when an individual can define the group prototype clearly and perceive that the prototype fits with the description the individual provides for herself/himself (Chattopadhyay et al. 2004). In multifunctional, multidisciplinary teams, because of the variety of functional domains, thought worlds, representations, and, potentially, cultures and demographics, defining a clear group prototype is harder. When the group is poorly defined, people construct group prototypes based on what they know about their own *self*; they infer group attributes from the attributes of the self that they assume are shared due to common group membership (Otten and Hogg 1999, Hogg 2000, cf. Cadinu and Rothbart 1996). This does not help them address representational gaps within the groups because, when they extend their own self to define the group's prototype, the group's prototype is bounded and limited by their own thought worlds. Such prototypes do not facilitate translation or conversation across the boundaries between the diverse thought worlds present in the group.

Self-categorisation theory argued that individuals perceive a clearer group prototype that fits with their perception of themselves when higher proportion of higher status individuals are present in the group; moreover, higher-status members construct social identities through '*assimilating the prototypes of relevant groups*' to which they belong and '*relevant groups may be defined by similarity*' (as discussed in Chattopadhyay et al. 2004). Lower status group members, instead, seem to prefer to target higher status groups for self-definition in certain circumstances. In cross-functional, diverse teams, we lack a method to define who could be high-status members and who could be low-status members, at least as far as I am aware. One of the ways to define this is by assuming those who contribute towards the group's goals in significant ways, have a high level of responsibilities and hold higher levels of informal power can be considered as higher status members. If so, the group prototype reflects the attributes of such individuals and lower status members would strive to relate to and associate with such individuals. This has implications for both collectivists and relationists.

As collectivists identify with the group prototype, they would strive to align their thought worlds, or their tasks and goals in the least, with those of the higher status individuals thus narrowing the representational gaps. On the other hand, relationists would try to develop interpersonal relationships with such higher status individuals as a means to achieve both

certainty and also self-enhancement and self-expansion. This would also lead to narrowing of goal discrepancies and thus representational gaps.

Proposition 7c. In the groups with a poorly defined prototype, collective identification would lead to the widening of representational gaps.

Proposition 7d. In the groups with a poorly defined prototype, those considered as high-status individuals reduce the representational gaps by making their representations optimal for the team.

Discussion

Representational gaps have been shown to cause severe problems in terms of information interpretation, task and move conflicts, and interpersonal and relational conflicts in multifunctional, multidisciplinary teams (Weingart et al. 2008, Sanderson 2012, Purser et al. 1992, Wiersema and Bantel 1992). Whether scholars have called them representational gaps (Weingart et al. 2008) or used other labels (Wiersema and Bantel 1992, Hambrick and Mason 1984, Walsh 1988, Waller et al. 1995), they seem to be consistent and permeable problems in several organisations relying on such teams or workgroups. How representational gaps could be resolved is an important question that has not been completely answered. Building on Cronin and Weingart's (2008) argument that one of the ways representational gaps can be resolved is through affective integration, I propose that such an affective integration can be better achieved if we understand the role social identity plays in cross-functional teams and organisations. This paper makes the main theoretical contributions to the literature on teams and groups, representational gaps, intra-team coordination and identity as well.

Representational gaps, diversity and team performance

Teams and groups are important in organisations for organisational actors to work together to achieve shared goals. However, the research on the performance of such teams and groups seem to indicate that they do not always succeed in achieving their goals and their performance often can be lower than expected, particularly in cross-functional or multicultural teams that are formed by members belonging to different functional domains, having varying levels of experience and expertise, and holding different thought worlds. These differences lead to representational gaps that partly explain the mixed support for the benefits of diversity and such cross-functional teams in organisations (Milliken et al. 1996,

Williams et al. 1998). They also explain why task conflict often negatively affect team coordination (De Dreu et al. 2003).

When representational gaps emerge among team members, it is important to increase cognitive and affective integration (Cronin and Weingart 2005). Affective integration requires the development of trust, respect and liking. They might not develop among team members either because of lack of time or because representational gaps inhibit the development of mutual trust and liking. Under such circumstances, management should be able to facilitate their development. Previous research has shown that team exercises can be used to develop trust (eg. Newstrom and Scannell 1980), or by promoting activities such as social gatherings to help develop liking among team members (Cronin and Weingart 2005). It might be possible to reduce the subgroup biases within the team (Lau and Murnighan 1998) and make other distinctions, such as team membership and shared goals, more salient (Cronin and Weingart 2005).

Besides affective integration, cognitive integration is important as well. Creative solutions often require integrating new knowledge that changes the problem representation (Ohlsson 1992). The ideal level of cognitive integration that reduces representational gaps is when each team member acquires information about her/his teammates' thought worlds, knowledge structures and representations. However, cognitive integration at such level is costly and in fact, could negate the purpose of cross-functional teams. The very reason such teams are formed is for the diversity to result in constructive and creative tensions among team members. When team members hold similar representations, unique solutions do not emerge. Thus, cognitive integration in cross-functional teams should reflect a shared recognition among team members that differences exist amongst their thought worlds and that these differences cause representational gaps. With this awareness, they would be less inclined to undermine others' views and blame others for not being considerate. This level of cognitive integration, i.e., an awareness of representational gaps and a motivation to overcome them, arise with affective integration.

Identification, motives and representational gaps

In this paper, I present identification as a means of bridging representational gaps. Specifically, I identify the four major motives that underlie one's definition of oneself in terms of teams and workgroups (collective identification) or in terms of their peers and team

members (relational identification). The four motives are the needs for self-enhancement, belongingness, self-expansion and uncertainty reduction. While the research has shown that they play an important role in how individuals define their self-concept or self-definition, the identity motives play a much more prominent role beyond merely shaping self-definitions. They, in fact, guide the behaviours, actions and thought worlds of individuals. Thus, they also manifest as root causes of representational gaps. Simply put, the same motives that define which identification becomes salient for an individual also shape the representations individuals hold. The extant literature has ignored this common thread that sheds light on the relationship between identification and representational gaps.

They also help us explain how identification affects representational gaps. Representational gaps directly affect teamwork by leading to the task, move and relational conflicts among team members. Resolving representational gaps is vital for the team members to work efficiently and identification plays an important role in doing so. In general, collective identification widens the representational gaps and relational identification bridges the representational gaps through the individual's pursuit of self-enhancement. Furthermore, relational identification even has behavioural-change effects and these effects become prominent the longer the team exists.

Collective identification widens representational gaps through the process of depersonalised belongingness where individuals seek out "similar" others. On the contrary, relational identification narrows representational gaps by encouraging individuals to engage in personalised belongingness pursuit and attempt to engage in dialogue across thought worlds. Through the motive of self-expansion, collective identification has little effect on representational gaps while those with more salient relational identification actively try to exploit representational gaps for self-expansion thus bridging them.

The uncertainty-reduction motive is a little more complicated; irrespective of whether individuals have more salient collective identification or relational identification, uncertainty-oriented individuals exploit and build on representational gaps to achieve certainty while certainty-oriented people widens representational gaps. In poorly defined groups where the group prototype is not clear, collective identification leads to widening of representational gaps. However, high-status members of the group can bridge the representational gaps when both collectivists and relationists try to associate or identify with them.

Finally, in uncertain or changing business environments, employees rely on the team to reduce subjective uncertainty (Marks and Lockyer 2005). As single role relationships with individual coworkers are unlikely to reduce uncertainty, the uncertainty reduction motive is strongly associated with collective identification rather than with relational identification, in general (Cooper and Thatcher 2010). When people discover that they disagree in terms of their beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behaviours with those whom they consider similar — those whom they categorise as members of the same group as themselves, uncertainty arises (Hogg 2000). Uncertainty reduces when similar others agree with them or they agree with similar others (eg. Abrams and Hogg 1990, Turner 1985). Thus, socially driven certainty exists in group membership rather than interindividual comparisons (Hogg 2000). Nevertheless, certainty can also be achieved by dyadic, interpersonal relationships. We all have experiences where we rely on someone to make sense of the world around us when the environment is uncertain. As such, future research can explore if relational identification can still help in achieving certainty through some mechanisms.

Implications for ongoing identity work

While identification is multifaceted and an inseparable part of any individual, it is, at the same time, not a static entity. Identification is an ongoing process where an individual continually try to define and redefine her/his self-definition and try to answer the question “*Who am I?*” (Kreiner et al. 2006). Moreover, the fact that multiple types of identification exist in an individual makes this process even more important. How an individual defines her/himself in terms of groups or relationships with significant others, which identifications become salient under different circumstances, and how those identifications guide her/his behaviours and actions; these are all important questions that need to be answered to understand representational gaps better. The research on identity work (Alvesson et al. 2008, Ibarra 1999, Snow and Anderson 1987, Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003, Watson 2008, Brown 2015) can help us further in answering these gaps.

The pursuit of the identification motives is what results in identity work. When individuals are tasked with challenging tasks, their needs for self-enhancement and self-expansion get activated. Opportunities that facilitate fulfilment of these needs offer space for them to redefine their identifications. At the same time, the uncertainty in the environment, unique challenges and hurdles, and potential relationships with new teammates trigger the

needs for belongingness and uncertainty management. Some people might not feel as if they belong anywhere; an individual who newly joined the organisation, who transferred between different entities or functional units, or who face some form of discrimination, can feel out of place. When she/he joins a new team, this membership offers them an opportunity to belong. At the same time, members of such teams, unless they have previously worked on very similar tasks with most of the same teammates, would find themselves facing uncertainty. This uncertainty stems from the very task of the team, i.e., the challenges, lack of required knowledge, unclear goals, and a lot of unknown variables that affect their pursuit of these goals. This uncertainty can also stem from the human component of the team, i.e., new people, differences in their views, opinions and agendas, and lack of trust and liking. How an individual approaches this uncertainty defines how she/he behaves with others.

Identification is a choice. Identities are not merely offered to individuals by organisations or someone else; they are neither simply chosen nor merely allocated but are results of identity work occurring at the boundary between domination and resistance (Mumby 1997, Trethewey 1999). Individuals often modify and redefine the identities available to them, or on offer to them in organisational contexts, or even contest them (Fleming and Spicer 2003). Brown (2015) argue that identities arise in a continuing dialogue between structure and agency and are '*improvised*' or '*crafted*' through identity work processes that are calculative, pragmatic, often emotionally charged, and generally social.

This process helps organisational actors accomplish both change and consistency. They accomplish change by '*adapting the narrative to accommodate the new episode*' while they accomplish consistency by looking back at the past episodes to determine naturally their current situation and actions (Ashforth et al. 2008). Thus, when an individual becomes a part of a multidisciplinary team, she/he tries to define her/his definition of self in two tandem ways: firstly, she/he will search for her/his past experiences of being a member of such teams and the challenges she/he had faced then; then, she/he will try to assess and make sense of the environment within the team, behaviours of the team members, and the tasks at hand, to try to refine and adapt her/his definition of the self to align with the identities around her/him.

Individuals are capable of engaging in anticipatory identity work when they join new teams. Over time, as individuals have gained experience and adapted their identity to include the central and distinctive attributes of a collective or role in their past, this emulation

accounts for anticipatory identification (Ashforth 2001). It imparts information regarding expectations of how to think, feel and act as a member of a collective or as a part of a relationship. This whole process would require a greater level of bricolage as the individuals combine their past with the present leading to highly unstable, fluid and tentative enactments initially which would lead to further sensemaking attempts. Multiple iterations of this cycle would ultimately lead to revisions to the individuals' identity narratives (see Ashforth et al. 2008). As such, we cannot expect an individual to resonate with either the collective identification or the relational identification as soon as she/he joins the team. Quite commonly, she/he would try different versions of identities (Ibarra 1999) and fail before they find an identity they feel comfortable with, which could be closer to the collective identity which would lead the individual to identify with the group as a whole and comfortably get integrated into the definition of the team or closer to the relational identity, perhaps with a few certain roles or individuals, which would lead the individual to develop and maintain strong interpersonal relationships with those roles or individuals in the team.

Furthermore, one type of identification does not become salient and stay as such throughout an individual's membership in a team. Making sense of the environment, trying on different selves and deciding on the appropriate identity is something that cannot be done instantly. As such, individuals engaging in identity work would face several failures in the beginning and only with time, and various strategies and mechanisms, do they succeed in finding the right social position for themselves (Ibarra 1999, Ashforth et al. 2008, Pratt et al. 2006, Beyer and Hannah 2002). For instance, if Natasha wants to expand her skill set by learning some engineering aspects of the car but Elon does not show interest in engaging in dialogue with her, the salience of relational identification rooted in the need for self-expansion and belongingness would decrease. If Sara reciprocates the kind of relationship Natasha is looking for, Natasha might find a feeling of belongingness in the relationship she has with Sara. This would again make Natasha's relational identification more salience.

Future research can build on longitudinal studies, both quantitative and qualitative, to capture how individuals go through the process of identity work in pursuing the underlying identity motives and how this dynamic process of identity work affects the representational gaps, conflicts and coordination within groups. For instance, decreased salience of relational identification would make Natasha less willing to understand Elon's, and perhaps even

other's, viewpoints while a reinforcement of its salience by Sara would make Natasha again considerate about other's, or at least Sara's, opinions. Moreover, future studies can observe if the type of identification individuals begin with when they join the team change over time or not thus exploring if the representational gaps have any effect on identity work. Increased tensions and conflicts between an individual and her/his team members could potentially disrupt any inclination she/he might have towards building interpersonal relationships with others. The relationship between identification and representational gaps is bidirectional, i.e., not only can identification widen or bridge representational gaps but if representational gaps lead to heightened tensions, they might negatively affect identification as well.

The role of time

Cross-functional teams are often formed for short periods of time when different members from different backgrounds come together, coordinate and work together to achieve a specific goal. Except for a cursory mention, the role played by time has been ignored in this paper. Identifying with the team as a whole and internalising the team's goals and priorities within one's self-definition is relatively quickly done in contrast to developing strong interpersonal relationships with team members and achieve stronger levels of relational identification which requires frequent interactions and extended time periods spent together. However, the nature of such cross-functional teams does not provide such an opportunity for the team members in most of the cases. As such, how can relational identification materialise and affect one's representations has not been touched upon in this paper.

However, when an individual joins a team, she/he would already possess a strong level of either collective or relational orientation which would then go on to drive the individual's actions and behaviours. As such, the individual would identify with the team or the team members based on the pre-existing identification compositions that start acting from the get-go. As time goes, this composition might change based on the individual's interactions and experiences with other team members. Future research needs to explore how these mechanisms work, i.e., how does identity gets reshaped as the time an individual spends as a member of a cross-functional team passes. This is similar to the question of how an individual engages in identity work but considering time as an important factor as well.

Empirical analysis

The theoretical arguments developed in this paper need to be empirically analysed and tested. Ideal empirical contexts include cross-functional, multidisciplinary teams where team members have not worked with each other before and where functional, cultural and gender diversity is salient. While experimental studies can help test the arguments developed in this paper in a much more controlled way, quantitative research based on cross-functional teams in organisations can shed light on the dynamics of representational gaps much clearly. There are various methods developed to measure a team's functional diversity (eg. self-reported measures by Attneave 1959, Boone and Hendriks 2009, intrapersonal functional diversity measures by Bunderson and Sutcliffe 2002, entropy-based diversity index by Ancona and Caldwell 1992 and Lovelace et al. 2001). Jehn (1995) had developed scales to measure task and interpersonal conflict among team members.

Weingart et al. (2008) used a Q-sort methodology to measure how different actors perceived the tasks differently in a product development process. This can be used to measure representational gaps by categorising how the team members perceive a certain task and then understanding how representational gaps vary across the tasks. Zhang et al. (2014) developed a 14-point scale to distinguish between relational and collective identification. It clearly defines collective and relational identification as a continuum, unlike the previous literature that argued that the two kinds of identification cannot be distinguished.

Specific methods to measure the four identity motives used in this paper exist too. Self-enhancement can be measured by the idiosyncratic-weighting method developed by Krueger (1998) and Sinha and Krueger (1998) or by the social relations model developed by Kwan et al. (2004). An alternative way of operationalising self-enhancement, called criterion discrepancy operationalisation, has been proposed and used as a better method (eg. John and Robins 1994, Paulhus 1998, Robins and Beer 2001, see Paulhus and Holden 2009 for a comparative review on different methods).

Self-expansion can be measured in various ways depending on how we define it. Probably the most famous is the Inclusion of Others in Self scale developed by Aron et al. (1992). It is the most common and flexible measure available. However, it is a self-reported measure and is susceptible to response bias. Alternative methods exist including response time me/not-me task used in Aron et al. (1991), one used in Agnew et al. (1998) based on

plural pronoun use, and the trait-rating attribution task (Aron et al. 1991, Sande et al. 1998). These alternate measures are implicit and thus eliminate self-report biases.

Belongingness can be measured by the General Belongingness Scale (Malone et al. 2012) or Workplace Belongingness Scale (Jena and Pradhan 2018). There are no scales to measure uncertainty or certainty orientation in the contexts of organisations and groups. Studies measuring uncertainty orientation used Weinstein's (1980) measure of unrealistic optimism combined with Sorrentino et al.'s (1992) measure of uncertainty orientation, a version of Hofstede's (1980) questionnaire (see Shuper et al. 2004).

Conclusion

The main contribution of the arguments in this paper was to explore how representational gaps in teams and workgroups can be resolved, or at least narrowed. This has been a topic of interest since long, whether scholars have called them representational gaps or used other labels, and identification offers a promising lens to understand how representational gaps can be resolved. Future research can verify the propositions made in this paper and add empirical validity. Furthermore, understanding how resolving representational gaps reduces conflicts and enables coordination within teams is important and thus future research can also use qualitative measures to explore how this mechanism unfolds.

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Conclusion

Coordination and conflicts are something that are unavoidable in organisations. As organisations are increasingly facing complex challenges and uncertain environment, employees need to coordinate with one another to resolve such challenges and achieve organisational goals. However, the very nature of the uncertain business environment and the interactions among employees also open up space for tensions and conflicts among them. As different individuals seek to possess same resources, occupy same position, pursue incompatible goals, and enact incompatible courses of action to do so, conflict emerges amongst them (North 1968). However, they still need to coordinate amongst themselves as well (Brown and Eisenhardt 1997, Majchrzak et al. 2012). This thesis started by asking '*How do organisational actors working together towards common objectives balance the paradox of coordination and conflicts?*'

The three papers in this thesis answered this question from three different perspectives. The first paper used a lens of organisational routines to show how routines, specifically the ostensive and performative aspects of the routines (Feldman and Pentland 2003), can act as both generative and resolution mechanisms of conflict. While the interdependencies among the tasks of different organisational actors and their contest for power and political agendas lead to disruptions in routines by causing extreme deviations between the ostensive and the performative, the very nature of deviations between the two aspects also opens up space for the resolution of these conflicts. Thus, the first paper of this thesis explored the paradox of coordination and conflicts from a process perspective where achieving coordination, emergence of conflicts, and resolution of conflicts are ongoing processes.

The second paper, building on Goffman's Impression Management (1949, 1978), looked at the behavioural aspects of coordination. While impression management has been shown to affect behaviours and perceptions in dyadic relationships (Leary and Kowalski 1990, Jones 1990), this paper looked at far wide effects of impression management on group dynamics. Specifically, it showed how impression management can lead to a decline in the psychological safety and motivation of employees thus deteriorating coordination potential. Furthermore, this paper also showed how individuals engaging in impression management as a process of their identity work aimed at enabling them achieve long term goals can in fact negatively affect their image. Thus, this paper showed that impression management goes

beyond dyadic relationships and influence coordination dynamics in groups and organisations.

The final paper focused more on conflicts by trying to resolve the representational gaps among the members of cross-functional teams (Cronin and Weingart 2007). It developed the theoretical framing for representational gaps and posited identification (Mael and Ashforth 2001) as a mechanism through which they can be resolved. By developing propositions on how the four motives of identification, the need for self-enhancement, belongingness, self-expansion, and uncertainty reduction, lead to widening or bridging of representational gaps, this paper showed that, in general, collective identification leads to widening of representational gaps and relational identification leads to bridging of representational gaps.

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