

Future Imperfect: Inter Pares, and the Natures of *Organization*

Inter Pares: Defining the UCaPP Organization

I also caution about seeing this as the ideal, amazing environment where we've learned how to do all these things that nobody has ever taught anybody in our society, right? (Jean-1-97).

Jean's caution notwithstanding, Inter Pares has learned to do many organizational things that have so far eluded the vast majority of contemporary organizations. Although there has been considerable discourse concerning more "democratic" forms of participatory management, and a wealth of admonitions for organizations to be more collaborative, Inter Pares has not only effected and sustained such changes, it is also quite explicit in its understanding of, and reflections on, these changes.

It was not always so: As Inter Pares grew from a start-up-sized organization of a handful of people, doubling its staff within a relatively short period during the early 1980s, it realized that the relatively conventional management structure it initially installed was not "true to its values of equality and parity, namely, where there would be parity in power and shared/equal responsibility and accountability" (Seydegart & Turcot, 2004, p. 3). Not dissimilar to the realizations that are driving organizational transformation at Unit 7, Sam relates the circumstances that provided similar impetus at Inter Pares:

I'd say it's only been since the mid-eighties that we identified as a feminist organization, where feminism became explicitly included and foregrounded within our political analysis, and our political identity. And that was initiated by the arrival of a new executive director who was a very strong feminist, and who ... identified the disparity that she

saw between the collaborative egalitarian model of work that was promoted for external relations, but that was not being followed internally, because there was a hierarchy within the organization. And that was an inconsistency that she felt was an important one. (Sam-1-97)

Sam describes how the gap between espoused and in-use theories, and incorporating what Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978) describe as double-loop learning, effected a fundamental change in organizational culture and practice. In what seems to be characteristic of a UCaPP organization, individual, personal values come together at Inter Pares to create a collaboratively constructed set of organizational values that inform every aspect of its operations and programming. Just as Loreen observes that any dysfunctional disparity between internal and external practice can be easily detected by Unit 7's clients (Loreen-1-21), Inter Pares understands the importance of "walking the talk," as Seydegart and Turcot describe:

For one, it gives Inter Pares added credibility and speaks to their integrity because they actually have actively pursued, in the very way they have structured and manage the organization, their vision of a more just and equitable world and their basic principles of equity and accountability. (Seydegart & Turcot, 2004, p. 31)

Inter Pares is founded fundamentally on the values held by the individual members—those beliefs that are to be promoted, preserved and protected. Sam describes the particularly Canadian¹ aspect to the universality of Inter Pares's values:

Our values of social justice and universal equality are found internationally. What makes us Canadian is recognizing that we hold a particular place in the world, which is often a place of privilege, and how we best use that so as to work against the systems that generate that privilege. (Sam-1-3)

¹ In subsequent correspondence, Sam points out that activists in other Northern countries who are part of North-South relations relate to their own countries in a similar manner.

Adhering to these values provides guidance to the organization's operational and program choices; they are reinforced throughout Inter Pares's management processes and preserved in its approaches to every aspect of its operation, from hiring through to its coalition and partnership engagements worldwide.

A Recipe for Emergent Organization

Jean describes the recipe for Inter Pares's success, and the high regard in which it is held among its partners:

Our methodology is building long-term relationships. ... We find people in various ways with whom we feel we can form a common cause around some various social justice issues, and they'll be issues arise depending on the context within which we're working in these places. And follow the relationships. So follow the place in the centre where both we feel that we can engage and we can contribute, and the people with whom we are building the relationship also feel that they can participate in this relationship, and they'll get something out of it, and it will be useful in the context in which they're working. (Jean-1-3)

There are some particularly interesting, if not instructive, aspects of Jean's description that may be applicable to organizations other than those involved in social justice endeavours. The first ingredient is to find people that share a commonality of cause around an issue or area of interest. This framing is clearly appropriate to a social justice context; it may be less clear – *but no less pertinent* – in any other organizational context. The common cause may, for example, revolve around an approach to a particular business or industry. Common cause goes beyond a specific instrumental purpose or objective which may yet to be determined. More likely, it reflects the intrinsic values of the invited participants and creates a commonality of motive force – impetus – within the context or environment.

Second, Jean suggests to “follow the relationship” or the “place in the centre where we both feel that we can engage and ... contribute.” Her selection of phrasing is particularly interesting in a way that will become apparent in a later chapter. For now, suffice it to say that the engagement or relationship connection is, ideally, balanced so that each member of the emerging organization participates in such a way that they receive “something ... useful in the context in which they’re working.” It is important to note that the “something useful” does not necessarily have to do with specific, named, preconceived objectives or goals; rather the focus is on what may be meaningful to the individual in the context.

But not every arbitrary group of people who happen to meet in common cause will form into even a loose coalition; nor will these initial relationships necessarily be able to sustain themselves and emerge into viable organizations. Jean describes what she refers to as the requisite “critical mass” necessary to creating an emergent organization, the diversity of voices and perspectives needed for appropriate perception, and the importance of developing a “social contract” that will enable the coalition to sustain:

We like to work in coalition, because, in fact we think the best way of getting things done is to be able to have a lot of people, building *critical mass*, having a lot of people working on the same thing ... going approximately in the same direction, but also, bringing many, many different perspectives. Many heads are better than one when you’re looking at this sort of thing. And actually, many kinds of voices, many ways of expressing things. *Divergent views at times* are all things that are important to have when you’re trying to achieve objectives around many of the things we work on.

So there’s the critical mass in the large sense that we want to always engage in coalition building, or network building, or even little pockets of things. But also within coalitions, when the social contract begins to

break down because there's turnover in this organization, or that organization has no idea of what's going on, what the history was, they're not really interested in that. *Social contract* begins to break down. You have to start saying, is this something we actually want to continue to be part of? Is this a useful thing for us to be doing? One of the ways that we would determine that is, is there a critical mass within this network or coalition of people with whom we can work to make sure that things can happen, that energy is emerging out of it, and it's not just sucking energy. And when I say critical mass, there has to be three like-minded parties—us, and at least two others who are *willing to at least ask the same questions, even if we're not coming up with the same answers*. (Jean-1-13; emphasis added)

In summation, an emergent organization will coalesce from a place of common cause when: (a) there are many people among multiple organizations with a common sense of purpose and volition to action; that (b) bring many perspectives and approaches while the entire emerging organization is “going in approximately the same direction”; while (c) assimilating many voices which are expressing ideas and approaches in diverse ways; so that (d) energy is being created and projected rather than merely being consumed.

In the processes of creating an emergent organization, divergent views are important, but always in the context of maintaining the social contract of the organization, that is, its embodied and enacted collective values contributed by each of the participant members. Jean notes that changing some of the participants may result in the social contract breaking down as the nature of the interactions change. If the resultant organization falls below a “critical mass” it will collapse. For Inter Pares, critical mass for an extra-organizational coalition is considered to be at least three participant member organizations – including itself – that are “like minded,” that is,

“willing to at least ask the same questions, even if we’re not coming up with the same answers” (Jean-1-13).

Like Unit 7, Inter Pares values diversity of opinion, multiple views and visions, and heterogeneous thinking, ideas, and approaches. Notably, this is in stark contrast to the BAH organization participants who variously insist on “speak[ing] with one voice” (Sean-1-29), or having members commit and not look back (Matt-1-25). It is not necessarily an alignment of objectives or goals that creates a successful coalition or emergent organization, or even agreement among the constituent members. Commonality of direction need be only “approximate”; more important is commonality of values, principles, cause, and, notably, *questions*.

Managing Consensus

One of Inter Pares’s key structural differences compared to other organizations is to decouple general management activities from being a distinct area of subject-matter expertise. Thus, having individual areas of managerial oversight – with nominal titles like Communications Director – is not mutually exclusive with a collaborative, co-management structure. Rather, in decoupling management functions from being distinct and separate operational responsibilities, each member of Inter Pares plays (at least) a dual role. An individual’s functional, or program, responsibility persists based on their “technical” knowledge, expertise, and qualifications; their management responsibilities, like being a member of the Coordinating Group (COG) or a reference group for co-worker evaluation, rotate among all members in Inter Pares’s co-management structure. None of the management responsibilities connote a special

status or class-defining hierarchy as in a BAH organization. Sam describes the structure as follows:

Inter Pares is a consensus-based organization. We're non-hierarchical, and we have a co-management structure in which all full-time staff are co-managers of the organization, with equal responsibility and equal salary. ... We have two main decision-making bodies, or instances in the organization. One is our monthly staff meeting, and the other is our monthly program meeting, and those are all-staff meetings. The staff meeting addresses institutional issues, and the program meeting addresses program-related issues related to our work outside of the institution as well as inside. And, there are about eight different committees as well that carry out our management functions. (Sam-1-21)

Operationally, the staff are organized into both geographic and thematic "clusters":

There's a geographic cluster for Asia, Africa, and Latin America. And there's also a fundraising cluster. And we also now have thematic clusters that [include] people from across the organization who are interested in particular issues, and pursuing that cross-geographically. And so there's migration, violence against women, and food sovereignty cluster. Oh, as well as a militarized commerce² cluster. (Sam-1-27)

The major management venue and coordinating structure is the all-staff meetings, notable for the fact that "it's not merely decisions that are taken at those meetings. It's also an important forum for *socializing information*" (Sam-1-27; emphasis added). How widely any particular bit of information is "socialized" is left to the judgement of the individual:

If it's a relatively light matter, then you might just consult with a few people who are around you, or people who might have a particular expertise on some issues, or you might discuss it within your cluster. Or, if you think that it's something, due to timing, or the fact that it might be controversial, or just due to the fact that everybody might

² Now renamed "economic justice."

want to know about it, then you would bring it either to the program or the staff meeting. (Sam-1-27)

The basis for exercising that judgement is not merely utilitarian or instrumental; nor are the criteria exclusively serving any external objective or goal. Rather, it is a judgement that incorporates the type of holistic knowing and contextual assessment that seems to be characteristic of a more-UCaPP organization.

The Co-ordinating Group serves the function of traditional middle-to-senior management:

COG. That's our nickname for our Coordinating Group, which is a committee that serves to keep an overall eye on things, and just to ensure that there aren't any things that are falling between the cracks. They keep track of workload and mental health issues, ... and generally keep their eye on the overall picture in terms of staffing and how things are going in that sense. So, of course, it's everybody's responsibility, but [COG is] a specific place for things to be discussed if, for instance, in the annual self-evaluations, that there are some worrying tendencies that were raised, the COG would discuss it to see if they would like to propose something. (Sam-1-23)

These managerial functions, such as human resources³ and general operations, are still required in this “non-hierarchical, cooperative, co-management” (Sam-1-21) model. Unlike a more traditional organization, they are performed collaboratively, with specific responsibilities not being vested in any one person. Similarly, Finance, Staff Operations, and Program Operations – the latter two being all-staff committees that meet monthly – confer collective responsibility among all members.

³ There is a separate Human Resources committee that focuses exclusively on developing human resources policy; administration and implementation of the policy remain with the COG. Any recommendations of either the HR or COG committees must be brought to an all-staff meeting to render a decision.

Inter Pares breaks from the fundamental premise of BAH organizations that draws from scientific management and administrative management theory: management functions are distinct areas of subject-matter expertise apart from the specific subject-content of the enterprise. A UCAPP organization like Inter Pares strives to create particular effects that are consistent with its values, sense of cause, and social contract among its various constituencies as its primary focus. The dual role for each participating individual is important for ensuring that subject matter-related activities and management activities are both contributing to bringing about the desired effects.

In most organizations, if there is a natural, intrinsic consensus among the members on a particular issue, or if the matter is of relatively low consequence, a decision is generally taken quickly—often retrospectively framed as being an example of a supposedly participatory or democratic process. The interesting distinctions become evident when an organization that espouses participatory decision-making confronts diverse opinions:

If there's more divergence of opinion than ordinary, then we might take longer and talk about it. And, try to get a sense of where people are coming from and to talk it through, until people felt like they could all agree and come to a decision. And sometimes, there are a few people who may still feel, by the end of the meeting, that they're not necessarily in accord. And so then, usually we would touch base with the particular people who had been voicing a minority opinion, and say, how do you feel about this, and are you okay with that. Sometimes, subsequently, we say we think consensus was rushed a bit, and we might revisit the topic. But usually, there's often a process of "trusting to the wisdom of the group." If I'm the only one who thinks that, and fourteen other people that I respect a lot think differently, well, I'm going to say that, in this case, I'll go along with it and stand behind this decision. But sometimes, you might think, you know, no, I'm really right about this and I'd like to continue the conversation. ... And

sometimes conversations just recur naturally on their own, whether because the topic comes up in a different form, or new colleagues arrive and the conversation just resurges naturally. So there are, over the length of one's tenure, the opportunity to talk about things more than once naturally on their own. (Sam-1-27)

The espoused processes are similar to those employed by Unit 7 and Organization F; the in-use processes appear to differ slightly, but in those differences are characteristic distinctions that reveal the locations of the respective organizations. With primary-purposeful organizations, their objective-driven intent to “move forward” seems to place a high value on making the decision, irrespective of whether the decision made is necessarily correct, effective, or appropriately understood in its complete context. There may be an emphasis on “convincing” dissenters as Aaron and Matt both report in Organization F, and “not looking back” on a decision once made. There may, as well, be an incentive to convey a sense of unanimity, expressed as “speaking with one voice” as in Organization M. Reflecting on the felt need for unanimity, it is almost ironic – but certainly telling – that the two most consensus-oriented organizations among my participants, Unit 7 and Inter Pares, explicitly invite, value, and incorporate dissent and diverse opinions. Difference informs a more reflective, heterogeneous process of consideration, especially when it comes to potentially contentious issues.

Among the various organizations, there is great similarity in form with respect to coordinating members' support for any given decision. Contemporary discourse that strongly advocates for more inclusiveness and participation in decision-making has clearly had an influence on espoused management practices across the

organizational spectrum from BAH to UCAPP. Nonetheless there are considerable differences in the underlying in-use theories of action at play.

We can use an analogous approach to understanding the differences in how the respective organizations scale. One could say that any organization scales to increase its effectiveness, conventionally thought of as either achieving more of its objectives, or increasing its ability to access and deploy resources (Campbell, 1977). In contrast, a UCAPP organizations such as Inter Pares scales by increasing the scope and domain of its intended *effects* through engagements with various partners and coalition members throughout the world, irrespective of other, more traditional measures of organizational effectiveness. Sam relates a lengthy anecdote about Inter Pares's role in facilitating an extended agricultural and agriculture-policy exchange between Canadian organic farmers and their counterparts in India (Sam-1-57/63). In my conversation with Sam, I asked, "If you approach the issue of scaling from, how do we scale in terms of our core values, the effects that we want to create in the world, it seems that you're scaling pretty darn well," (despite remaining at a headcount of fifteen people). Sam agrees and explains:

I'd say that is the way that we scale up. We work a lot in coalitions, and in collaboration with other organizations in trying to implicate more and more people into, and draw more and more actors into the work that we're focused on. And we try to include in that also, infusing our ideals and approaches as much as possible or appropriate. (Sam-1-106)

Thus, both BAH and UCAPP organizations scale to increase their effectiveness. With BAH organizations, effectiveness is measured in terms of owned or controlled resources that are deployed in the pursuit of defined objectives and goals. UCAPP organizations, it seems, feel a lesser need to control or own the means – including

people – that enable the creation and dissemination of its intended effects which are based in shared values and participation in common cause.

The divestiture of legitimated control that characterizes both Inter Pares, and to a somewhat lesser extent, Unit 7, is predicated on the dissemination of what is usually considered privileged knowledge. The value of socializing information can be neither underestimated nor overstated in a collaborative leadership environment that provides true empowerment—enabling every member to commit the organization to a particular tactical activity or strategic direction. Jean explains the value and seemingly paradoxical benefits of full attendance at the program meetings⁴, echoing many of Loreen’s observations:

We spend, some people think, an inordinate amount of time up front, having meetings with each other, talking to each other about things. In many organizations, for instance, the program meeting would be only the people directly involved in program. Here, it involves everybody. Actually, it’s really, really useful for many reasons. People who are directly involved in program can often bring perspective that programmers lose sight of. And, often, somebody who might be in fundraising, or donor relations, or doing the books, will learn something about the program because of the conversations, about the context, or about the analysis, that actually makes something that she’s just been asked to do make absolute sense. ... It makes the wheels turn easier, so you don’t have to come up with fifteen administrative checks and balances, and have somebody look over your shoulder as you’re trying to make every decision which, actually, is a waste of energy. (Jean-I-54)

The idea that involving everyone in all matters is more efficient over the long term is, at first blush, counter-intuitive. However, it creates unanimity in supporting

⁴ Program meetings concern geo-political and thematic operations activities in which Inter Pares is involved based on the various “clusters,” as opposed to management infrastructure issues that are the subject matter for the staff meetings. Both meetings are held monthly and include all members of Inter Pares.

decisions, eliminates undermining, and creates a shared understanding of the organization's present reality in each person's mind. Jean continues:

There's a whole bunch of fallout from having everybody there. One, is that you make a decision, and you know everybody's behind it. And nobody's going to be undermining it off in the corner, which I'm sure you've seen as well. Which [avoids] years-long battles going on, and nothing actually getting done. Or things getting done, and then getting undone, and then getting done again. We don't have that. (Jean-1-57)

This approach takes a longer-term, integrated, and holistic operational view of the organization, rather than a shorter-term, narrower-scope, instrumental view based in specific, individual concerns. In the larger context of the organization in relation to the interconnected multiplicity of its constituencies, this approach represents a form of environmental sensing and feedforward process with respect to bringing continually changing, diverse contexts, active issues, and pending decisions back to the organization. These help to reinforce the sense of common cause and vested commitment among all organizational members:

The other thing that happens is that after every meeting, I have more of a sense of where this organism is right now, and it's constantly evolving as people think, as people go through bad moods and then get out of them, or as we integrate new people and some people leave, it's always evolving. (Jean-1-57)

Sustaining a Complex Culture

The evolution of Inter Pares's direct membership is slow because of its very low turnover. Nonetheless, hiring and integration of new members is a thorough, and well thought-through process that is consistent not only with the organization's values, but also with preserving and sustaining those values. As Jean describes, "we go through a fairly rigorous hiring process, and we're looking for fit and aptitude. Sometimes we're

looking for a specific knowledge or expertise, but that’s actually more rare. The biggest priority is fit, aptitude, and political analysis” (Jean-1-59). She continues:

What I would mean by fit is, is this somebody who has an open mind? If one of their deeply held beliefs is challenged, are they going to just react, and just say, no, actually this is something I’m not even going to listen to? Or, are they somebody who will swallow hard and say, okay, let’s talk about that. Why do you think that? Because one the things that we need to be doing in this work more is to question what we’re doing. We’re in a business in which we actually disagree with most of the business, but we’re that forum. And so there’s all sorts of contradictions we’re living everyday. You have to have a strong tolerance for ambivalence, for ambiguity. You have to have a very strong *norte*, polar star, orientation, to be able to, to be able to keep following what you think, rather than what you dragged into, in the normal course of events in this biz. There’s a saying, author I don’t remember. Somebody, a French philosopher who I always love, [said] this: you have to remember to live the way you think, or you are in grave danger of ending up thinking the way you live⁵. (Jean-1-63)

Note the very strong connection suggested in Jean’s description of fit between one’s personal, lived values, and the way those values are expressed through one’s actions. This points to the necessity of aligning the values of the UCAPP organization as a whole with those of the individual members, rather than the other way around.

How does an organization actually ensure the correct “fit” in selecting new members? And, without a specific human resources “expert,” how does Inter Pares manage both the hiring process itself, and the necessary organizational learning that enables a consistent and sustainable hiring and integration process over time? Inter Pares’s hiring committee composition ensures sustainable learning in keeping with its co-management ethos: one person who would be working with the new hire, one who

⁵ From French author, Paul Bourget’s work, *Le Démon de midi*, “*Il faut vivre comme on pense, sans quoi l’on finira par penser comme on a vécu*”—translated approximately as, one must live the way one thinks or end up thinking the way one has lived.

has never been on the hiring committee before to provide experience, and one other who would be continually available throughout the process. After the typical short-list process of determining those who are technically qualified, articulate, (depending on the circumstances of the position) literate in both official languages, and presentable in initial interviews with the hiring committee, the top choice is invited to participate in an experience that is more initial acculturation than it is job interview:

Whoever we've recommended will be invited to come back for what we call the rounds, which is where they meet with all of the other colleagues. In the past, those were all one-on-one, two-hour interviews; we often pair up now, though people have the option of going on their own. So by then, there's only one person who's doing that rounds. They're not in competition with anyone else. And it's really an opportunity for people to explore whether we've made the right recommendation, and to get different perspectives on that person that would surface through multiple conversations. Also, for the potential incoming person, it's a chance for them to meet everybody, and to get a sense of whether this is a workplace they'd be interested in, and to have fifteen different views or facets of the organization... And also, aside from it being a more informed decision by having more information about that person, it's also a broadly shared decision. (Sam-1-39)

The extensive process of “rounds” is the beginning of acculturation into Inter Pares’s social contract and appreciation of its collective values and ethos. Not only is the collaborative, co-management structure described to the candidate; the potential new member actually participates in it as part of the hiring process. As Sam describes, “I think the process would really reveal to yourself, if you’re engaged with, and enthusiastic about this type of management model, because if you’re not, ... that could, I think, lead to some doubts” (Sam-1-47). Sam reflects on her own experience of the hiring process as a confirmation of her alignment with Inter Pares’s values:

When I first was invited to come for the rounds, I thought at first, wow, this seems really lengthy. But then, as an interviewee, when I was

participating in it, I thought this makes complete sense. I think that revealed my alignment with Inter Pares's views and philosophies on things. It seemed very logical that, if you're going to be working with everybody very collegially, you would have a chance to meet everybody, and vice versa. Especially in a non-hierarchical organization, you could all take a decision together to welcome a new member amongst you. (Sam-1-49)

Edgar Schein (1992) describes organizational culture in terms of processual learned behaviours in response to particular situations. At the third-level of culture in Schein's conception are the deep-seated and tacit cultural understandings that effect in-use theory of action, which "have become so taken for granted that ... behaviour based on any other premise [is] inconceivable" (p. 22). Despite the considerable time investment required, the rounds process as part of Inter Pares's hiring ritual helps to immediately inculcate potential new employees into that third-level of organizational culture. Inter Pares's program-operational effectiveness is completely intertwined with its value set expressed through its culture. Thus, such an extensive acculturation process – even before the new member is officially hired – is as important to the organization's ongoing sustainability as is, for instance, hiring individuals with the appropriate content knowledge.

Consistency and alignment of values with the organization's external constituencies is a similarly important consideration for a UCAPP organization like Inter Pares, as important as value alignment among its internal members. Sam describes the equivalently slow process of "getting to know" a new organization with which Inter Pares may form an alliance—a process quite analogous to "the rounds":

Other organizations, we've gotten to know over the years – often it can be through chance meetings with people at conferences who are working in countries, and we really like their politics, or what they're

doing... We start exploring collaborations, and perhaps might plan some things together, or invite them to conferences, and then after some time, explore whether adding in a financial element in terms of raising funds on their behalf, whether that makes sense given the relationship. (Sam-1-55)

Sam gives an example of an organization in Sudan, one of whose members met an Inter Pares member by happenstance in another forum. That led to a subsequent small collaboration in another group, that evolved into a larger, direct collaboration, that resulted in a stronger direct-support connection involving fundraising. Rather than being a specific, purposeful or mission-fulfilling goal or objective, bringing in a new organization as a coalition-member is “usually a very organic process” (Sam-1-55). The decision about how to proceed emerges as the nature of the relationships evolves, without a specific, pre-determined endpoint or decision timeframe.

The evaluation process at Inter Pares – especially for new colleagues – is continual, ongoing, and holistic, rather than being framed as a periodic, singular evaluative event *per se*. Evaluation is focused on individuals’ “larger institutional integration” rather than on strictly judging performance in the context of assessing whether the person was indeed the appropriate choice for the job—more checking-in as opposed to checking-up:

We have what we call a reference group for new colleagues when they come in that, for a year, they have a group of people that they can talk to, and who assume a responsibility for their larger institutional integration, rather than having it fall just upon the people who will work most immediately with that new person. So we might set up a reference group that might meet with that person to talk about their issues, and try to problem-solve with them.

We have the possibility of a staff evaluation, where a staff can say, I would like to go through an evaluation, and have people work through with me my workload issues. And sometimes, it’s the COG [that] does

what we call checking the ice, of just saying I think that so-and-so has been under a lot of strain lately, and why don't we recommend that they take a week of paid leave, or to suggest that we change the committee structure a bit to take them off a committee, or to encourage a particular redistribution of work to help them—whatever means people think might help a person through a particularly rough patch. (Sam-1-35)

Like many other organizations, Inter Pares has a probationary period of sorts to assess the performance of new members with respect to both professional and interpersonal competencies. However, as might be expected, the process of assessment is considerably different from that in conventional (especially BAH) organizations in intent, implementation, and effect, as Sam outlines:

When staff first come to Inter Pares, after the first six months, they write a self-evaluation. An evaluation committee is appointed to discuss any issues that might be raised. And so, staff write a description of their work, and what they've been doing, and how they feel about their learning and their integration process, and how they've been performing so far, and how things are going. I would say six to eight pages. And that is circulated to all staff, and every staff member in the co-management structure writes a written response. And so it's a really good opportunity for the new staff to get feedback on how they've been doing, and primarily that ends up being an affirmation and encouragement of how well they're doing so far...

If there have been any gaps in their learning that still haven't been covered, or any failure in the support systems to help them integrate, then those are identified and addressed, and any measures needed to address those are suggested and then monitored, usually either by the evaluation committee, or by that person's reference group. And the notes to the evaluation meeting are circulated so everybody knows this is how the issues that got flagged have been addressed. And everybody has a chance to read all of those responses—they're also circulated. And then after a year, the evaluation committee touches base again, and looks at where things were six months prior, and has there been resolution to any issues. (Sam-1-65)

Like Unit 7, Inter Pares's evaluations are extensive narratives, qualitative and contextually based. True to its collaborative practices throughout every other aspect of

the institution, even employee evaluation is collaborative, and founded on a notion of collective responsibility among all members—witness mention of yet to be covered “gaps in their learning” and “failure in the support systems.” The six-month self-evaluation process is framed as a collective reflection of the individual in relation to the other members and institution as a whole, and the other members in relation to the new person. Because everyone is both vested and implicated in the individual’s success, the new member feels safe to make honest reflections and to seek guidance.

The difference between this milestone and a typical “probationary period,” is significant. Conventionally during this period, a person’s position is tacitly, but most definitely, in constant jeopardy as their ongoing employment is contingent on a successful exit from probation—the language similarity to attaining freedom from penal incarceration is not lost on most people. On the contrary, in a UCAPP organization like Inter Pares, members assume an explicit, shared, mutual, and collaborative responsibility for a new member’s integration and personal success. At the first anniversary of a new member joining, there is, as Sam mentions, a subsequent review and something more:

We have a social contract that is the staff agreement, and even though, legally, they’re employed as full-time staff, it’s a bit of a ceremonial welcoming to say, you made it through your first year, way to go, and people are celebrated for having made it through their first year. (Sam-1-65)

Self-evaluations are not only for new members. Each year at Inter Pares’s annual retreat, members participate in a reflection-oriented self- and mutual-assessment. When compared to conventional annual review processes in more-BAH

organizations, the distinction between the respective cultures of checking-in at Inter Pares, versus the more traditional culture of checking-up, becomes clear:

Every member of the co-management structure writes a self-evaluation each summer in time for our fall retreat ... where we go away for a few days, and talk about institutional issues. ... Everybody has written a self-evaluation that's been circulated prior to that retreat, so you have a sense for where people are at in the work, how they're doing, what workload issues there are. People are also meant to talk about what they're doing, because sometimes there are certain aspects that, for whatever reason, haven't been socialized, and so it's a way to share what your big priorities were over the last year, and what you've been able to accomplish. ... People have ten to fifteen minutes to talk. So it's meant to be more of an existential level, you know, this is how I'm feeling in my life, and in my work so far, and these are the major things that have been affecting me, and this is how I'm doing generally. (Sam-1-67)

For the longer-serving members, there is a recently instituted reference-group evaluation, akin to that provided to new members, which occurs at least once every seven years. It is a combination of work evaluation, a systemic reflection on the whole person in relation to the holistic institutional environment, and a form of long-term, reflective life therapy. The reference group evaluation is a larger-scale, well-focused check-in that is substantially different from the typical annual review in BAH organizations. BAH annual reviews tend to concentrate on specific task-oriented goals and so-called growth or personal development objectives that are exclusively related to the instrumentality of the job. In Inter Pares's case, a reference group reflection includes and expands beyond the person's assigned job responsibilities to incorporate other aspects consistent with the organization's values and lived ethos.

Without the (sometimes not-so-tacit) threat of suitability for one's office as reported in a BAH environment such as Organization A, for instance, or a need to

rank individuals for either rivalrous, scarce rewards or punishments, this framing of reflective assessment via checking-in helps to enable a sense of safety in the evaluative space. Moreover, by eliminating the need for either defensiveness, retrospective justification, or objective validation, the organization creates its own opportunities for learning, improvement, and continual emergence towards greater effectiveness.

One additional significant aspect of living a culture of checking-in involves the institution itself as a distinct actant that participates in the annual retreat check-in:

This is more like a program check-in. ... There are questions around the institution. Do you feel there is anything at the institutional level that you need to bring to our attention? What can we do about it? Do you have proposals? So it's ... trying to get more at the assessment part of it, but understanding that it's not an evaluation—like getting a self-assessment and kind of a cultural, ambient assessment as well. (Jean-I-97)

Overall, these extensive, holistic, and rich, contextual reflection processes create a depth of common understanding among all members. That common understanding enables the level of coordination, socialization of knowledge, and trust that provide for empowered autonomy and agency for each individual in a ground of collective responsibility and mutual accountability. It represents an organizational embodiment of “managing the action/reflection polarity” (Laiken, 2002a).

As I have mentioned several times, a significant contributor to these processes is the practice of regular check-in. Integrally considering the reflexive effects created in the union of one's personal and work lives reinforces the characteristically UCAPP notion of work/life integration: “At the staff meetings, we have personal check-ins, where people talk about their personal life and [life] at work. It's a voluntary thing,

and people share elements that they feel might be affecting their work-life as they see fit” (Sam-1-27).

Integrating work and life, being aware of the social and psychological effects of such integration, and being able to articulate that intersection for one’s colleagues is expressed through the colloquial term, “where you’re at”:

Where you’re at. I mean that as a statement about one’s mental health, or psychic state, or if it’s with respect to workload, then how you’re feeling about that, how you’re managing that. Because we feel that part of responsible management is to ask for other people’s assistance when you feel like you’re overwhelmed, rather than foundering under the weight of your work, and having the work suffer. (Sam-1-29)

What is interesting and significantly different from more traditional environments, is that admitting that one is overwhelmed is not understood as a sign of weakness, inability, or incompetence in one’s responsibilities. If a culture is expressed in terms of collective responsibility and mutual accountability, an individual surfacing a state of feeling overwhelmed to his/her colleagues is consistent with being mutually accountable for the work getting done. Moreover, that overwhelmed individual acts on the sense of collective responsibility felt by all members to rectify the situation.

Individuals commonly feel an obligation to be individually accountable for their own psychological wellbeing, and take individual responsibility for remediation. However, in that more conventional environment, the manager faces an almost intractable conflict: s/he has a primary responsibility and individual accountability for specific objectives, goals, and outcomes for his/her department that are inevitably compromised by an individual’s psychological incapacity. Resolving that tension

humanistically in a primarily instrumental environment certainly depends on the individual humanity and willingness of the manager. However, that resolution tends not to scale in the individual's favour organizationally as, for example, Stan reports in Organization M, and several participants from Organization A similarly relate. Essentially, whatever individual humanity may exist between an individual and their direct superior in a BAH environment tends to scale to collective callousness the farther up the hierarchy the "resolution" originates.

In contrast, Sam describes how the tension between individual and collective responsibility is negotiated in a primary relationship-based view of people that characterizes a UCAPP organization:

I'd say there's a balance that happens. On one hand, we do have collective concern for our colleagues' mental health, but we also recognize that a certain onus lies on each individual for their own mental health, and to flag items for colleagues. And so sometimes that could be reviewed in hindsight, you know, to look back on a situation and to say, I think that as a group we should have stepped in more in that situation. And other times we might say, we've talked about this person's situation on a recurring basis, and ultimately they have to take responsibility... It's not enough to say as a group, well this person's a workaholic, and we've talked too much about it, and only they can address that. Inevitably it will have a negative impact on the work of the whole. And so collectively, we have to take steps to address it.
(Sam-1-31)

The Nature of Collaborative Leadership

Coordinating tactical and strategic activities, as well as the leadership process itself, are conflated in *Inter Pares* in a way that represents something more than relatively straightforward decision-making based on objectively considered criteria. This circumstance has to do with what Jean describes as "the right and responsibility"

that inheres in each member to commit the organization to a particular direction, especially with respect to external constituencies:

We are responsible for the organization, and we're all accountable to the organization. And, we all get benefit from the organization. So we work on the principle of parity. Parity of responsibility, accountability, obligation, as well as parity of what we get out of the organization. ... And I'm doing that as a manager, knowing that I am going to be the person who manages the fallout, if there is any. So while I know that I have the right and responsibility to do these things while I'm out, I also have the responsibility to ensure that I'm right— as right as I can get. And I understand my organization as well as I can, so that I can think about what the fallout might be. Whether it's fallout in terms of, was that a very effective thing to do, to, did it undermine something else that we're trying to do? Then, when I come back to the institution, it's the institution's obligation to support me. And, if there is fallout, if there's a problem, even if they think I was wrong, [they will] support me, and be able to figure out, okay, now what do we do?" (Jean-I-43).

In this short excerpt, Jean describes Inter Pares's collaborative leadership troika of individual autonomy and agency, collective responsibility, and mutual accountability. Collaborative leadership is situated in the context of a shared space of socialized knowledge and the common – that is, *integrative* – sense of understanding of institutional and subject-matter content, and the multiplicity of grounds that create meaning. Being true to Inter Pares's social contract, this sense of mutual understanding creates trust, from which the collective mind, positions, and approaches – “mostly approaches rather than positions” (Jean-I-37) – emerge.

One of the main, I don't know whether you'd call it methodology, probably modality is better, that we have is—we use the technical term, winging it. So, when we're here around the table, we do our analysis together. We understand our institution, we understand where we're coming from. When we engage in the conversations, we understand it better and better. That allows us to go out and be the executive director, each and every one of us. We can make decisions for our organization. (Jean-I-27)

Since each member of Inter Pares has the ability to commit the organization to external constituencies, leadership cannot be embodied in any one person. Rather, it is collaborative leadership-as-process. Collaborative leadership is neither anarchy nor simple consensus—both of which create a vacuum of leadership. Collaborative leadership and true individual empowerment do not suggest the absence of responsibility or accountability—it is quite the opposite, in fact. Notably, leadership at Inter Pares is constructed as a complex, emergent process, embodied within the entirety of the *organization-as-entity*, rather than in any one person. There is, as well, a notion of organizational mindfulness that transcends the individual’s specific subject-matter responsibility: “It is our responsibility as a co-manager here, to understand the organization, and to make sure we understand, and can represent the collective mind, the collective positions and approaches” (Jean-1-37). This concept in a conventional, BAH organization exists solely as part of the subject matter expertise of the professional managers in a manner consistent with scientific management’s division of labour.

When individual autonomy and agency goes wrong, when the organization becomes committed to a direction that is untenable, for instance, the immediate reaction is *not* to restrict members’ autonomy or institute procedures of so-called checks and balances. Jean recoils at the mere thought of such restrictions: “That would kill us. It would just kill us. It would kill the reason we’re here. And I actually had a visceral reaction when you said that!” (Jean-1-54). Rather, there is a collective reflection on, “at what point should this person have brought this back to the group? It needed to have been more socialized that it was, and people could have helped her

about raising some red flags on a few things” (Jean-1-53). And the group, collectively, extricates the institution from the errant decision.

Inter Pares delineates the diametric distinction between the BAH and UCaPP leadership and decision-making models. In a more-BAH organization, the time required to completely socialize information is seen as detracting from the efficiency required to expediently accomplish instrumental objectives. Individuals are socialized to perceive non-direct-task-related information as being generally irrelevant to their personal context—the task at hand. Hence, they are often unwilling or unable to assimilate it in the larger, organizational context, or beyond. Thus, decision-making is reserved for the elite few, relatively higher in the organizational hierarchy, whose specific subject-matter expertise is nominally the process of purposeful, objective-oriented decision-making.

Administrative and bureaucratic procedures become necessary to supply appropriate information to that small group of individuals, and to provide the organization with whatever checks and balances are necessary to ensure integrity in decision-making processes. These processes themselves often consume tremendous time and resources, sometimes overshadowing the time and effort required to actually accomplish the nominal task-at-hand in large bureaucracies. Additionally, they can become a locus of passive control as contentious or controversial issues disappear into the maw of bureaucratic and administrative procedure and review.

More-UCaPP organizations invest considerable time to socialize information and involve people who may not have a direct, purposeful reason for participating in

that information sharing. However, the extensive socializing of information means that each member can act relatively autonomously, assessing circumstances with a high degree of accuracy. This socialization enables the organization to move quickly in actually accomplishing the task-at-hand. Given the right organizational context – a social contract, for instance, to which all members are committed – leadership-embodied-as-process does not have an explicit and distinct control function that creates the necessity for explicit and distinct administrative controls. Therefore, the UCAPP organization requires neither the gatekeeper aspect of decision-making nor the consequential construct of leadership being embodied in an individual.

This is counter-intuitive—the idea that involving everyone in socializing all information and collectively making all decisions provide a more expedient and effective leadership approach overall. However, it creates unanimity in supporting decisions that are ultimately taken, and eliminates undermining, and undoing and redoing initiatives depending on internal organizational politics. Perhaps most important, it creates a sense in each person’s mind of “where this organism is right now, and it’s constantly evolving. ... I always have an ongoing touchstone about what I’m representing out in the world” (Jean-1-57).

Leadership-as-process enacted in Inter Pares is rooted in the practical reality of human dynamics which is far from utopian. There are circumstances in which individuals may assert themselves in what otherwise might appear to be a leadership role—in this, the appearance or *figure* seems to be no different than in a BAH organization. However, it is very different in *ground* – the context and intent – and therefore, in its *effect* compared to more conventional organizations:

It's more just the natural dynamics of leadership that happen in terms of people having greater authority based on their knowledge or expertise in one particular area, and people might turn to that, or defer to that. Or perhaps if you are a more timid person, you might not assert yourself as much as a more confident person. So there are the dynamics that play out everyday in life, but without the addition and entrenchment of it by having a hierarchical structure internally. And there's also a conscious reflection on power, in that we share institutional responsibility and privilege as much as we can. (Sam-1-97)

In other words, a UCaPP organizational philosophy, ethos, and management practices will not negate what Sam describes as the natural power dynamics that exist among people. By the same token, neither does the UCaPP organization reinforce or reward what are often problematic effects of those supposedly natural dynamics, nor those who would exploit them to their personal benefit. Irrespective of any other consideration, this aspect alone offers considerable hope to remediate many of the dysfunctions that have characterized the beginning of the 21st century—remnants of the 20th century's BAH heritage.

Finding the Natures of *Organization*

Change

In his book, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Manuel Castells (1996) describes bureaucracies as, “organizations for which the reproduction of their system of means becomes their main organizational goal” (p. 171). By continually reproducing and refining their procedures and processes, bureaucracies characteristically strive to achieve stability and predictability in their operations, a state of being “near equilibrium [where] we find repetitive phenomena and universal laws” (Capra, 1996, p. 182). The honing of their “system of means” to (ideally) achieve near-perfect

predictability stands in opposition to any sort of organizational richness, variety, or adaptive behaviours that would tend to effect organic or evolutionary change at the cost of their ability to accommodate the unexpected or exceptional.

Facing change

Thus, in the face of change, BAH organizations tend to favour systems and structures that have proven to be successful, irrespective of acknowledging possible changes in context. Organization A, for example, adheres to the “cargo cult” principle of adopting what are perceived to be so-called best practices as it acquires and assimilates new companies. Organization M, through its myriad formal, administrative procedures that are “more spelled out so it’s more rigid” (Mina-1-99), has become almost ossified over the past two decades. Those who might have been agents of change have been effectively blocked from doing anything other than “writing as directed” (Mary-1-67). Organization F, in transitioning to become more BAH, seeks the relative stability of functional stratification, that Jeff maintains is “a necessary evil” simply because it “is what we should do” (Jeff-1-253) compared to larger, more established organizations.

It is not that UCAPP organizations necessarily embrace change or deliberately seek change as a mandated process. Rather, Unit 7 and Inter Pares demonstrate how creating truly collaborative organizational dynamics enables change and adaptation to continually and organically emerge. Unit 7, for example, creates multiple venues in which people of various ranks from different functional areas of the organization collaborate so that new perceptions and voices are able to introduce new

understandings of the organization's greater environment. Inter Pares chooses to work primarily in coalition to accomplish the same effect.

Controlling change

Change is certainly managed in UCAPP organizations, although a better word might be *accommodated*—adapted to, provided for, held comfortably, and made suitable. The systems and structures, especially those that comprise the *culture change venue*, provide mechanisms whereby changes can become well-integrated into the organization's day-to-day operations. Inter Pares, for example, describes how the values espoused in its social contract provide foundational guidance for its growth, and how that growth is slow and organic. There is a strong emphasis on acculturation whether the growth occurs among its own membership or is manifest in the effects it enables among its various coalition partners. At each turn and at every level, UCAPP organizations continually reflect on the advisability of both pursuing new directions and practices, and continuing old ones. The key question, as Unit 7 frames it, is, “for the sake of why?” (Loreen-1-9). New information and environmental influences that might spark change are invited from all quarters and socialized widely—change occurs where it occurs, without regard for the rank or status of the change agent.

BAH organizations create mechanisms that emphasize control and specific task focus which limit individuals' interest and willingness to step beyond their bounds, save to achieve a direct, extrinsic benefit. As seen in Organizations M and A, and to an increasing extent, Organization F, members are strongly socialized to accept the status quo – the way things are done are the way things *should* be done – with

questioning, challenges, and dissent strongly (if sometimes tacitly) discouraged. Changes that do occur come from the top of the hierarchy, limited to a privileged cohort within the organization specifically charged with being the “thinkers.” Consequently, knowledge exchange, particularly in the form of feedback and feedforward loops, is equally limited to those whose instrumental task it is to set direction, make decisions, and initiate change.

Coordination

Teamwork vs. collaboration

Teamwork, in the discursive sense of this analysis, is consistent with a primary-purposeful organization; hence, every member of the team is selected by virtue of what they can contribute based on a pre-determined understanding of the team’s requirements. It is based on the assumption that information and capabilities in a bureaucracy are fragmented among its component roles, and that the way to ensure complete information being brought to bear on a particular initiative is to identify and coordinate those necessary components.

The sports-originated team metaphor suggests a “captain,” a legitimated leader who assumes overall responsibility (that is, responsibility “over all”) for the team’s assigned objective, goal, or *purpose*. It is taken as axiomatic in a BAH environment that the right team, once assembled, with everyone delivering on their required responsibilities, will produce the desired outcome. Each team member works independently on their assigned tasks which are themselves *interdependent* so as to provide a sense of cohesiveness among the fragmented, individual, subtask objectives.

If an individual fails in their assigned task, s/he is personally accountable for that failure to the BAH-style leader who him- or herself is accountable for the team's failure to those higher in the hierarchy.

In a sense, primary-purposeful teamwork hearkens to the age-old story that recounts, “for the want of a nail,” the shoe, the horse, the rider, the battle, and the kingdom were all lost. There is a sequential, linear, (inter)dependency that lies at the heart of purposeful teamwork, as reported by various members of Organizations M, A, and F. Teamwork in this sense can be considered to be the fundamental unit of BAH coordination, and comprises its fundamental vulnerability. Not only do primary-purposeful teams possess many individual and generally uncontrollable points of failure. The extreme functional and linear-process foci do not necessarily ensure that the team's product will actually produce or contribute to the intended ultimate organizational result.

Collaboration recognizes that there is much of which any *organization* is unaware. As I mentioned earlier, collaboration recognizes the limitations of knowledge, assessment, predictability, and anticipation of future need—in short, *organization* does not, and cannot, know what it does not know. Thus, collaboration depends on individuals having the agency to involve themselves in widely publicized initiatives, and the autonomy to undertake self-identified-as-necessary tasks. Individual autonomy and agency can only be effective when it is balanced by a sense of collective responsibility among the members who collaborate. Jean from Inter Pares identifies this as “parity—parity of responsibility, accountability, obligation” (Jean-1-43) among *organization* and its members. Being collectively responsible – one cannot

succeed unless all succeed – means that the members of a collaboration viscerally experience mutually accountability among one another for the success or failure of the whole.

Game design at Unit 7, for instance, begins by inviting those throughout the organization who feel they can contribute to, or have a stake in the outcome of an initiative, to participate. Collaboration depends on a type of over-involvement that seeks to cover more than the initial, nominal, expected requirements, as those cannot precisely be known. Initiatives that have worked exceptionally well at Unit 7 – its relationship with Account R or the B-Roll Diabetes Initiative – are highly collaborative, each one demonstrating the three characteristics of individual autonomy and agency, collective responsibility, and mutual accountability. Collaboration provides more-than-required resources in a non-rivalrous environment where job competency is not considered an exclusive or limited commodity. Those endeavours that are more of a struggle for Unit 7 – the Workflow Process game design whose challenges exemplify the importance of creating a culture change venue – struggle because they retain some artefacts of dysfunctional teamwork mentality among some of the members. Redundancy, even if by design or self-election, suggests a lack of competency or ability to perform in those who believe they hold individual responsibility in a primary-purposeful team context. What is perceived as a threat in such a team is an asset in a collaboration. As Loreen reminds us, collaboration “is a very misunderstood way of working” (Loreen-1-95).

Checking-up vs. checking-in

The differences between BAH and UCAPP ways of working give rise to differences in the methods used to ensure that tasks will be accomplished. When a leader assumes individual responsibility for the success of his or her team, there is the concomitant responsibility to “make sure”: “The discipline of checking-in is different from the discipline of making sure. So, the making sure will have a pretty strong positioning of, I’m pretty sure you haven’t so I’m just here to make sure” (Loreen-1-281). A BAH organization’s control imperative and interdependent responsibility structure necessitate checking-up, making sure that no metaphorical nails are lost.

In contrast, UCAPP collective responsibility and mutual accountability create a different imperative—one in which all members take on an authentic concern for each other’s success via checking-in. The concern is genuinely holistic in nature, as Sam explains:

It is meant to be about how you’re feeling about your role in the organization, that’s certainly part of it. But how that has manifested in your work. Do you feel that you’re being effective ... like your talents are being used in a way that are the most effective and productive, and do you see any challenges? (Sam-1-73)

Because checking-in originates in mutual accountability rather than in judgement or evaluation, there is no incentive to obscure problems or difficulties. It thus becomes a more effective way of ensuring ongoing and appropriate coordination throughout the organization.

Alignments

Matt clearly describes how he encourages competent, independent agents to act, while he “generally *makes sure* that their activities are aligned with those of the organization as a whole” (Matt-1-7), that is, “aligned with what we’re trying to get done” (Matt-1-95). BAH organizations, like Organization A, functionally decompose overarching objectives at each successive hierarchical level so that, to a person, individual goals and tasks are aligned with those of the organization. This model extends to the organization’s nominal values; individuals are asked to subscribe and conform to organizational values, sometimes even in their private lives (Adam-2-38). When one’s own values deviate from those expressed by the organization (or perceived by outsiders), an individual may hide their organizational association in social conversation, for example (Stan-1-144).

UCaPP organizations seek to align organizational values with those of their members. Jean expresses this as “be[ing] able to keep following what you think, rather than what you’re dragged into” (Jean-1-63), recounting Bourget’s warning about the danger of “thinking the way you live” (Jean-1-63). There is, of course, a strong connection between one’s personal, lived values and the way those values are expressed through one’s actions. By adopting UCaPP alignment of values, task coordination becomes less about control and checking-up, and more about enabling autonomous agency among members who collectively know what should be done.

Evaluation

Assessment

Setting and meeting objectives is considered important for organizational effectiveness. However, precisely how those objectives are set depends on how one frames *effectiveness*, a topic into which the thesis will delve in a subsequent chapter. BAH organizations set objectives that are quantifiable and (nominally) achievable. However, as we have seen among all the BAH organizations, quantifiable and achievable objectives do not necessarily reflect achievement of the desired, intended, or even nominal outcomes or effects. Stan, for example, reports several instances of metrics designed to demonstrate the organization's success, without actually achieving the nominal public policy objectives. And Aaron claims that the metric used to measure Organization F's key success criterion – customer satisfaction – is little more than a “meaningless statistic that we've used to puff out our chests and feel good about ourselves” (Aaron-2-68).

On the other hand, UCAPP organizations create objectives that create visibility for the intended effects and provide an ongoing reflection on the organization's values in action. Assessments are qualitative, subjective, and highly contextualized; they are therefore neither easy nor quick to accomplish. Although there are specific standards for performance – Unit 7, for instance, creates both a “satisfactory and a wow area for each item that you [promise]” (Cindy-1-172) – UCAPP assessments are as much about contribution to the environment as contribution to results.

Particularly as I have framed *organization* as a distinct actant – an autonomous entity, agent or actor that has behaviours, characteristics, and externally perceived intent distinct from those of its members – any given organization can and *should* be considered for periodic reflective assessment for itself. One cannot simply take as axiomatic, for instance, the proposition that a BAH organization is always correct in its often arbitrary selection of goals and objectives. Thus, individual goals and objectives derived via functional decomposition may as well be contestable. Indeed, in a culture of inquiry characteristic of UCAPP organizations, individuals’ “promises” (Unit 7) or “workload issues” (Inter Pares) must always be negotiated and reasonably contested. For Inter Pares in particular, the annual review provides the opportunity for a “cultural ambient assessment” and “program check-in” (Jean-1-95) for the institution as an entity in itself.

The fundamental evaluative concern of the UCAPP organization takes on a significantly different character from that of the typical BAH organization. In general, it asks a very different sort of question based in reciprocation or “parity”: In what ways did the individual contribute to enabling and creating the organization’s intended effects, and how well did the organization respond?

Reward and recognition

Reward and recognition are often constructed as rivalrous resources based on the premise of there being beneficial motivational value in creating internal competition among members of a BAH organization. However, the tacit but clear message received by organization members is that they are always and continually

competing for their respective offices unless one has job security via a collective agreement, tenure, or other, similar arrangement. Teamwork, for example, becomes necessary in this environment, beyond its instrumentality for coordination, to establish concertive control (Barker, 1993) among its members in the absence of legitimated and explicit coercion.

Given that the UCAPP organization does not privilege one group or class over another, the espoused concept of personal success only being achievable through group success permeates among all organization members, irrespective of their nominal position, role, or tenure with the organization. When considering BAH organizations, however, the converse is perhaps more important: so-called collaborative efforts or teamwork that might be expected or encouraged among the workers cannot be contradicted by the organization's formal or informal evaluation, compensation, and recognition systems that are typically based on rivalrous rewards.

The collaborative culture of a UCAPP organization decouples reward and status from contribution as much as is feasible in the organization's practical industry or sector context. In a strong UCAPP environment, organization members contribute not only because it aligns with their personal values to do so, but because they *feel* valued in doing so. As Loreen reminds us, "give me a reason ... that is meaningful to me, that I know I'm making a contribution; I'm in" (Loreen-1-203).

Impetus

Every organization has an intrinsic motive force – the ideation which provides the impetus for the organization to move. For many organizations, impetus is

expressed as a mission statement that nominally captures the organization's overall goals and objectives. For others – especially UCAPP organizations – impetus emerges from its members' deeply held values that unify in the body of the organization. Regardless of its origin, impetus defines the processes of direction-setting and decision-making, and therefore informs and provides guidance to the mechanisms of management throughout the organization.

Christening a new leader-ship

Although they emerged as separate categories in this analysis, coordination and impetus are traditionally conflated in the role of “leader” and in the embodied-leadership persona. This conflation only applies in a BAH context; UCAPP organizations separate the coordination-oriented managerial functions that are enacted among various structures and behaviours (e.g., game design at Unit 7, or the practice of checking-in), from the creation and maintenance of impetus *per se* that tends to be emergent from individual and collective values. In contrast, BAH organizations spend considerable time and effort concerned with extrinsic motivation – usually closely integrated with evaluation processes – since the responsibility for impetus is tightly held, not coincidentally by the same “leaders” who control coordination.

By virtue of its ubiquity among BAH organizations, a leader's coercive power via reward and punishment seems to be regarded as the most effective people motivator. In contrast, UCAPP organizations favour referent leadership that emerges organically from among a collaboration or coalition. As Cindy insists, at Unit 7, “all

the other people in the group have to agree that you can lead and own it” (Cindy-1-15).

In a BAH organization, the leader atop the hierarchy has the job of knowing the direction and destination of the organization. S/he therefore has the responsibility of providing the necessary and appropriate impetus, both collectively and individually, through delegated authority via administrative procedures. Because BAH organizations coordinate activities by aligning individual task performance with overall objectives, the leader usually deems it important to align people’s directions and destinations with those of the organization. That felt responsibility often necessitates convincing dissenters to either fall in line (Organization A), or give up their dissent (Organization F).

In the collaborative environment characteristic of UCAPP organizations, diverse meaning-making contexts from which dissenting opinions emerge are well-explored and carefully considered. Inter Pares recognizes, for instance, that there is considerable value in being “willing to at least ask the same questions, even if we’re not coming up with the same answers” (Jean-1-13). The BAH view on contentious issues is that “you can disagree about stuff, but then once you decide to commit to it, you commit to it and you don’t look back” (Matt-1-25). In a more-UCAPP organization like Inter Pares, for instance, “the opportunity to talk about things more than once [occurs] naturally on their own” (Sam-1-27). BAH organizations consider leadership to be embodied in a person; UCAPP organizations consider leadership to be embodied in emergent, socializing processes. I will return to this topic in greater depth in the next chapter.

Sharing a vision

Despite the figure-similarity in how “shared vision” is often expressed among very different organizations, the intent or effect of such expression is vastly different between UCAPP organizations like Unit 7 and Inter Pares, and traditionally managed, BAH organizations. Many organizations refer to constructing a shared vision among their members. Matt, for instance describes, “Organization F as a relatively organic organization, where there’s a series of small insights that lead one to a path, ... and people work towards a shared vision of things” (Matt-1-13). As extensively described by Gee, Hull, and Lankshear (1996), contemporary, “fast capitalist” organizations strive to instill a common, corporate vision among all of their employees with the intention that each individual will, to a greater or lesser extent, give over their own identity and values, and assume those of the organization—even extending into their private lives, as reported by both Adam and Karen (Organization A). In contemporary BAH organizations, that process of vision colonization tends to be manipulative, occasionally to the point of becoming anti-humanistic, according to the cited authors and many among the BAH research participants.

In Inter Pares, members also have a mutually shared vision, one that emerges from shared values and deeply held principles. In fact, Inter Pares’s hiring process specifically selects for those commonalities, while the co-management process reinforces both vision and values in day-to-day operations. Ironically, the intent of expressing a vision is identical for both BAH and UCAPP organizations: one shared vision to be held among all members and the organization itself. The respective mechanisms for achieving that common vision, of course, could not be more

dissimilar. A BAH organization develops its vision – often among a number of elite, top-level members – and offers it as a *fait accompli* for the rest of the membership to adopt as their own. In contrast, Sam describes the consequence of a UCAPP vision process, emergent from its common values, as it is accomplished at Inter Pares:

I'm completely biased, but I would argue that we're far more successful because it is truly a shared vision. It's not merely handing over an individual vision, it's because there are inimical interests within that structure. You know, there's class opposition, there's this contradiction of a company wanting to get as much as it can out of its workers, whereas that's not the case here, so it allows for people to truly participate in owning and contributing to that vision. (Sam-1-81)

Power Dynamics

A tale of two CEOs

Loreen and Matt each play the role of legitimate leader in organizations that are in transition, from BAH to UCAPP, and vice versa, respectively. They each regard themselves as responsible for creating an enabling environment for their respective organization. Unlike Matt, Loreen does not see that task as a sole responsibility. “It's not all about what I create for them. It's also about how they help create it” (Loreen-1-5). In Unit 7's game design, there is an authentic empowerment process at work in which Loreen cedes a great deal of control to those who would, in a traditional organization, have very little influence, let alone autonomy, to create aspects of that environment.

There may be considerable similarity between the two organization leaders' description of their roles. But, there is also a key distinction that reflects the considerable philosophical difference between them, and between BAH and UCAPP

organizations, with respect to power. As I previously mentioned, Matt “set[s] the course ... generally make[s] sure that their activities are aligned with those of the organization as a whole” (Matt-1-7). He sees himself as being singularly responsible for creating an environment that will facilitate the requisite instrumentality to accomplish the organization’s objectives which are, in fact, Matt’s objectives (Aaron-1-115, 2-24/28; Jeff-1-51). Loreen sees her exercise of control in terms of creating an environment in which people collectively participate, and are mutually responsible for both their own development and for the ongoing facilitation and development of the environment.

As a legitimated leader in a UCAPP organization invites multiple individuals to create an environment for collective participation, there is a deep, lived understanding of mutual responsibility for individual and collective development that pervades the culture. Leadership, as previously mentioned, transforms to become an embodied process in a UCAPP organization. It not only *can* be collaborative, it *must* be collaborative, even as it is enabled and facilitated by the nominal or legitimated leader.

Equivalently, in a BAH organization, leadership *must* be embodied in an individual who, in the best instance, embraces an almost parental caring for those who inhabit his/her environment, designed with as much cognitive, emotional, and social intelligence as can be mustered. At its worst, of course, paternalistic care reverses into a not-so-benign dictatorship, with ambitions for a totalitarian iron grip of control over employees, customers, suppliers, and its market as a whole. Loreen herself admits that the precursor organization to Unit 7 resembled this worst case: “We very much had

an abrasive command and control way of running the business. There was a lot of induced fear in the environment” (Loreen-1-17).

As legitimated leaders in their respective organizations, both Matt in Organization F and Loreen in Unit 7 possess, and have exercised, an absolute veto and exclusive decision power. Their reactions reveal key differences in their fundamental philosophies with respect to: creating systems of authentic collaboration; enabling mechanisms that tend to divest absolute power rather than concentrating it in a privileged group; and encouraging a culture of inquiry rather than a culture of advocacy for the leader’s point of view. Loreen reserves her veto and laments having to use it. Matt sees his veto as his legitimate and exclusive right as the founder of the organization.

Knowledge is power

Whether power is legitimated through rank status, or conveyed through knowledge authority, BAH organizations consider it acceptable, if not essential, to establish and maintain power and control relationships among their members. This becomes especially true when a hierarchy of privileged and legitimated knowledge is supported by the discourse of the so-called knowledge economy. For environments in which exercising overt class privilege might be deemed unacceptable, creating knowledge hierarchies is considered quite permissible, without necessarily probing how the processes that legitimate specifically privileged knowledge simply remap the prior class hierarchy. Unanimously in the BAH participant organization, academic

credentials convey status and grant power through legitimizing an individual's contribution (or conversely, delegitimizing it sans credentials).

The working assumption in Unit 7 is that there is considerable potential value and insight to be gained from less formally qualified members; hence they are granted considerable power through their invited influence. Analogously, Inter Pares values indigenous knowledge in the context of international development, and does not privilege Western knowledge authority as do many other international development agencies. UCAPP organizations remain true to their ethos of eschewing power and status hierarchies, be they organizationally structural or constructed by the authority proxy of privileged knowledge.

Sense-making

BAH organizations' dependence on systems and procedures to minimize discretionary judgement means that their instrumentation must necessarily focus on verifying the correctness of those systems and procedures. As I discussed in an earlier chapter, Karl Weick suggests that the generally accepted and entrenched justification for any action or social behaviour reflects the sense that people have made of the world. It is that justification, and its supporting logic, that is given preference above any other. Thus, metrics that validate existing systems – both process systems and systems of meaning – inform the sense-making apparatus in BAH organizations as the interpreted environment increasingly resembles the preconceptions from which the systems and associated metrics emerged (2001, p. 15-23).

Thus, for example, Organization M creates budget-vs.-actual bonus targets for managers that track a minute fraction of a year's fiscal management, and chooses to report program fulfilment based on intentions rather than actual delivery (Stan-1-94/39). Organization A members almost unanimously report that there is no *post hoc* review of business cases once a justified initiative has been implemented to verify whether the nominal benefits were actually realized. And Organization F's CEO simply maintains that, "you commit to [a plan] and you don't look back" (Matt-1-25). This defensive-routine (Argyris, 1994) approach to sense-making that seems to be rife throughout the corporate world and public sector precludes double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1996), that would involve submitting underlying assumptions to critical scrutiny, and questioning the validity of plans and objectives. As Stan observes:

In the government when they do performance measurement, they do it just to get the funding. And what happens, say two or three years from now, no one goes back and looks at that performance measurement, and [asks], what happened? There's no continuity. (Stan-1-47)

One of the fundamental values in UCaPP organizations is encouraging a culture of inquiry that supports comprehensive sense-making. Loreen frames this as reflexively considering "for the sake of why" a particular initiative is being undertaken or continued. Aaron succinctly summarizes the simple sense-making philosophy underlying a culture of inquiry: "if nobody's asking questions, that implies to me that there's not enough thinking being done" (Aaron-2-20).

More than questioning, UCaPP organizations embrace complex, non-deterministic processes that inform their sense-making and strategic direction. They

incorporate diverse voices and views, as expressed by both Unit 7 and Inter Pares. In the latter case, Jean describes how they approach making sense of complex issues:

We start from where we are. There's a history. There's a present. And, there is, I think, versions of futures that we then have to decide among. But it is based on our history, and our present. ... Some ideas gain traction and some ideas don't so much. It's based on a lot of people here who do a fair amount of reading, or are themselves involved in various policy or political organizations, or whatever. (Jean-1-15)

UCaPP organizations value heterogeneous and diverse participation to enable the widest scope of information and insights being brought to bear on an issue. In contrast, BAH organizations reserve participation in organizational sense-making as part of the instrumental role-contribution of an elite few; such participation is generally considered an indicator of one's privileged status and rank.

View of People

One of Henri Fayol's (1949) management principles speaks to placing organizational concerns above those of the individual. In the eyes of a BAH organization, people are relatively interchangeable and replaceable so long as the requisite qualifications of the office are met. The functional *bureau* in a bureaucracy sustains, irrespective of the individual occupant, as does the organization as a whole. Multiple offices or functions can be combined or divided in a variety of configurations with no deleterious effect. In fact, because of supposed (or predicted via assumptive, deterministic sense-making) efficiencies and synergies, such combination or division of functions are typically framed as being beneficial to the organization. Any particular individual is as irrelevant to the overall operation of an organization as a specific,

replaceable machine part is to the factory machine. People are considered as instrumental by a BAH organization.

UCaPP organizations recognize that membership changes in an organization have the potential to damage the “social contract” that binds, and creates values-based cohesion. As Jean states, “when the social contract begins to break down because there’s turnover in this organization, or that organization ... you have to start saying, is this something we actually want to continue to be part of?” (Jean-1-13). Unit 7 realizes that there is more to be considered than a person’s instrumental contribution to an organization’s production—their contribution to, or undermining of, the cultural environment is a paramount consideration of that organization’s CEO.

The instrumentality with which BAH organizations regard their people leads to a fascinating phenomenon. The experience of some in Organization M notwithstanding, participants in BAH organizations report that their immediate supervisors seem to care – express warm, human feelings and emotions – towards their direct subordinates. However, when considered as a group by managers several levels higher in the hierarchy, this individual humanity scales to collective callousness: “Employment at will, and we own you. You do what you need to get done to keep the company going,” according to Adam (-2-70). Every other BAH-organization participant agrees.

UCaPP organizations tend to scale individual humanity consistently throughout the organization, including up through the ranks of any nominal hierarchy. The caring is reciprocated, especially by those who have not yet become

jaded by the working world, as reported in Unit 7. Work/life balance – that Loreen identifies as a baby-boomer concept, comparing the amount of time one spends away from work relative to time spent on the job – flips in a UCaPP organization to become a consideration of work/life *integration*. The more an organization demonstrates that it cares about an individual and her/his contributions, the higher priority an organization's needs will garner in that individual's integrated life.

The problem with softball

The question of work/life balance compared to work/life integration manifests in another, interesting way in UCaPP organizations with respect to creating strong, affective connections among members. Often, venturing outside the workplace to have fun, and thereby creating positive affective connections among participants, is a characteristic behaviour of BAH organizations attempting to rebalance the often out-of-balance, work/life balance. Creating opportunities for social engagement is an important catalyst for healthy interpersonal dynamics. However, creating such opportunities in a way that is not holistically integrated into the work environment and the organizational culture reinforces the notion that one's work is distinct from one's life. To coin a phrase, what happens in Vegas may well stay in Vegas; to a large extent, what happens in the infield (or even the outfield) stays out in the field and rarely translates to the office in a way that effects cultural transformation and the healing of organizational dysfunctions.

In contrast, Unit 7's Frances reports on how the B-Roll Diabetes Initiative created strong social and affective connections among members in a way that is well-integrated within the context of the organization's business operations.

As a department, I was feeling like we were isolated from other departments, and it was hard to build bridges. What's happened with this initiative is, we created a kind of a research lab that everybody in the agency was invited to take part in for fourteen weeks, to walk in the shoes of a diabetic—a type-2 diabetic. And, what happened as a result is, a few key people worked on developing the initiative with me from departments that I don't really work much with. Production, for instance. Some people from the creative team that I normally might not really get to know that well. And then, when we announced the initiative – it was to the whole agency – people got to see me like they hadn't seen me before... And I had the chance to talk to people from a very different capacity, and I really started feeling, unlike before, I really started feeling like part of the fabric of the company, and it felt really wonderful. (Frances-2-8)

This succinctly captures the idea of “the problem with softball.” Although it is useful to create affective ties with co-workers, the activities that are typically employed are almost exclusively outside of normal work activities, like softball games, other social outings, company retreats, facilitated workshop events, and the like. In Unit 7's case, the B-Roll Diabetes Initiative recontextualized typical, work-related activities throughout the agency so that they are engaging and fun, enabling people to collaborate in ways that defy the typical organizational separations imposed by formal structure, hierarchy, and workaday processes.

Enabling these sorts of social connections in the work context eliminates the dissonance and disconnection of being “buddy-buddy” on the ball field or bowling alley, while maintaining fragmented, bureaucratic structures and internal rivalries in the office proper. Consistent with having a fundamentally relational view of people,

integrating affective and instrumental aspects of organizational life is an important aspect of a UCAPP environment. As Frances notes, “it’s not just information. It transcends the normal day-to-day business purpose for being here and connecting.” (Frances-2-12).

The contemporary reframing of the classic chicken-and-egg question – which takes priority, the individual or the organization? – plays out in consideration of an individual’s personal development. In BAH organizations, personal development is justifiable and supported when there is an identified business need; the need drives the potential for contribution as Robert reports in Organization A, for example. In a UCAPP organization, individual contributions drive the business potential and opportunity. Thus, personal development is a means to expand an organization’s horizons, so to speak, consistent with valuing diversity and heterogeneity.

What is clear above all else in an instrumental (BAH) versus relational (UCAPP) view of people is that in a UCAPP organization, someone disrupting collaborative relationships and the organization’s social fabric is equivalent to not performing one’s assigned job requirements in a function-oriented, primary-purposeful, BAH organization. This observation, as it turns out, can provide the basis of a unifying theory that connects BAH and UCAPP organizations, and informs an understanding of their respective processes of transition from one type to the other. This, too, will be extensively explored in subsequent chapters.

Simply Put

BAH organizations replace the complexity of human dynamics in social systems with the complication of machine-analogous procedures that enable interdependence through interdependent action, individual responsibility, and hierarchical accountability. UCAPP organizations encourage and enable processes of continual emergence by valuing and promoting complex interactions, even though doing so necessitates traditional, legitimated leadership ceding control in an environment of individual autonomy and agency, collective responsibility, and mutual accountability.

Neither approach is universally appropriate; nor should an organization fall blindly into one or the other without understanding the ramifications and desirability of becoming less (BAH) or more (UCAPP) consistent with contemporary society in the organization's own complex context.