Time, process and discourse in business network research

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Abstract

Different conceptions of time are reviewed in this paper and, in particular, distinctions between objectivist and subjectivist approaches are compared. Current explorations of time within the IMP are identified along an objectivist- subjectivist continuum as tending towards location towards a more objectivist orientation. Consequences of IMP researchers adopting more subjectivist, 'Post–Cartesian' lens are then investigated. In such a move, more intimate engagement with concepts provided by G.H. Mead, process philosophy and critical postmodernism are reviewed. Along the way substantially different ontologies and epistemes are encountered and towards the more extreme limits of subjectivism, time is encountered as purely relative or 'panrelational' in conjunction with space and human experience.

Keywords: Time, IMP conceptions, Alternative and Competing Perspectives

Time, process and discourse in business network research

Time is a strange phenomenon. Its strangeness inspired one of the most famous sketches from The Goons. The radio show is *The Mysterious Punch-up-the-Conker* (series 7, episode 18) [1]. About 25 minutes into the episode, Bluebottle and Eccles are 'in the ground floor attic' of a clock repairers. After listening to lots of timepieces ticking, chiming, cuckooing etc. for a while...

Bluebottle	What time is it Eccles?
Eccles	Err, just a minute. I, I've got it written down 'ere on a piece of paper. A nice man wrote the time down for me this morning.
Bluebottle	Ooooh, then why do you carry it around with you Eccles?
Eccles	Well, umm, if a anybody asks me the ti-ime, I ca-can show it to dem.
Bluebottle	Wait a minute Eccles, my good man...
Eccles	What is it fellow?
Bluebottle	It's writted on this bit of paper, what is eight o'clock, is writted.
Eccles	I know that my good fellow. That's right, um, when I asked the fella to write it down, it was eight o'clock.
Bluebottle	Well then. Supposing when somebody asks you the time, it isn't eight o'clock?
Eccles	Ah, den I don't show it to dem.
Bluebottle	Ooohhh...
Eccles	[Smacks lips] Yeah.
Bluebottle	Well how do you know when it's eight o'clock?
Eccles	I've got it written down on a piece of paper!
Bluebottle	Oh, I wish I could afford a piece of paper with the time written on.
Eccles	Oohhhh.
Bluebottle	'Ere Eccles?
Eccles	Yah.
Bluebottle	Let me hold that piece of paper to my ear would you? - 'Ere. This piece of paper ain't goin'.
Eccles	What? I've been sold a forgery!
Bluebottle	No wonder it stopped at eight o'clock.
Eccles	Oh dear.
Bluebottle	You should get one of them tings my grandad's got.
Eccles	Oooohhh?
Bluebottle	His firm give it to him when he retired.
Eccles	Oooohhh.
Bluebottle	It's one of dem tings what it is that wakes you up at eight o'clock, boils the kettil, and pours a cuppa tea.
Eccles	Ohhh yeah! What's it called? Um.
Bluebottle	My granma.
Eccles	Ohh... Ohh, ah wait a minute. How does she know when it's eight o'clock?
Bluebottle	She's got it written down on a piece of paper!

Bluebottle and Eccles are not alone in their comical confusion. Conceptions of time vary enormously from one culture to another and within academic discourse. One way to distinguish within the latter is between objective / positivist 'clock time' as opposed to subjective / idealist, 'event time' perspectives. Orlikowski & Yates (2002: 684) observe that, "the two sides have posited opposing views of time as either existing independently of human action or as socially constructed through human action". This distinction is not new as in Western though it dates back to Ancient Greece where "the distinction between *chronos* and *kairos* made in the rhetorical literature reflects the same underlying objective-subjective dichotomy" (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002: 686). Table 1 (below) summarises the different time perspectives. Following the paradigm shift from Newtonian mechanics to Einstein's relativity, "a Newtonian assumption of time as abstract, absolute, unitary, invariant, linear, mechanical, and quantitative" (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002: 685) has found fewer advocates. The subjective / idealist view "is assumed to be neither fixed nor invariant. Time here is seen as relative, contextual, organic, and socially constructed" (ibid.).

Table 1: Different Perspectives on Time in Organizations

	Objective	**Subjective**
View of Time	Time exists independently of human action; exogenous, absolute	Time as socially constructed by human action; culturally relative.
Experience of time	Time determines or powerfully constrains people's actions through their use of standardized time-measurement systems such as clocks and calendars.	Time is experienced through the interpretive processes of people who create meaningful temporal notions such as events, cycles, routines and rites of passage
Role of actors in temporal change	Actors cannot change time; they can only adapt their actions to respond differently to its apparent inexorability and predictability, e.g., speeding up, slowing down, or reprioritizing their activities.	Actors can change their cultural interpretations of time, and thus their experiences of temporal notions such as events, cycles, and routines, e.g., designating a "snow day," "quiet time," "fast track," or "mommy track."

Adapted from Orlikowski & Yates (2002)

The difference between the 'two sides' is manifested in Chia's (1999) distinction between metaphysical assumptions of a 'metaphysics of change' in contrast to a 'metaphysics of substance / presence'. Table 1 (below) details some important distinctions between substance and process metaphysics. In the former, time is seen as absolute; involving objective events, sequenced in linear progression of 'monochronic' (Hall, 1983) events and moments from past, through present and toward future. In the latter, time is seen as relative experience of duration in a diachronic or 'polychronic' (Hall, 1983) and non-linear enfolding of past and future into the present.

Table 2: Metaphysical Distinctions

	Metaphysics of substance / Presence	Metaphysics of Change / Process
Metaphors	*Containers* Networks, Variance modelling Reality is something there to be discovered	*Rhizomes*, Net-*workings*, Second-order thinking Reality is something *we* are making
Intellectual sources	Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Newton	Heraclitus, Buddha, Lao Tsu, Whitehead,, Heidegger, Bateson, Derrida, Serres, Deleuze
Ontology	Ontology of Being. Emphasis upon stability, permanence and order. Truth as fixed and underlying (foundational). An entitative conception of reality	Ontology of Becoming. Emphasis upon process existentialism- every 'thing' is a stability wave within a sea of indeterminate process. (Fixed) things are not real, only processes are real.
Epistemology	Substance / Representationalist Epistemology. A modernist and 'Logocentric' correspondence theory of truth involving 'Simple location' whereby *essential or foundational* presence of matter and hence causal mechanisms are assumed locatable at specific co-ordinative points in space-time. Linguistic terms provide an 'immaculate conception' and are taken to accurately represent an external world of present, discrete and identifiable objects, atoms, forces and generative causal mechanisms	Process Epistemology. The primacy of process and change requires realization of the mutual implication of process and structure. Each structure is a stabilized moment in a process of continuous becoming. There is no inert or invariable object as a thing that changes, only changes that produce heterogeneous becomings of objects. Change, seen as a series of differences in objects over time through one stage of fixed stability to another, is reification.
Understanding of 'Process '	Representationalism depicts change outcomes as transitory temporal phases necessary for bridging the various stages of rest of evolution. Change is only an epiphenomenal and unreal stage between periods of 'real' fixity/ stability. Time and change requires organization and management	Process and change are the only reality. Fixity, stability, management and organization are linguistic bewitchments that disguise the reality of flux, indeterminacy and *duree*. Organisational change is an oxymoron because change is process and organization is substance / presence / representation. The idea of net-*workings* (a verb) better encapsulates a Deleuzian conception than 'networks' (a noun). Time and change cannot be managed

Source: Chia (1999)

A 'Notions of Time' Continuum

Most of the contemporary notions of time lie between extremes of objectivism and subjectivism. Along an objectivist-subjectivist continuum, perspectives of time can be plotted. In this paper, we plot current IMP conceptions of time in relation to American Pragmatist philosophy (particularly G.H. Mead) and other process philosophy. This is a useful exercise in allowing for speculation and prediction of what a movement towards a more subjectivist time perspective would mean for the IMP 'time agenda'. In a simple form, we map our understanding of where current IMP time conceptions on the objectivist- subjectivist continuum in fig. 1 (below).

OBJECTIVE ---SUBJECTIVE

| | IMP | Mead | Process | Critical |
| | | | Philosophy | Postmodern |

→ *Post Cartesian Time*

Fig. 1: A Notions of Time Continuum

Very few contemporary conceptions of time deny (either partly or fully) that time is relative and a non-entitative product of the imagination and meaning constructions. This is particularly so with regard to the past and the future, which quite obviously no longer exist or not yet exist and are communicated into present being. The present is less obviously the product of the imagination and is more concrete but because it is constructed in a conspiracy with past experience and future expectations, it also is an imaginative creation. Our proposition is that time is not just relative but 'panrelational'; involved in a network of "labyrinthine inferential relations" (Rorty, 1999: 134). It is co-constructed through processes of discourse (knowledge, language and communication) and the symbolically –mediated interweaving of experience and action in practice. To come to terms with this complex, 'panrelational' and imaginative view of time, we draw in this section upon the work of the American pragmatist philosopher, G.H. Mead (1932; 1934).

Mead adopted a middle path between idealism and positivism and integrated aspects of subjectivism and objectivism. He rejected any single paradigm in favour of an ambivalent, eclectic approach (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 75). Mead conceived interactional practice as "temporally unfolding, symbolically – mediated interweaving of experience and action" (Simpson, 2009: 1338) which is intimately involved with identity construction processes at individual and organizational levels (Hatch & Shultz, 2002). The dual meaning-making domains of interaction and identity are subject to both convergent (or 'centripetal') structures of meaning and divergent (or 'centrifugal'), agentic sources of creative and novel meaning. Mead conceived of the self "anti-atomistically, as a structure" (Swingewood, 1991: 263) and attempted to examine the self in terms of its 'external' social experience and 'inner' consciousness (Swingewood 1991: 264). For Mead, "the conscious human being evolves through a social process, a process of interaction which involves the development of language and hence 'mind' and 'self ' " (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 74). Both 'mind' and 'self' are "social creations of everyday life" (Swingewood, 1991: 265) which enable human reason, reflection and symbolic communication. As a result, mind and self, consciousness and action are "thus collaborative not individual phenomena involving social roles, social relations and social institutions" (Swingewood, 1991: 265). Mead's work, as it involved a bio-social explanation of 'mind' and 'self ', incorporates culture and genetic influences as simultaneously influential upon behaviour.

Mead's Temporal Interaction

Mead's pragmatism is an abandonment of dualism and rational or normative action theories in that it incorporates temporality *and* interaction, the individual *and* society as well as the agentic (voluntaristic / creative) *and* habitually determined aspects of human experience. Mead's main contribution is to engage more holistically with the temporally emergent and embodied social actor, so avoiding overly psychologised views of practice by including emotional and tacit influences to complement cognitive effects (Simpson, 2009). Mead's pragmatism, therefore, requires an extension of comprehending time and relationships as having a "cognitive nature" (Medlin, 2004: 186) into a comprehension of them as fully embodied, emotional, discursive and holistic. In accounting for the complexities of temporality, social agency and practical action, Mead avoids any simplistic determinism. Along with other American pragmatists (such as Pierce, James and Dewey) he provides a complex appreciation of social interaction mediated by evolving meaning over time.

Mead's interaction involves trading meaning through interactions or 'social gestures'. Through conversational gestures between and within people identities and meanings are formed recursively. Interaction is Mead's terms, therefore, involves what happens between people *and* to people over time and how they simultaneously retain some stability *and* experience change in identities and meanings. Interaction, from this perspective, is more complex than many other conceptions of it because it involves stability *and* change between *and* within actors.

Between actors, conversational interactions or 'social gestures' are accomplished through language, communication and symbolic trading. Significant symbols allow a commonality of meaning that facilitate the social regulation of meaning and conduct but also allow room for negotiation for differences in interpretation that facilitates novelty and evolution of meaning and emergence of new conduct. The 'generalised other' provides the cultural norms (or *ethnomethods*) of an "organized system of significant symbols that reflect the generalized attitudes or discourse, of a social group or community" (Simpson, 2009: 1335). The 'generalised other' configures the boundary of sense-making, outside of which is cognitively and discursively dissonant. These cultural boundaries of believability are, however, permeable and elastic and change through negotiated meanings in interaction over time. Changing any 'thing' requires a shift in discourse and change towards process requires a shift in vocabulary, for example, from nouns to verbs. With this pragmatist 'poetic' ambition of inspiration and hope, the linguistic turn only really tolerates one heuristic distinction "between knowing what you want to get out of a person or thing or text in advance and hoping that the person or thing or text will help you want something different – that he or she or it will help you change your purposes" (Rorty, 1999: 143). So for example, contemporary concern for ecological and green issues is changing the boundaries of acceptable discourse and action so that increasingly business network talk and action, perceived as ecologically damaging, is increasingly seen as unacceptable in more and more business groups and communities.

Within actors, identities are imaginatively created in micro-level individual inter and intra-actions where actors project an 'I' and get reflections of an embodied 'Me' mirrored back from others (Mead, 1934). Mead construes the 'self' as developing "through reciprocal relations with others and (as) both a subject and an object. The subject, described as 'I', is thinking and acting as a bio-social being and the object described as 'Me' is conscious of its social position within the group and the resultant expectations upon it." (Swingewood, 1991: 265). The 'me' is the organized set of others' attitudes that are embedded in significant symbols equating to habits of conduct acquired reflexively through a history of interactions (Simpson, 2009). A self develops through language and symbols when the 'Me' and 'I' are equated so that the self interacts and unifies with itself and its culture. "The

'I' both calls out, and responds to the 'me' in an internalized conversation of gestures" (Simpson, 2009: 1336). The performance of the self therefore involves the cultural script of the 'me' in relation to the ad-libbed enactment of the role in terms of the creative persona of the 'I'. The self thus has both a voluntaristic, individual, bio-social (creative, reflexive) domain and a deterministic, cultural domain which is structured through commonly shared values and imposes collective conformism and 'social order' (Swingewood, 1991: 265). The actors, in Mead's view, *are therefore the meaning* emerging from interaction; they have some negotiated agency but are subject to the ethnomethodological limits of cultural expectations.

Mead, therefore, not only shows the complexities of *how* "actor bonds connect actors and influence how actors perceive each other and form their identities in relation to each other" (Håkansson and Snehota, 1995: 26) but also implies that activities and resources are also enmeshed in the symbolic and imaginative nature of all interaction. From this viewpoint activities do not merely mean "activity links regard technical, administrative, commercial and other activities of a company that can be connected" because all activities involve trading meaning through 'social gestures' scripts and ad-libbed performances (Lowe et al., 2009). Similarly, resources cannot be restricted the idea that "resource ties connect various resource elements (technological, material, knowledge resources and other intangibles" (Håkansson and Snehota, 1995: 26) because resources are always also props (Lowe et al., 2009) in the drama of symbolic interaction within business networks.

The recursive interaction between the 'me' and the 'I' is the site of Mead's temporality. The past and future are both in the actions of the present. The 'me' carries the accumulation of past interactions and stable social attitudes constituted as significant symbols and the 'I' carries the future in terms of abducted (intelligent guessing), novel possibilities of change. For Mead (1932; 1934) time is not simply the cognitive grasp of monochronic 'events' between 'moments' (Medlin, 2004). Mead did retain objective events as an element of time and as a result his "thinking differs significantly from that of other process philosophers" (ibid. p.1337). In keeping with his adoption of a middle path between idealism / subjectivism and positivism/ objectivism, Mead "saw sociality as more than a mere succession of transactional moments; it also involves the continuous narration of unfolding social selves" (Simpson, 2009: 1336). It is this narration of the experiences of 'lived time' that Medlin's (2004) 'events between moments' eliminates through *containerising* events and moments. As a *metaphor we live by* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) in our sub-conscious Cartesian mind, the container trope forces us to think of time as discrete, monochronic packages. Mead's cognitive-discursive holism requires partial adoption of Bergson's notion of the introspective experience of 'duration' or *duree* which is a conception of time derived from process philosophy. Mead's (1932; 1934) temporality is, therefore, partially sympathetic with a metaphysics of change and an 'ontology of becoming' as shared with most process philosophers.

Apart from Mead, time as change and duration is all that there is for most process philosophers. Any approach (such as the metaphysics of substance) that regards time as stable, fixed, a sequential series or something requiring organization and measurement is mistaken because there is no time you can stop and represent as fixed or stable or manageable. Time as duration, therefore, entirely "depends on the process and context" (Quintens & Matthyssens, 2010: 93). Consequently for Bergson, "spatialized time is a mere distortion of authentic temporality" (Simpson, 2009: 1336). Using this ontology, process and change are the only reality. Fixity, stability, management and organization, 'moments' and 'events' are linguistic bewitchments or fictions that disguise the reality of flux, indeterminacy and *duree*. Time, from this Bergsonian viewpoint can only be experienced, not categorised or divided into sequence. Time that can be divided and described, talked about and

managed is just that; only talk. Actual time defies description and can only be experienced. Before exploring process viewpoints of time further, we turn to examine the current IMP 'time agenda'.

IMP Time Research

Most marketing research methodologies, including business-to-business research, are modernist in nature (Gómez Arias and Acebrón, 2001) and captive of objectivist assumptions of a metaphysics of substance. Modernist discourse emphasizes the potential for human advancement through adoption of rational thought, reason and progress. The dominant form of modernism is 'systems' modernism, which institutionalizes reason through the development of the functional demands of universal systems. Modernism rests on a conception of information and knowledge as referential or representational, as a means of expressing something real and foundational outside of itself. It is founded upon assumptions of realist ontology and lends itself to logical positivism and universalizing nomothetic 'model building' methodology. It is 'structural' in that it involves reducing complexity to atomized measurable, foundational certainties and largely adopts mechanistic metaphors and linear explanation to describe the world, which it assumes, is controllable by human kind as the central agent of reason.

The lamentations of DiMaggio (1992), Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994), and Gómez Arias and Acebrón, (2001) emphasize the limitations of contemporary network analysis. IMP literature, for example, is captive of modernist, logocentric thinking because of its adherence to structural-functionalist assumptions of ontological realism and nomothetic methodology. Failure to engage with the symbolic world results in distorted understanding of those stakeholders, such as customers, that constitute relationships that are critical to success. Ringberg and Forquer Gupta (2003) for example, demonstrate how a failure to identify the symbolic world of tradesmen because of an over-reliance on 'utilitarian driven' brand trust models had lead tools manufacturers to misunderstand tradesmen users and the relationship potential with them. Employment of interpretivist methods to explore the symbolic world of tradesmen showed values dissonant with their previous imposed stereotype as macho and materialistic. From the point of view of this paper, misunderstandings of different notions of time are likely to be a principal cause of symbolic dissonance, particularly if partners are from different cultures.

The phlegmatism of modernist assumptions of the metaphysics of substance and an 'ontology of being' persist when it comes to current perceptions of time within IMP literature. These perspectives are not purely objectivist in that they appear to lie between Objectivism and Mead's 'middle path' between idealism and positivism (see fig.1 above). Seminal contributions to the IMP literature on time can be attributed to Halinen, & Törnroos (1995), Halinen, (1998), Hedaa & Törnroos (2002) and Medlin (2003; 2004). These contributions are creditable in raising the time agenda within IMP research. The IMP time agenda has recognised that time is complex and necessary for the examination of business network processes (Woodside & Wilson, 2003: Halinen & Törnroos, 2005; Quintens & Matthyssens, 2010). Despite the recognition of the polysemy of 'time', these authors invariably adhere mostly to objectivist predispositions but also appear to borrow some 'interim' (those between objectivist and subjectivist paradigms) positions (such as, for example, G.H. Mead) in an approach that "provides an understanding of how events and episodes, in conjunction with expectations, build a business relationship" (Medlin, 2004: 186). These IMP researchers on time appear to be in mild sympathy with Mead's temporally unfolding, symbolically–mediated interweaving of experience and action, which is intimately involved with identity construction processes at individual and organizational levels. Their perspective however adopts more objectivist assumptions of time and interaction than Mead. Their approach is an overtly cognitive, psychologised

view of practice. It is less inclined towards accounting for the 'embodied' social actor and less determined to overcome the dualisms that Meads approach accomplishes. Objective 'horizontal' and subjective 'vertical' time are interwoven elements in the emergence of the temporal present (Halinen, 1988) so that " the present of any relationship is conditioned by the past and future and that different cultural boundaries will determine the human perspective of the past, present, and future depending on the nature of the management problem(s)" (Medlin, 2004: 186). The role of internal identity processes (between the 'I' and the 'me' and the *abductive* (intelligent guessing, imaginative speculation) aspect of future enfoldment into the present is, however, largely ignored. Cognitive processing of interpretations of past, present and future and the tacit advocacy of time as a 'container' (Medlin, 2004: 187) conflates perception/cognition and eliminates the embodied, imaginative and emotional experience of social action that Mead adopts from subjectivism. As Marshak (2003) observes, metaphors are conceptual discursive phenomena that can work on either similarity or dissimilarity. The former may indicate conscious or unconscious framings of reality or meaning, while the latter may be used to work consciously on frame-breaking. Container and 'essence' metaphors are 'root' metaphors that we 'live by'. It is a similarity metaphor used to frame reality as foundational (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). When used together container and essential root metaphors create preconfigured categories of an entitative, divisible and foundational reality for us. The world (and time) is consequently preconfigured for us as existing independently, divisible and storable and subject to linear causal determination, which it is assumed can then be analysed through the correct (objectivist) episteme by the rational, detached observer. Employing a container metaphor is, therefore, an unwittingly 'loaded' form of objectivism that Mead's approach attempts to avoid. IMP time researchers would in our opinion, therefore, gain from a more detailed engagement with Mead (1932; 1934). Our hope is that the first part of our paper will facilitate such engagement. We also consider, however, that IMP time researchers would gain considerable insights from approaches further along the objective-subjective paradigm continuum and it is this to which we now turn.

Post-Cartesian Time

An incursion further into the subjectivist paradigm for IMP time researchers would involve greater attention to meaning. Time and meaning and the meaning of time and time and interaction would require greater attention. Process philosophy, discourse analysis, the 'linguistic turn', the 'embodied turn' and the 'practice turn' require exploration of the relative meaning of time and create a time of relative meanings. In other words, Post -Cartesian 'time', 'process', 'discourse' and 'business networks' are all products of human imagination and meaning-making. This realisation requires a conscious 'second-order' (Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001) appreciation that the 'things' we are talking about are a property of the talk and not of the 'things' *as such*. In, for example, naming (using a noun) a 'network' or 'time' as a 'thing', the entity is brought forward into 'being' or structured existence, through its naming, and reified by its enactment. The assumption becomes one where theories by researchers and talk by networkers of networks or time as 'things' contribute to *producing* or *constructing* these putative phenomena, which are then enacted and reified. In doing so, the non-entitative, paradoxical, heterogeneous and processual 'becoming' character of networks and time is disguised and the structural, 'essentialist' illusion is complete. The subjectivist argument is that time, process, discourse and business networks are not 'things' and researching them using ontologies and epistemologies seeking to identify things is intellectually mistaken. In order to explore this, we propose to concentrate on selective borrowing from ontologies, epistemologies and philosophies that have regarded 'things' as the products of human imagination and meaning -making or 'make believe'.

Following Deleuze, Robert Chia proposes "a rhizomic model of the change process in which the precarious, tentative and heterogeneous network-strengthening features of actor-alliances are accentuated" (Chia, 1999: 211). Rhizomes are processual, complex, ever-changing, unorganized and unmanageable networks with no centre or structure. Communication exchanges need to be described not in the amount of information exchanged but rather in processes undertaken in relation to power games and imaginatively developing self images. In rhizomic networks, interaction processes can be described as communication exchanges where processes of identity clarification/ re-positioning occur, constantly changing an actors' image of themselves relative to all others they interact with.

The axiom of conceiving *networkings* as 'heterogeneous becoming of change' (Chia, 1999: 218) within a Deleuzian conception of Rhizomes comes with two other complementary axioms. Firstly, the axiom of rhizomic understanding involves the' logic of otherness' which requires a realisation of 'identity' as process in the context of creation and interaction with others. As a result "meaning is never fully and immediately present in a term, Rather each term contains the traces of its 'other' which as other serves to supplement and complement it" (ibid, p.220). That other is organisation, which is not a "'thing' or 'entity' with established patterns, but the repetitive activity of ordering and patterning itself " (ibid) – identified within the IMP oeuvre as activity processes within ARA model. 'Change', as a result, cannot be 'managed' and organized, as recognised by 'paradox 1' in IMP thinking (Håkansson & Ford, 2002).

Secondly, the axiom of rhizomic understanding involves understanding the processual nature of time through the principal of immanence. Time is not a self-evident linear progression represented by the clock. Time as process means the past immanent in the present. From this viewpoint, the present absorbs and incorporates the past but in a novel and emergent outcome rather than a linear succession of it. Consequently, because the change within the present is due to unexpected emergence, linear causal attribution of past events to present conditions does not occur. In other words simple, linear causality is an illusion that produces a 'bemusement of movement'. It fails to recognise time as change and indeterminate fiction.

Because a 'rhizomic' understanding, in the Deleuzian sense of ontological relativism, has seemly by-passed IMP research an appreciation of their implications is absent. IMP research has adopted more of an epistemological rhizome which means networks and interaction are viewed as something to be known rather than experienced. An ontological approach requires time and self to be explored as a narrative (Ricouer, 1984). In interaction we therefore narrate 'lived time' according to cultural and discursive conventions. In the individualistic West, this requires to exchange autobiographies in relationship building and expects an account for how, in Frank Sinatra's terms, I did it 'my way'. For pragmatists such as Rorty (1999), appreciating dialogue and self renewal as critical network processes is necessary and a principal ingredient of improvement and durability. This is similar to the notion of human systems as autopoetic systems of communication with language as a mode for self renewal (Capra, 2002: 71). In living human systems 'communities of practice' arise where "each communication creates thoughts and meaning, giving rise to further communications. In this way, the entire network process generates itself, producing a common context of meaning, shared knowledge, rules of conduct, a boundary and a collective identity for its members" (ibid. p.94). The idea of business networks as Deleuzian 'rhizomes' also highlights how inspirational language changes can alter the meaning, knowledge, rules, boundaries and identities of business networks by incorporating communication and language, focussing upon narrated experience of 'lived time' and rejecting structurally incremental approaches. If relationship management is as much about 'being managed' as it is about managing (Ritter, Wilkinson & Johnston, 2004), that is, involving both reactive and proactive elements; then networking happens in 'a space of paradoxes' (Hakansson &

Ford, 2002). This two-way process involves actors influencing others and allowing others to have influence (Ford & Saren, 1996). Given this ambiguity, approaches that help to understand this paradox are preferable to those that consider conclusive certainties are the only thing that matter (Ritter et al.2004).

Most process philosophy is a focus on time as duration, which is not discrete or measurable but is *experienced* as event. This contradicts the dominant objectivist viewpoint, which privileges the influence of a supposed substantial underlying reality. The objectivist influence of Parmenides, Plato and Aristotle dominates over the view of Heraclitus in Western thought. In Western metaphysics, 'logocentric' thought relies upon series of dichotomies of opposition. This is the consequence of a 'metaphysics of substance' (Chia, 1999) where phenomena are conveyed as existing *as such,* and being represented (without complications by managers and modelled by theorists). The metaphysics of substance is "trapped in a Parmenidian intellectual legacy which implicitly elevates permanence over change, discreteness over immanent interconnectedness, linear progress over heterogeneous becoming, and equilibrium over flux and transformation" (Chia, 1999: 226). Cartesian binary opposites involve privileging one term over its opposite and as a result the creation of truth and meaning is an outcome of the illusion of the 'metaphysics of presence' (Derrida, 1976). This is the constructed assumption that the meaning of a word is present in the speaker's mind and communicable to the listener without any slippage of meaning.

Surprising and challenging ontological possibilities emerge from subjectivist traditions within Western thought and Art and the principal tradition within Eastern art and philosophies such as Buddhism and Taoism. These traditions have in common a dedication towards direct experience and dedicated, practical action (Chia, 2003).Within Western thought David Hume identified simple *impressions* as forceful, unrepresentable perceptions that are prior to ideas. These perceptions are simple because they admit no distinctions or separation; they are pure ontological experience. Ideas are, as they become more complex, epistemological phenomena that can tend to cover pure experience in a blanket of explicit, representational, causal knowledge. Subsequently, Heidegger's (1953) project in *Being and Time* was to centralise the question of *being* and thus to put the ontological question in a position of priority in philosophical enquiry. Heidegger traced the early genealogy of the meaning of being. Beginning with Plato's 'forms', through Aristotle's 'categories' followed by the Christian theologians attribution of God as the receptacle of being. Heidegger (1953) identified in more contemporary philosophy, Descartes' *Cogito* and Husserl's 'Trancendental Ego' as avoiding the practical ordinary and everyday 'factical life' experience of 'beingness' in the moment. Heidegger recognised in Aristotle's *Phronesis* a concern with the practicality of being in a lifeworld and sought to liberate it from the yolk of intellectualisation of 'being' as conceptualised in most philosophy which involves ontic (existential) and metaphysical rather than ontological notions. 'Being in the world' the artist and artisan encounters the pre experience of existing "encountered in a non-thematic mode" (Chia, 2003: 955) without need for prior theoretical, causal explanation. Heidegger's (1953) notion of *Dasein* involves a rejection of the 'I' as an atomistic, knowing subject and a realisation of being-in the world as an emotional and understanding participant in present practicality with others. Dasein then, concerns meaning of being as defined by temporality and is accomplished through authentic existence. In identifying the dominance of a 'correspondence theory of truth' in contemporary society, Heidegger attempts to liberate truth from its either-or antimony. He liberates the pre-Socratic conception of *Aletheia* or unconcealment. The strange paradoxical, meditative reality that emerges is one where what appears to consciousness as unconcealed is at the expense of other alternative appearances that remain concealed. Without an authentic *dasein,* we are therefore bemused by time by failing to grasp the present moment. This temporal bemusement is expressed by Kundera (1993: 129) :-

"The present – the concreteness of the present – as a phenomenon to consider, as *a structure,* is for us an unknown planet: so we can neither hold on to it in our memory nor reconstruct it through imagination. We die without knowing what we have lived."

It is at these outer regions of subjectivism where Descartes is finally left behind completely. A Post–Cartesian view of time adopts what might be called an 'embodied dialectic'. Here, time along with everything else is relational. So the identity of a person, for example, is relative to the situated relational context that the person is found in. At different times and in different relational contexts, the identity of the person is different. The 'I' can only be regarded as a signifier and the Cartesian certainty myth or 'ontological delusion' of the foundational existence of self (Capra,1996: 287) as mind is abandoned. The 'self', in this embodied dialectic view is uncertain, 'multiphrenic', heterogeneous, liminal and contingent because "embodied persons become identified with the multiple relations in which they are located and which, as agents, they change through their multiple interactions" (Burkitt, 1999: 12). The Post-Cartesian mind and the body are inseparable and neither has to be privileged or denigrated. The mind is embodied in the hardwiring of the brain and "the embodied mind leads us to a philosophy of embodied realism. Our concepts cannot be a direct reflection of external, objective, mind-free reality" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 44).

Post-Cartesian time (and space) are relative, contingent and multiple. Time and space constitute and are constituted by the situated relationships within contexts of experience. These contexts themselves are not isolated but interpenetrate as actors move between them. In the 'relational ontology' of Post-Cartesian time-space no self, object or 'thing' actually exists independently because everything is relative to everything else in context. Take, for example, the homogenous Cartesian 'Actor' in the ARA or 'Actors, Resources and Activities' (Håkansson and Snehota, 1995) model.

Table 3: Braudel's Three Interlocking Historical Time-Scales

Longue durée,	Biological, geo-physical, climatic	'Bio-history' (Foucault, 1979) has shaped the body to be socially and ecologically embedded and situated. Body and Mind are not split
Conjunctures	Social, economic, political, cultural	Imposed Cartesian split between body and mind a consequence in changed relations of power in Europe in seventeenth century. Change from overt sovereign power over life and death to covert modern 'self' control facilitated by mind disciplining the body as machine. The 'bio-power' of Reason and artifacts, such as the clock, replace violence as means of control (Foucault, 1979).
Micro-history	Everyday	Personal embodied interaction and experience in relations of communication / identity formation and reformation. In such interactive, everyday practices, body and mind are not split.

In Post-Cartesian terms this Actor is a fragmented, heterogeneous, temporary and ephemeral product of situated relationships and time-space. Tomorrow this Actor will be another embodiment occupying another context, another time, space and set of relationships. Since relationships are the key influence in an 'embodied dialectic', Burkitt (1999) with reference to Elias (1991 a) and Foucault (1982), suggest this means a requisite focus upon relations of communication within social structures, relations of power in the social structure and relations to technologies, objects and events in the environment. Burkitt (1999) is therefore emphasising the relativity and heterogeneity of relationships and the concomitant multi-levelled and relative character of space-time. Burkitt (1999) suggests that multi-faceted relations also require a multi-conceptual understanding of time. He adopts Braudel's (1973; 1977) temporal distinction of three interlocking historical time-scales outlined in table 3 (above). These are the *longue durée*, the time of *conjunctures* and *micro-history*. For Burkitt (1999) this means Elias's (1991 b) complex understanding human experience as encompassing the three relative dimensions of space, the fourth relative dimension of time and a fifth relative dimension of symbolic human experience that involves language and communication, technology and other cultural artifacts of human imagination.

A principal consequence of table 3 is to identify Cartesianism as a consequence of an epoch of European culture at a particular time. Descartes anatomised body is a collection of organs to become an 'organised body' through control by the reasoned mind and pious soul (Dale & Burrell, 2000: 16). The Protestant Reformation required righteous organised bodies not to waste time and to be on time as a part of a work ethic conducive to capitalist development. All aspects of body were subject to temporal control. So, for example, white bread with low roughage was fed to the workers to stop their wasting unnecessary time on the toilet and away from the production line. The outcome has been to privilege the productive, rational mind of capital and denigrate the 'disorganised body' of labour. The implication is that Cartesian clock time is an artifact of power and self control that facilitates more efficient and 'civilised' capitalist interests than would be possible with more 'uncivilised' feudal control through violence to the body. Under the influence of Descartes, objectivist time assumes time as a thing to be measured, planned, allocated and controlled (Kavanagh & Arujo, 1995). In such an objective time-world, Actors, Resources and Activities and are convenient 'logocentric' categories contrived as 'simple presences' for more readily efficient objectified, planned sequencing and control. The ARA model then is an objectivist representation ripe for co-option by those with power for managerial application and effective manipulation resource for the purposes of keeping power 'where it belongs'. By contrast, subjective time as *kairos* liberates the art of *ex tempore* improvisational organizing from the science of organizational management (Weick, 1979) and planned time activity. Improvisational organizing or 'Chronigami' (Kavanagh & Arujo, 1995) *in the moment* does not separate knowledge and action or privilege explicit, rational cognition over tacit, experiential bodily intuition and practical wisdom.

Conclusions

The main problem that the Cartesian legacy of *Cogito* leaves is recognised in much of Continental Philosophy in the last century as 'I-centred' separation, alienation (Zohar, 1991) and inauthenticity. One subjectivist agenda within the IMP oriented to restoring authenticity begins by taking discourse (knowledge, language and communication), imaginative processes of meaning-making and the concomitants of the 'linguistic turn' more seriously (Lowe et al., 2008). Time in this paradigm is the product of human meaning-making through experience and interpretation and not some separate object existing to be discovered and managed. When 'managed', from a critical perspective, time usually involves the subject of power; the powerful manage the powerless using

clock time. Another way to explain the objectivist-subjectivist distinction is through metaphor. Purchase et al. (2010) employ a metaphorical difference between a 'photographic' approach and a 'cinematographic' approach. The contemporary cognitive 'pictures' (Ford and Redwood, 2005; Shoib *et al.,* 2003) and time agendas within the IMP Group tend to use a 'photographic' metaphor. Pictures and time are relatively still and sequential. A cinematographic metaphor using the projective significance of language (Purchase *et al.,* 2010) sees 'pictures' and time as flexible, continuous, dynamic, heterogeneous and the consequence of imagined or concocted 'make believe'. Views of time, therefore, determine what kind of pictures are to be made and shown. The photographer takes a picture and shows it as a representation of reality. The cinematographer making a 'movie' does not pretend it is other than fiction but does try to concoct *verisimilitude* or 'believability' of the narrative and images created. The successful movie induces you to forget that it is fiction and allows you to lose yourself in the time-space of the story. Just as Einstein has shown us that time and space are relative, the cinematic metaphor approach implies that human symbolization and imagination is another relative 'force' to be added to time and space. From this perspective, time and space do not 'exist' without each other but neither of them 'exist' outside the force of human imagination. For Purchase et al. (2010), the time has come for using embodied talking pictures to recognize the relativity of the fictional dynamics of interaction of time, space and imaginative symbolism within business network research.

A post Cartesian adoption of time would bring with it other implications for IMP research. The 'interactive' (Ford et al., 2010; Hakansson, 1982) and 'sensemaking' in networks (Colville & Pye 2009; Henneberg, Naudé & Mouzas 2010; Möller, 2010) approaches are more cognitively focussed. They are vitally sensitive to the imaginative aspects of interaction but we propose that they would benefit from a more expansive, comprehensive complex agenda that incorporates a more holistic, bodily interaction. For example, this means taking what people say, hear, report what they see, communicate through body language and *feel* as cultural and individual prejudices into account. A post Cartesian adoption of time would require these approaches to question the division of mind and body and explore the consequences of removing the body from its denigration and subordination to mind in a corporeal or 'embodied turn' within IMP research. The implication is that network interaction, sense-making and relationship development is far more extensive and complex than can be captured by attention to cognition alone. If the subordinated body is uncovered from its de-privileged position to mind and cognition, dramaturgical issues of gender, sexuality, intuition, emotion and senses, non-rationality, aesthetics, discourse, narratives and power, symbolism and imagination and other embodied aspects of relationships and interaction would have to move from the background into the foreground. For those dedicated to rational and measurable aspects of interaction, this 'embodied turn' may be unwelcome. For others, it would be 'about time'.

Notes: 1.   www.hexmaster.com/goonscripts/what_time_is_it.html - 5k - cached - related

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