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## **Polystructurational social space - The final frontier**

### **Abstract**

We explore a discourse structurational approach and employ a planetary system metaphor in order to examine complex business networks within contemporary globalizing, consumer cultures. This conceptual/commentary paper reviews discourse structuration and employs a celestial metaphor to comment on strategy including reference to consumption, business marketing and business network research. Each sphere in the metaphorical constellation is characterised by a complex duality of deep structures and surface activities co-determined and mutually constituted through the medium of modulated actors' schemas, norms and other 'technologies' of their practical consciousness. Market consumption is a galaxy comprised of complex, interacting, multiple structurations where everything co-determines everything else through mutual gravitational influence. We argue that consumption is comparable to a Black Hole at the centre of the system dragging all matter into its centre, warping and distorting structures and processes until eventually destroying and assimilating them altogether. Implications and consequences are discussed in terms of the increasing hegemony of consumption and consequent commodification of other spheres with via a discourse structurational approach concentrating upon strategy and marketing.

**Keywords:** Discourse structuration, Astronomy metaphor, Market consumption as a Black Hole

## Introduction

Barthes, Debord, Baudrillard, The Frankfurt Group and other critical, poststructural and postmodern theorists have described the mythical condition of the consumer society eloquently. The market of *mythologies*, as spectacle, as simulacrum or hyperreal, the ‘immanent reversal’ or ‘dialectic of Enlightenment’ signal a move towards paradox, symbolic exchange and blurring or implosion of all prior boundaries and distinctions. This has important connotations for assessment of the ‘market’ and consumption. A main problem is that these labels are an inheritance of a disappeared past where ‘reality’ was thought tenable and such distinctions and representations were valid. In Baudrillard’s postmodern world, what was autonomous and distinct as the consumer society has disappeared down Alice’s rabbit hole. Collapsed distinctions and imploded categories mean that the market may have been superseded by the ‘transmarket’. Now, arguably, there is no market as a distinct category in some real world. In a hyperreal world involving the ‘perfect crime’ involving the ‘murder’ of reality (Baudrillard 1996) everything is the market and the market is everything and there is nothing that can escape potential commodification because to quote Firat, ‘The market is a uni-dimensionalizing system because the only dimension that it cares about is the commercial dimension; everything must be turned into and expressed in economic exchange-value terms’ (Bradshaw and Dholakia 2012, 124).

Seidl and Whittington (2014) in their outline Strategy-as-Practice approaches identify epistemes varying between understanding through taller or shorter ontologies or through emphasis upon the ‘sayings’ or ‘doings’ of practice. This paper attempts to further contribute to the focus upon shorter ontologies and treats sayings and doings with equal seriousness. This territory in Seidl and Whittington’s (2014) schema is initiated by the work of Chia and Holt (2006), Seidl (2007) and Latour (2005). Schatzki (2002) describes the social world in terms of spatiotemporally extended ‘constellations’ of bundled practices and material arrangements.

Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) assemblage theory also speaks to the idea of the social, linguistic and philosophical nature of complex systems where an emphasis on fluidity, exchangeability and multiple functionalities assists in their analysis. The term ‘constellation’ is used to describe these assemblages – comprised of fanciful, possible expressions amongst the various heterogeneous components and where the notion of ‘coding’ describes the process of creating order around a body such that by assuming a particular form, they choose, create and complete a territory. In creating a territory, hierarchical bodies are created through a

process of stratification and the constellation therefore defines the interactions/relationships with these bodies. Territorialization is the ordering of the coded and stratified bodies creating the assemblage. What is of most interest in our reference to assemblage theory is that in embracing multiplicity, what is most important are not the specific terms or elements, but what is between them; the relations and interaction that makes them inseparable from one another. This will be seen later in our astronomical metaphor composed of trust and power and culture and identity and discourse.

We use our astronomical metaphor as inspiration and add to it the discourse structural approach proposed by Heracleous and Hendry (2000). We suggest the astronomy metaphor can provide a useful representation of postmodern consumer 'transmarkets' and extends the notion of 'time and space' recently employed by Figueiredo and Uncles (2015). We use it to portray a rather confusing, complex wonderland, an 'epistemic consumption object' (Zwick and Dholakia 2006, 42) where what once made sense no longer does – where 'representational attributes that appear to make the market identifiable also highlight the extent to which markets defy identification' (Mayall 2008, 210). In effect, our view is that complexity cannot be made totally coherent, and that we can only offer representations that are cooked up simplifications.

We also extend our interests more widely outside strategy and include reference to consumption, marketing and the new materialism (Scott, Martin and Schouten 2014) and in particular, business marketing and business network research. Structural approaches to understanding complex networked phenomena promise a non-linear comprehension of their complex dynamics. A less explicit (or less evident?) underlying theme in this paper is the notion that complex systems are formed of hierarchies of holons, which produce emergent properties at each successive level. It also suggests that each holon is a duality of structure and agency. The main implication is that complex systems are constituted by hierarchies of structuration - at each level structuration produces emergent structural properties. So for example, dilemmas at one level might emerge as paradox at a higher level ( or dualisms might emerge as dualities), e.g., the dilemma of whether managers should control or enable employees at department level might emerge as a control paradox at organisational level where excessively intrusive controls create greater unmanageability.

Thus, in this paper, developing a structural approach to these complex, dynamic networked phenomena is a main objective. In attempting to realise this objective, we employ a complex astronomical source domain to represent a vastly complex target domain because we do not see simple representations of complex phenomena to be feasible, coherent, cogent,

or credible. We find support and draw upon Foucault and Deleuze's notion of constellations to explain assemblages such as 'networks' where ontologically, "the conditions for thinking of networks appear, as it were, to be network-like themselves" (Eriksson, 2005, p. 597) since networks involve constellations of power and knowledge centered around particular experiences or phenomena from which they obtain their meaningfulness (ibid). We review how structurational approaches have been used and end with an advocacy for the further development of a 'discourse structurational' approach (Heracleous and Hendry 2000). This is an intended sophistication of organizational discourse which seeks to overcome the privileging of agency over structure or structure over agency in order to view discourse as a duality of communicative actions and structural properties recursively linked through the interpretive schemes of actors. Development of this approach largely involves theorizing in the context of complexity. We attempt to present a discussion on developing discourse structuration approach enhanced by some notions taken from 'unfolding logics of change' (Morgan 2006).

Structuration is a concept first coined by Giddens (1984), which proposes that structures and practices recursively co-create each other in that practices are framed by structures and, at the same time, create those structures in ongoing action. Structuration involves structures, modalities and interaction as co-created and manifested in signification and legitimation rules along with domination resources. From a discourse structurational viewpoint, discourse (communication, language, and power/knowledge) is the key catalyst for the recursive co-invention between structure and agency. Discourse, in other words, is the vehicle for habitus and the key means by which agency and structure are co-created and it is the principal vehicle through which the practical consciousness (Giddens 1984) of the actors (which moderates agency and structure) can operate implicitly and the means by which discursive consciousness operates explicitly. From a complex network conception, we can add to this understanding through the realisation that there is more than one domain in play in structuration and these domains or spheres are also inter-related and co-determined in a complex system of multiple structuration or what might be termed 'polystructuration'. As a result, domains of trust and power, institutions, identity and culture, economics, technologies and other externalities along with internal organizational dimensions can be regarded as all part of this complex, dynamic 'polystructurational' system.

In order to aid this conceptualisation of dynamic complexity, we liken it to a planetary system or galaxy constituted by stars, black holes, planets and moons all interacting in mutual gravitational influence. Various 'planets' or spheres in this galaxy, including trust and power,

institutions, identity and culture etc. are gravitationally associated, with each affecting and being affected by conditions on all the others and where (taking a Foucauldian immanent thought perspective (Curtis 2014) discourse is not regarded as one of these planets or spheres centred in a system, but rather more as the light and gravitational force of a sun/star in which things are cast and which itself carries no substance. Each planet in the constellation, in turn, is characterised by a complex duality of deep structures and surface activities which are co-determined and mutually constituted through the surface medium of modulated actors' practical consciousness (Giddens 1984) involving schemas and other 'technologies' of their habitus (Bourdieu 1977). Using the planetary metaphor, practical consciousness or habitus is akin to the technologies used by planetary inhabitants in order to survive, create habitats and develop. These technologies of the actor are not infallible and involve a considerable amount of abduction in use. In engaging in practices, actors are often guessing about the structural norms and resource implications of their actions. The practical consciousness or habitus of the actor is consequently a very important inter-transformative technology set between agency and structure as it enables agents to abductively 'make sense of and enact positions in the field' (Voronov 2008, 940). It is, in our view, principally constituted by/in discourse including narratives and stories, metaphors and other tropes, through talk, text and embodied communication (such as proxemics or 'body language'). From our astronomy metaphor perspective, change in any sphere can come through endogenous or exogenous structuration, or a complex combination of these. In this galaxy, consumption can be seen as comparable to a Black Hole at the centre of the system. The Black Hole of consumption, in this metaphor, drags all matter into its centre, warping and distorting structures, processes and moderating technologies until it finally destroys and assimilates them altogether.

We proceed with a brief review of structural approaches to complex, dynamic network systems before a more detailed outline of discourse structuration; our favoured approach. We then discuss some implications for research of such complexities and apply this to explorations of three closely-related planets; the Planet of Institutions, the Planet of Trust (and its Moon of Power) and the Planet of Culture (and its Identity Moon). We then turn to the issue of understanding the Black Hole of Consumption within our metaphorical / mythological galaxy. Finally, we offer some preliminary suggestions of implications for practice and address immediate research development problems and potentials. It is our hope that our position incorporates the requisite ethos (our credibility), pathos (appeals to the readers' emotions, values and beliefs), and logos (our arguments's logical power).

## **Approaches to complex networks**

Complex inter-organizational network dynamics have been approached in many ways. Sydow (2004) identifies several approaches to understanding complex, dynamic network systems and distinguishes two prominent theories as evolutionary/co-evolutionary and interventionist plus less prominent theories emphasising interaction (IMP network relationship research, Ring and Van de Ven's (1994) staged process approach and the learning approach of Doz (1996). None of these approaches are regarded by Sydow (2004) as entirely adequate in terms of equal accounting of agency and structure and the processes that connect them. One of the main implications of applying structuration theory to inter-organizational networks is the necessary shift from understanding determining factors to the more pertinent comprehension of the tensions and contradictions of processes (Sydow and Windeler 1998) that are inevitable in the reconciling of ambiguities and paradoxes between structure and agency through the practical consciousness of actors. More recently VanWijk et al. (2013) using institutional theories show how field change can be a consequence of interaction between challenger movements and incumbent resistance when this results in a confluence of cultural and relational structuration. Within business marketing, Ellis and Mayer (2001) apply a structurational approach to examine an industrial network in the speciality chemicals industry. Similarly Makkonen, Aarikka-Stenroos, and Olkkonen (2012) also overcome some of the criticisms of Sydow (2004) by modelling industrial network processes as structured and then demonstrate how narrative approaches can provide the empirical sophistication to explore these complexities.

Sydow's (2004) preferred approach emphasises the importance in structuration through reflexive practice involving abductive action in structural development. Such a structuration approach emphasises the recursive interplay between complex network action and structure in their co-evolution involving continuous non-linear, unpredictable (often paradoxical) dynamics. Through reflexive monitoring using their practical consciousness, the practitioner acts abductively in expectation of the consequences of her action, whether these are intended or not. The actor is very often guessing through the tensions, contradictions and paradoxes of what practice outcomes might be. The practitioner can consequently be seen as usually acting in *bricolaged* (Boxenbaum and Rouleau 2011) fashion with bounded abduction – taking action in the context of guesswork as to the effect of this action within the bounds of what can be articulated (discursive consciousness) and current perceived possibilities (practical

consciousness). So the cultural members' resources of their habitus constituted by schemata, norms, the lexicon and practical consciousness that the practitioner has built up and adopted through prior experience provide an abductive frame for evaluating action outcomes. Practical consciousness reflects frames that have been established that set the boundaries for what can be currently conceived as legitimate and feasible, what can be said, what can be done and what is considered sacred or profane. Giddens (1984) considered that because of inevitable asymmetry of resources, power inequalities are inevitable and persistent as a 'structuration of domination' will usually prevail as long as repetitive actions maintain institutional conditions. If, as is normally the case, outcomes of action are broadly in line with expectations framed by practical consciousness then these schemata and norms are reinforced and such actions are inclined to be repeated and institutional structures are maintained. Because of influences of bounded knowledgeability and a 'dialectic of control' agents will not always, however, subscribe to norms and act predictably within these boundaries. They can at times act and change their discourse through perceived or sensed self-interest (Mumby and Clair 1997). If they judge that following a normative prescription would be detrimental to their interests they may choose to ignore it and act differently. If outcomes of action are not in line with expectations then schemata, norms and practical consciousness can be revised or modified, different abductive actions can be taken through changes in reflexive structuration (Ortmann, Sydow, and Windeler 1997), and adaptations can then arise through recursive interplay between changed actions and evolving new structures as well as an evolving lexicon to express them.

The planetary system metaphor, we argue, is a useful trope as it pictures a complex target domain, which is extremely difficult to comprehend, in terms of a source domain with which we can relate and envisage more easily. In the planetary system, the planets and other spheres are power, institutions, identity and cultures, economics etc. Each is a structural body with deep structures and surface activities which are co-determined and mutually constituted and which are framed by prevailing discourse. This mutual constitution is moderated by 'technologies' that frame two-way conversion of influences. Each planet in turn is gravitationally inter-related so that changes on any planet can have (direct and indirect) consequences for every other sphere. Our more controversial proposition is that our complex system as a metaphor for contemporary global consumer societies has the force of consumption at its centre which we liken to a Black Hole. Consumption, therefore, is a force seen as dragging increasing volumes of structure and action and moderating 'technologies'

into its centre, warping and distorting them until it finally destroys and assimilates them altogether.

Within discursive structuration, discourse is a principal element in the technologies of habitus (schemata, norms, rules etc.) that mediate between structure and action with all spheres. Discourse in our planetary system metaphor can be likened to the light and gravitational pull from a star or the Sun principally influencing planetary structures, actions and their co-creation as well as co-ordinating the mutual gravitational effect of all the planets. In discourse structuration 'discourse is viewed as a duality of communicative actions and structural properties, recursively linked through the modality of actors' interpretive schemes' (Heracleous and Hendry 2000, 1251) or habitus (Bourdieu 1977) predisposing the 'modus operandi' for establishing identities relative to others within the network through configuring which actions are identifiable (Chia and Holt 2006). Discourse, therefore, is a principal manifest moderating interpretive vehicle for the two-way exchange between structure and agency.

Structural elements in environments, such as power in the political environment, markets and competition in the economic environment, institutions in the social environment and values in the cultural environment are 'made' through enactment processes with discourse being the principal vehicle for this making. Being both enabling and constraining, structural features of discourse are employed in particular contexts in order for actors' opinions, ideas, or argumentations to be seen as legitimate and worthy of attention. Discursive structural features can be used as a resource for effective argumentation characterized by an abductive 'seeming' probability i.e., what actors in a social context believe to be the true framed by their habitus and not necessarily what is true. Here this habitus or 'practical consciousness' becomes the key modality to understand this reflexive monitoring because it translates structures and actions in both directions. Schemas / scripts and norms are the most readily accessible manifestation of practical consciousness and they operate in contexts reflecting the heterogeneity of both structures and actions.

### **Principal implications for research**

The central requirement for research of complex, paradoxical, dynamic, multi-structured systems is to comprehend how reflexive practice involving abductive action and structural development are co-determined. Giddens was not prescriptive about the methodological implications of structuration. As it transcends dualisms of structure and agency and objectivity and subjectivity, Weaver and Gioia (1994) propose it is quite clearly an approach

with potentials to overcome problems of paradigm incommensurability (Burrell and Morgan 1979). The methodological difficulties involved should not be underestimated. Ellis and Mayer (2001) identify the main problem as having to interpret onto-epistemologically different (and arguably incommensurable) data from structural and agency practices into a cogent narrative.

Heracleous (2013) provides a brief but invaluable summary of the methodological problems and issues facing discourse structuration approaches. Giddens clearly saw discourse as both structured and central in the structurational moderation between all types of structures and actions. Because of this centrality we identify discourse as a star or the Sun in our metaphorical galaxy since discourse has its own structurational characteristic and is also a principal influence on the structuration on all the other planets. Heracleous (2013) maintains that most studies centrally account for the duality of structure but not other equally important elements of the theory, in particular the importance of temporality. For practices to form as structures they need to be repeated over time and longitudinal monitoring of this repetitiveness and the various modalities of it are vital. Heracleous (2013) cites his own study of ethymemes (Heracleous and Barrett 2001) as an example of understanding repetitiveness over time. Ethymemes are rhetorical phenomena where a sustained argument is based upon taken-for-granted premises. So, for example, the premise of the market, assumed as an unquestionably 'natural' phenomena, can sustain and justify pro-market and neo-liberal arguments and market-based decisions repetitively even if they cause social or ethical problems. The implication of identifying repetitiveness is to establish how the schemata, norms and practical consciousness of agents moderate between structure and agency interchanges. In the case of the ethymeme of 'natural markets', the latter is a root metaphor likely to pervade the discursive consciousness and so filter into the schemata, norms and practical consciousness of the actor. The practical consciousness of the actor as a moderating device between practices and structures is evident, in this example, through the repeated and unquestioned use of an ethymeme and its use as analogical reasoning through a root metaphor.

Discourse structuration requires practice and discourse to be treated with equal seriousness to structure. The 'practice turn' in social theory (Schatzki 2001) attempted to remedy the prior neglect of practical accomplishments, logic and wisdom. Through this we have begun to see a great deal more written in the area of 'practice' in management/organizational research (see Corradi, Gherardi, and Verzelloni [2010]) – especially the 'strategy as practice' literature focussing on what firms *know* or have in

conjunction with or versus what they *do* regarding strategy (Chia and MacKay 2007; Jarzabkowski 2004; Whittington 2006). Practice-based approaches in many social science and management disciplines have expanded, leading to claims of the emergence of the ‘practice turn’ in these disciplines or more pejoratively, a bandwagon of practice-based studies in search of direction (Corradi, Gherardi, and Verzelloni 2010). We have also seen increased theorising about markets and consumption from a practice approach (Kjellberg 2008). Our view is that such a practice turn applied to, for example, marketing provides promising research opportunities through a suitable forum (or map) to transcend problems of incommensurability and paradigm oppositionalism and encourage a dialogical vehicle or catalyst for multidisciplinary, multiple-lens research.

Solutions to ‘bridging’ gaps between paradigms, structure and agency and between practice and theory often come up against problems of incommensurability (Okhuysen and Bonardi 2011). Okhuysen and Bonardi (2011) outline the difficulties faced in building theory by combining lenses but maintain that multi-lens approaches are increasingly needed because of greater pressures towards ‘relevance’ through providing critique of the practicality of dominant paradigms and to transcend paradigmatic silos. Okhuysen and Bonardi (2011) point out that the level of difficulty in establishing multiple lens theories is the conceptual proximity of the theories combined and the degree of compatibility between their underlying assumptions. Unfortunately multidisciplinary agendas that seek to overcome paradigmatic hermeticism usually create a flurry of interest mostly followed by further entrenchment of parochial research agendas, re-enforcement of onto-epistemological silos and ‘epistemic monopolies’ (Knorr-Cetina 1999, 4). The problem is exacerbated by persistent, narrowly parochial, mutual referencing academic syndicates or influence networks as described by Armstrong and Lilley (2008). The agenda of discourse structuration to overcome these problems is, consequently, ambitious and admittedly difficult.

Our analysis of the reason for prior multi-disciplinary and paradigm crossing failures is that research problems and solutions are defined and proposed in modernist terms, using structural metaphors such as ‘bridges’ (Shultz and Hatch 1996; Lewis and Grimes 1999; Dubois and Gadde 2002) and are detached from more micro- processual character of discourse and practice. This leads us to consider that ‘bridges’ are ethymemes and to speculate whether different, less structurally-fixed metaphors may be more appropriate for discourse structuration. Rather than ‘bridges’, would more quasi-structures be more appropriate? So, for example, could ‘pontoons’ as quasi-structures be more appropriate tropes than ‘bridges’. Pontoons are temporary, flexible structures that are erected for a purpose and

disassembled when that purpose has been served. Alternatively, in terms of our planetary system metaphor, would space travelling metaphors such as ‘space stations/shuttles’ or reusable spacecraft like the ‘Voyager’ be more amenable to discourse structuration. Given the significant role of imagination in discourse structuration it might be even feasible to productively use ‘Star Trek’ (as with the intertextually referenced title of this paper), ‘Star Wars’ or even ‘Galaxy Quest’, ‘Doctor Who’ and ‘Red Dwarf’ as tropes in discourse structuration investigations. We would, at this stage, prefer not to impose our tropal preferences on the reader (although the wormhole interdimensionality in ‘Interstellar’ is a tempting analogy for attempting to illustrate and reconcile paradigm incommensurability. It was only through this interdimensional ‘travel’ that Matthew McConaughey was able to fully understand the time/space conundrum and transmit this knowledge to his daughter) and suggest that all of these metaphorical possibilities, and perhaps others we have not imagined, could be productively explored by the discourse structuration researcher according to their own preferences. It is also important to acknowledge that for some, the planetary/astronomical metaphor might do itself a disservice by evoking (for some readers) associations with science, reductionism, and a positivist episto/ontological orientation, however we hope that the examples above provide enough (science) fiction and mystery to rationalize their use as tropes that attempt to simplify something incredibly complex\*.

## **Inter-planetary explorations**

### ***The planet of institutions***

From a discourse structural perspective, discourse and language are the key means by which practices become institutionalised. This institutionalisation takes place in the context of existing institutions and macro-cultural discourse (Lawrence and Phillips 2004) so that new institutional formation more often grows out of established institutions in incremental fashion, although new institutions can end up looking very different from the old. Lawrence and Phillips (2004) demonstrate that in the development of whale-watching on Canada’s west coast evolved through inventive combinations of different macro-cultural discourses by institutional innovators promoting new types of practice and challenging old ones. Invariably the tussle to change discourse involves a metaphoric transformations and shifts in analogical reasoning as well as changes in narratives and storytelling. In the case of the whales in Canada’s West coast, for example, this involved a tropal re-characterisation of the whales from dangerous beasts and sources of food and oil to newer images as scarce wonders of

nature worthy of saving for a new generation of participative, concerned and appreciative eco-consumers. This is an example of imagery that is imbued with aesthetic meaning subtly influencing people at an emotional level (Biehl-Missal 2013). Using this approach institutions are regarded as discursively constituted social constructions repeated regularly and consistently over time. Shared definitions of socially constructed realities are principally accomplished through the production and consumption of texts or other semiotic vehicles that describe, communicate and legitimize action and practices (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy 2004; Munir and Phillips 2005). Using our space metaphor, we have seen this discursive evolution in the transformation of Pluto from a planet to a moon and now currently to a minor/dwarf planet.

From this perspective, texts such as business models, annual accounts and strategic plans have impact on meaning by providing *traces*, which are distributed, disseminated and re-used semiotically, providing self-regulating mechanisms by which actions and practices become repetitive, regulated and thus institutionalised. Traces can also manifest themselves as mantras, core or 'root' metaphors and other tropes, repeated stories or narratives, pro-forma, received schemas such as SWOT analyses, fads, symbols and logos. Textual traces are usually important in turning single actions into repeat practices through isomorphism and thus the beginnings of regular or habitual action and consequently institutionalised behaviour. So, for example, commercial law provides texts that regulate the practices of commercial exchange in market-based economies so that 'markets' can become institutionalised. Meyer (2008) in support of this suggests that certain modern myths, like markets, supporting rational actorhood have started to become isomorphically globalised even if subject to adjustments through variation of local interpretations. In another example, Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy (2004) cite the study of Palmer, Jennings, and Zhou (1993) to show how the ubiquitous adoption of 'multidivisional structures' in the 1960s in the USA involved discursive structuration around the impetus and textual consensus created from the viral scripting following Chandler's (1962) book on 'Strategy and Structure'. Discursive structuration, therefore, involves a process where meanings attached to actions through sense-making where texts make 'traces' and virally gain momentum in terms of establishing meaning and garnering beliefs in the legitimacy of such actions. Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy (2004) propose that texts are more likely to make such traces when they involve crucial issues of sense-making, legitimacy and identity, and where originate from reputable actors using recognizable genres and employ existing mappable, intertextual references.

When, as a result of establishing meaning through textual processes, beliefs become norms and are rooted in the schemata, scripts and practical consciousness of the majority then they may be regarded as institutions. Discursive structuration holds that institutions, once established, provide structural frames which delineate subsequent action so that the influence between structure and action is always two-way and mitigated by discourse in both directions. Discourse affects action, therefore, through the constitution of institutions that produce sanctions against actions not prescribed and which make deviations from sanctioned action costly (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy 2004). On the Planet of Institutions, surface actions and structural depth are co-created mainly through the medium of discourse and its interpretation through sense-making resources provided by practical consciousness. The planet of Institutions in our galaxy metaphor is also influenced by other planets, by the Star of discourse and by the Black Hole of consumption. It is strongly influenced by the neighbouring Planet of Trust to which we examine in the following section.

### ***The planet of trust and the moon of power***

The Planet of Trust revolves closely to the Planet of Institutions in our metaphor. For Bachmann (2001) trust and power operate in a dialectic process in different combinations and at different levels (individual and organizational). Trust and power are, in other words, jointly structured and this process is closely related to institutional and cultural co-structuration. From a structural perspective, trust is vital to social interaction in that it reduces uncertainty and complexity sufficiently for the practical consciousness of the actor to engage in abductive sense-making. The risks associated with affording trust have to be sufficient to induce confidence in predictable expectations of the trustworthiness of the trustee, structural norms and resource implications of the relationship. In our planetary metaphor, without the Planet of Trust, the galaxy would be in disequilibrium. Without trust, social interaction and relationships (and therefore Institutions and Culture, Economics, Technology, etc.) are inoperable. Trust is structured in that trusting practice is both enabled and constrained by trust structures and moderated by the practical consciousness of trusting agents (Sydow 1998). Equally, the other planets are vital to trust. Bachmann (2001, 346) invokes Luhmann's (1979) systems theory to advocate that institutions have a latent but significant influence upon structures of trust (i.e. through systems trust) and upon trust practices. Bachman (2001) also suggests that structuration (Giddens 1984) explains these mutual influences very well through the notion that power and trust are both structured and co-structured. Bachman (2001) goes on to show how different institutional and cultural arrangements in Germany and

Britain create different patterns of trust and power. Interpreting this through our planetary metaphor, we can suggest that power may be likened to a kind of moon around trust. Power is, in this conception, another type of (negative) force for co-ordination of social relationships that operates similarly and often coordinatively with trust as another (positive) coordinative force. We trust that the power of the moon will result in the ebb and flow of our planetary tides. If we bring into this conception of the inter-relationship and co-determination between institutions, trust and power the realisation that discourse is the star in this galaxy, we can realise that institutions, trust and power are all always co-constituted through narratives, texts and tropes enabled through the moderating influence of the actors' practical consciousness or 'habitus'. In using discourse and language gaming, actors are in constant battles to reconstruct social realities so that their interests are protected and furthered (Hardy and Phillips 2004; Suddaby and Greenwood 2005). In an empirical exploration of homeworking, Brocklehurst (2001) confirms partial validity of Giddens' (1984) structural approach to power. His findings, however, suggest that power and identity are rather more closely related than suggested by Giddens (1984). Our planetary metaphor can account for this by conceiving identity as another structural sphere in the galaxy whose gravitational influence upon Trust and Power and upon Institutions and Culture suggest close proximities and strong mutual determination amongst all of these spheres.

### ***The planet of culture & its identity Moon***

A structural approach to identity and culture requires them to be regarded as another co-determining duality. Hatch and Schultz (2002) adopt such a duality by combining culture and identity using G. H. Mead's (1934) notion of the mirror of the 'Me' and the 'I'. Using this duality identity can be seen as a process that develops through the interpenetration of projections of organizational culture and reflected external images of identity. Such an approach fits comfortably with a structural approach and our planetary metaphor. We can conceive of culture and identity as both structured and co-structured, which would require us to see identity as a moon of the planet culture. The idea of structured culture fits tolerably well with Hofstede's (1980) 'onion' metaphor where values are the structural core of culture and practices are on the surface. However, a structural approach is better derived from Hatch's (1993) notion of culture as a recursive process involving a circularity of effects between assumptions, values, artefacts and symbols if we regard assumptions and values as structured and artefacts and symbols as manifestations of agency and practice. If it is not already obvious, it should be clear that this approach is not consistent with Archer's

(1996) view, which had significant influence upon Critical Realism, that culture is a determinant of agency, rather than co-determined with it. Identities conceived as co-structured with culture are created at a macro-level through representations of cultural projections and images reflected from audiences (Hatch and Cunliffe 2006; Hatch and Schultz 2002) as well as in micro-level individual interactions where actors project an 'I' and get reflections of a 'Me' mirrored back from others (Mead 1934) both on and off-stage. From a structural perspective the cultural 'I' is constituted together by cultural structures and practices just as the identity of 'me' is constituted by identity structures and practices. Culture and identity are also co-structured and, returning to our planetary metaphor, identity acts as a moon revolving around the cultural planet where the latter has influence over the former (in a reversal of our previous power/trust metaphor or at least there is mutual influence over one another and with trust inherent in both). Reflections from the moon onto the planet, of course, come from the Sun of Discourse, which therefore has effects both upon daily practices on the cultural planet and its identity moon as well as the structural configurations of both spheres

From a structuration perspective identity is a structural accomplishment through everyday practice mediated by the interpretive schemas of practitioners. As with all structures, identity therefore is a product and producer of 'identity work' by practitioners. The favoured metaphor in identity research is the social 'mirror' (Dutton and Dukerich 1991) or recursive and participative construals created in interaction between actor and audience (Cheney and Christensen 2001; Elsbach and Kramer 1996; Ginzler, Kramer, and Sutton 1993). Identity is heterogeneous and often fragile and its stability relies heavily on successfully repeated performances. Identity, of course, operates from the individual level up and through various levels of abstraction.

### **Understanding the Black Hole of consumption**

Through a structural lens, our depiction of consumption as a Black Hole in our space metaphor suggests that consumption is increasingly hegemonic in the structures, modalities and agency and through the resources of domination and rules of signification and legitimation operating in the structural constellation. In his critical analysis of 'The Consumer Society', Baudrillard (1998) outlines the pervasiveness and power of consumption mythologies promulgating desires for objects rather than needs for their utility. From this perspective, consumption has become the prevailing social logic crowding out other logics. This view regards consumption as a kind of semiotic plague. It is, in structural terms, a macro-structuration where structures of consumption govern all structural phenomena and

consumption practices are equally hegemonic amongst all other practices. Consumption, in terms of the planetary system used in this paper, is a Black Hole with a force dragging all matter into its centre, warping and distorting structures and processes of life in a process of domination which promises to finally destroy and assimilate them altogether until all that is left is commodification. This is a pessimistic view; we see practices of consumption as participatory by consumer agents in a partly self-induced trap of being locked in a ‘gilded cage’ of pursuance of unsustainable fantasies sometimes spilling into narcissism. Advertisers are thus involved with consumers in a conspiracy of the pursuit of artificial happiness with costs that are hidden and dangerous. Consumers have the capacity to change this agenda through changes in action and discourse but this is unlikely, we think, until the hidden costs of ubiquitous consumption and the ‘consumption of consumption’ are realised.

A structurational understanding of consumption requires, however, an appreciation that it is more than a structural imposition of advertising discourse. From a structuration approach we would need to understand how consumption practices moderated by the practical consciousness or ‘habitus’ is involved in structures of consumption. In other words, this involves taking the agency of the consumer seriously and not regarding them as mere cultural dopes of advertising and PR. Consumers are, from this perspective, often complicit in their captivation by consumerism which offers them emotional rewards and fulfilment of desires that keep them practicing as consumers. The implication is that their emotional, rational and abductive behaviour as regular consumers ‘makes sense’ and the habitual practices of consumption sustain a consumer society recursively and in perpetual, growing structuration. From this perspective, only some massive calamity such as ecological degradation or total economic meltdown (or catastrophic astronomical occurrences like asteroid-planet collision – see Armageddon and Deep Impact) is likely to change this perpetual motion. For these reasons, we liken consumption in our planetary metaphor to a Black Hole. The force of the Black Hole appears impenetrable and the force threatens to destroy and assimilate all other phenomena until it is the only thing left.

The application of social theories of practice to consumption is addressed comprehensively by Warde (2005). He regards these as fragmented, reflecting the pluralistic and dynamic viewpoints about social life and identifies structuration as amongst the principal social theories of practice. Warde (2005) points to the useful overview by Reckwitz (2002) which provides a good source of more detailed understanding of social theories of practice to those interested. Reckwitz (2002) cites Giddens (1984) structuration as the most explicit expression of the importance of the ‘doings and sayings’ of practice as both coordinative and

performative. In other words, practice involves both action and its representations as well as scripts and their enactments in performances. Practices obviously vary between, for example simple and complex, dispersed and integrative, individual and collective and social theories of practice need to adequately account for this heterogeneity. It is lack, in this comprehensiveness, that Warde (2005) attributes to all social theories of practice, including structuration. The implication is that Giddens' (1984) structuration may need complementing at times with other social theories of practice, such as those of Bourdieu (1977) and Schatzki (1996). In applying social theories of practice to consumption, Warde (2005, 145) makes clear that 'consumption occurs within and for the sake of practices'. Consumption is thus as diverse, fragmented and idiosyncratic in its heterogeneous 'doings and sayings' and varieties of coordination and performances. Consumption requires differential engagement in the artefacts, symbols and skills required in the practices of consuming, which means that different consumers will usually practice consuming the same thing differently. Applying structuration and other social theories of practice to consumption moves the key focal points to 'the organization of the practice and the moments of consumption enjoined' (Warde 2005, 146). In other words, the focus is upon how the practice, the habitus and the structures at play are co-ordinated in order to create sufficient satisfaction for particular people in particular contexts so that they are motivated to repeat these practices as habits becomes the agenda for understanding consumption. Structuration and other social theories of practice, from this viewpoint, provide general *and* specific reasons to explain the thrall, power and hegemony of consumption and the increasing commodification of everything in contemporary societies, their institutions, trust and power relations, cultures and identity formations. Consumption as a Black Hole is not mass consumption; it is a diverse mass of repetitive heterogeneous all-consuming practices.

### **An outline of research issues for developing discourse structuration**

Discourse structuration is designed to try to explain dynamic, complex, polystructural systems. Several issues of this approach need to be emphasised. Given space limitations, we focus upon those immediately pertinent to strategy and marketing issues (as this is the 'space' in which we operate in academia) and to case methodology (since this is extensively employed in the area of business-to-business marketing and network research). Seidl and Whittington (2014) warn against 'parking' of concepts such as context, against lack of reflexivity in ontological choices and failures to 'follow through' on these choices. We do not

disagree and offer complementary issues and observations. However, we consider that a discourse structural approach has more ‘paradigm crossing’ potentials through the use of temporary ‘pontoon’ research bridges and is better placed to avoid or transcend problems of paradigm incommensurability (Burrell and Morgan 1979) since we are currently unable to access the wormholes that would enable dimensional space/time and paradigmatic crossing to use our space metaphor. As a consequence, we would advocate a ‘longer’ and ‘wider’ ontology as a complement to the tall and short ontological options proposed by Seidl and Whittington (2014). Returning to Deleuze and Guattari’s constellation-like assemblages and our own astronomical metaphor, we are positing a research approach that acknowledges imagining this assemblage in a time-space that is “inherently unstable and infused with movement and change.....offering an odd, irregular time-limited object for contemplation” (Marcus and Saka, 2006: 101). Our principal research issues and observations for such an agenda are as follows:

***Crossing research barriers may require new research metaphors***

In all explorations of crossing research barriers, we have already noticed that a ‘bridging’ metaphor is ubiquitous. We seek an alternative to bridging that addresses the undoubted difficulties of applying an ‘ex-ante’ approach to cases (Andersen and Kragh 2010) involving language gaming of multi-paradigmatic authorship. We propose the metaphor of using ‘pontoons’ as temporary structures to be used on a research context by context basis to accomplish ‘ex-ante’ barrier crossing case research. We propose that as temporary and mobile rafts, pontoons are more suitable for the problem specific or ‘emic’ barriers that most ‘ex-ante’ case research projects face.

***Discourse structuration needs to draw broadly upon social practice theories***

Rasche and Chia (2009) explore social practices and their consequences for strategic practice. They identify the genealogy of strategy as practice and describe two source approaches as what they call neo-structuralist and neo-interpretivist. In doing so they identify the synergies of combining these two source approaches in a kind of ‘pontoon’ approach with Bourdieu as a key author within the neo-structuralist school and Goffman within the neo-interpretivists. Their proposed pontooning approach emphasizes Goffman’s performativity and Bourdieu’s habitus as internalized and embodied rules of the games as equally important. It comes along with an emphasis upon material practices in terms of acquisition and deployment of ‘species of capital’ in the playing of language games. The strategy as practice approach that Rasche and Chia (2009) draw upon is interested in social practices as a way to explain everyday

strategizing action and how actors actually ‘do strategy’. This is why Rasche and Chia (2009) are interested in the ‘social theories of practice’ of Bourdieu and Goffman. In doing so they identify elements to be considered when conceptualizing and researching strategy practices as embodied routines (habits, rituals etc.), use of objects, identity constitution through practice and background, and tacit knowledge in situ – but again, a Deleuzian assemblage perspective emphasizes and constructs the set of relations between these self-subsisting elements. The ‘practice turn’ sees practice as embodied, materially enabled sets of human activities organized around shared practical understandings (Schatzki 2001). Rasche and Chia (2009, 721) outline the research requirements for investigating practices as requiring focus upon lived experiences in terms of routinized bodily performances in the form of ‘bodily sayings and doings’. Reflections on these bodily sayings and speech acts can be therefore an initial form of exploration to be complemented by subsequent ethnographic observations that gets closer to the ‘live action’ of bodily sayings and doings in different contexts. As abductive bricoleurs of live action, practical actors have ‘intimate knowledge of the human, material, and symbolic resources of their organization, and their thinking is based on proximity, rather than on the abstraction induced by many contemporary management methods’ (Duymedjian and Ruling 2010, 148).

***Various conceptual concepts need connecting into a more coherent whole through practice-sensitive methodologies***

Research pontoons within discourse structuration approaches, therefore, need to be able to connect repetitive practice, discourse, particularly talk, texts and tropes (as the most manifest aspect of practical consciousness) and structural enablement and constraint. By pontooning, the researcher is licensed to make these connections through research bricolage; by making these connections through whatever resources are available to hand in the particular research context she finds herself. By its very nature, research bricolage involving pontooning is looking for speculations, abductions and guesswork that ‘stick’ long enough to realise research objectives. It is also itself abductive and not suitable for precisely prescribed methodologies.

In this regard, we find a similar concern in the field of strategy described by Denis, Langley, and Rouleau (2007). We also think that many of the solutions presented by Denis, Langley, and Rouleau (2007) are pertinent to the broader context of problems resulting from pluralities amongst researchers and between researchers and practitioners in marketing and management. Denis, Langley, and Rouleau (2007) examine Actor Network Theory,

Conventionalist Theory and Strategy-as-Practice approach as three lenses which highlight the three principle problems of coordinating within heterogeneous networks; namely power, values and knowledge. Combination of these approaches, they argue, provides solutions to co-ordination by focussing upon situated routines as a practical means of power brokerage, accommodations of values and knowledge intermediation in interaction. The focus upon routine practices of interaction brings with it an emphasis upon materiality, discourse and representations involved in embodied experience. The approach is entirely consistent with what we are proposing to call floating ‘pontoons’ because these are also mobile and temporary bridging devices designed to enable crossing and mediating between actions and structures.

### ***Incommensurabilities need to be transcended***

Comprehending reflexive practice involving abductive action in structural development has been identified as the central issue in research of complex, dynamic, multi-structured systems. Given the vast complexity of the dynamic polystructural ‘system’ we have described here metaphorically as a planetary system, it is unlikely that progress will be possible without crossing disciplinary and paradigmatic boundaries. The shocking implication of discourse structuration is that, even at the extremes, no Structural Equation Model would not benefit from a complementary Ethnographic study (or vice versa). Further it is unlikely that practice can be successfully integrated into our epistemes without collaboration with practitioners themselves and on their own terms. The need to take practice and discourse seriously is hampered by paradigm incommensurabilities and resistance to paradigm crossing and integration. Our proposition is that paradigms cannot be bridged but it is possible to cross them using temporary structures on a heuristic, case by case basis, which requires cultivation of skills of research bricolage and the employment of methodological pontoons. As knowledge itself can be regarded as structured, a resilient research habitus maintaining such barriers is a critical problem. We argue that metaphors we used, for example, to carry meaning of research are, partisan and favour particular structural tropes (like ‘bridges’) and their onto-epistemological assumptions over others. Changing research will, consequently we would further argue, only possible if research discourse is changed along with research practice.

The reason for theory-practice separation is given by Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011, 339) as being an inheritance of the dominance of scientific rationality which “makes practice derivative of theory and, thus, practical relevance more abstract and less rich”, hence

sustaining a theory-practice gap. Chia and Holt (2008) also identify and lament the preference for abstract causal explanation over practical knowledge and the business school practice of privileging rigor and precision as mediators of authoritative knowledge at the expense of what they call ‘knowledge-by-exemplification’ associated with demonstration, creativity and performance. The privilege afforded to scientific rationality often results in scientific chauvinism towards practitioners and their inferior logic (Sandberg and Tsoukas 2011). The main consequence, in our view, is that academe has developed a culture that has mostly isolated itself from practice and the practitioner, embedded itself in abstract theorizing and fragmented into paradigmatic discursive/political silos where bashing the paradigmatic opposition in leading journals is seen as a route to academic career success.

Incommensurability and paradigm warfare is a condition found in the rarefied and abstract atmosphere of academia and is of little relevance to the world of practice. It also bolsters academic careers but has no obvious practical use to anyone involved in dealing with everyday issues in business or organizing generally. Therefore, a move towards using practice as a pontoon for all except those who choose to remain in their ‘ivory towers’ is a move away from this ‘paradigm plague’ (Holland 1990). This academic isolation provides interesting debates on abstract contestations and hair splitting over nuanced theoretical differences usually involving dualist arguments, such as whether an actor has or doesn’t have agency. In practical contexts this is a much less relevant question because the actor will and won’t have agency according to the context. Returning to our space metaphor, this incommensurability and paradigm warfare demonstrates a galaxy of different worldviews consisting of (chronologically) rising and falling stars, altered gravities and the occasional black hole.

***Practice needs understanding on its own terms not simply as a consequence of structure***

With regard to practice, Shotter (2010a, 245) states: ‘What is special about our everyday activities is that they occur within the ceaseless flow of many unfolding strands of spontaneously responsive, living activity’. The ‘practice turn’ in social theory (Schatzki 2001) attempted to remedy the prior neglect of practical accomplishments, logic and wisdom. The development of Western thought based on the ‘knowledge-creation-application-performance’ (Chia 2003, 953) style presumes that knowledge needs to be objective and to precede action (i.e. through hypothesis testing). Practical knowledge, which is often indeterminate, uncertain, abductive, unfixed, tacit and complex, in this episteme, is ignored or marginalized in the search for certainty and the illusory ‘conclusive’ findings. Shotter

(2010b) argues that knowledge is of no help in developing the embodied skills and criteria of judgment to actually do things unless it is effectively ‘how to’ knowledge – knowledge developed through doing -- and that this kind of understanding necessitates having an embodied sense of the relevant criteria to be used in assessing one’s success in making incremental progress towards achieving desired outcomes.

***Understanding practice on its own terms requires taking its embodied and habitual nature seriously***

Most social theories of practice emphasise the importance of practical consciousness, habitus or practical rationality, its heterogeneous and situated nature, its routine character and the indivisibility of body (doing) and mind (knowing). Practical life is, therefore, constituted through the sayings and doings of concrete, mundane micro practices (of discourse and other types of interaction) which are embedded in referrals to broader or macro-level, abstract ideas and structures. Both the theory-practice gap and the paradigm incommensurability problem appear to be problems resulting from pluralism. In both cases inhabitancy by actors of different lifeworlds makes co-ordination of the interests, values and purposes of different parties difficult, sometimes appearing impossible.

Practice-based approaches often emphasize the interconnectivity of embodied experience, mental processes, discursive enactments and material things. They, therefore, are pontooning all of Capra’s (2002) essential criteria for understanding lifeworlds: pattern, process, meaning and structure. In terms of pattern, this involves relational patterns that form an unfolding relational totality – a constellation-like assemblage if you will. This means an embodied pattern of relations encompassing emotions, senses and feelings as well as cognition. Such embodiment has been somewhat cloaked under Cartesian preferences for ‘mind over body’ within scientific rationalism, thus practice-based approaches attempt to uncloak the corporeal world of interactors. Yakhlef (2010) argues that since the body is our link to the social and material world and is therefore the medium for knowing and learning that a corporeal basis for practice-based approaches will better contribute to our understanding of the social basis for human cognition, action and interaction. With similar concerns, Callahan (2004) proposes that emotion can be fruitfully examined as a structurational phenomenon by regarding emotions and social contexts as co-determining. In terms of process, the emphasis of practice approaches is upon culturally configured mental representations within a *Weltanschauung* that determine ethnomethods prescribing what is acceptable and what is not in action and discourse. In terms of meaning, practice-based

approaches take into account the hermeneutic nexus of meaning as affected by discourse (knowledge, communication and power) as transmitted through narratives, stories, rhetorical devices or tropes such as metaphor, metonymy, irony and synecdoche and proxemics or non-verbal communication. For example, Zilber (2007), using a discursive approach to institutionalization, shows how story multivocality and competing discursive dynamics between stories supporting institutional structures and counter-stories or what Boje (2008) has called ‘antenarratives’ constituted consequences for change following a crisis in the Israeli high-tech sector. Finally, in terms of structures, practice-based approaches include socio-material practices and material arrangements of technologies, artefacts and symbols, including gender, ethnic, class, and other structural differentiations. The emphasis, therefore, is upon situated practice involving complex interactions within unfolding relational totalities where agency is afforded equally to patterns, processes, meanings and materials in bundled (Schatzki 2005) sites or multiple stages of performative practice and storytelling (Boje 2008).

### **An example: A ‘practice turn’ pontoon approach for multidisciplinary perspectives in marketing research**

Practice may be regarded as embodied, materially enabled sets of human activities organized around shared practical understandings (Schatzki 2001). Practice perspectives emphasize that strategizing in plural contexts involve ‘mobilizing explicit and tacit knowledge through everyday discourse and action’ (Denis, Langley, and Rouleau 2007, 198). Chia (2004) makes it clear that the ‘practice turn’ as applied to strategy mostly by processualists such as Mintzberg (1987), Pettigrew (1992, 1997) and Whittington (1996) has resulted in a welcome departure from disembodied and abstract theorizing. Chia (2004) also suggests that the inheritance of dominant scientism has corrupted any understanding of practical logic. He suggests that further interrogation of practice needs to be understood with regard to the contributions of praxis social theorists and their influence on the ‘practice turn’ in social theory. In particular, notions of practice have tended to presuppose rational action and reliance of the practitioner on instrumental reason and cognitive representations. Chia (2004) blames the privileging of observer-led, means-end, causal logic on an intellectualisation /academic logocentrism or literary perspective where words and language are regarded as a fundamental expression of external reality – all of which fails to understand practice within its own practical logic and its non-rational, non-linear and non-causal terms.

More recently, the practice turn has seen the incorporation of Lévi-Strauss' bricolage (Boxenbaum and Rouleau 2011) in organisational research – i.e., looking at acting (practice), knowing (epistemology), and one's underlying world view (metaphysics) in 'doing things with whatever is at hand' (Duymedjian and Ruling 2010, 133). This is somewhat analogous to Bourdieu's (1977) notion of 'habitus', the employment of which requires researchers not only look at the experiences of managers, but they also explore 'being' as scholars using, for example' polytropy and mixing scripts of epistemic metaphors (Boxenbaum and Rouleau 2011) through conceptual blending (Oswick, Fleming, and Hanlon 2011). Actions are not dictated but framed by habitus. This again, supports our position regarding the implications of researchers incorporating more practice-based reflexivity and introspection in their work because academic habitus, due to the dominance of Cartesian science, has been inclined to privilege theory over practice.

A practice turn in marketing emphasises the importance of pragmatic and practical perspectives to marketing theory (Nicholson, Lindgreen, and Kitchen 2009). It appears consistent with structuration theory in emphasising the importance for market making and shaping of exchange, normalizing and representational practices (Kjellberg and Helgesson 2006) and a 'markets-as-practice' orientation (Geiger, Kjellberg and Spencer 2012). These appear consistent with Giddens '(1984) emphasis upon communication, power and sanctions of interactions in relation to modalities and structures in structuration. Araujo, Kjellberg, and Spencer (2008) maintain that a move towards a practice turn involves adoption of a performative idiom which directs attention to the emergent and unfolding practices that actors engage in to frame, socially construct and problematize markets. They posit, as we do, that moving on from a representational idiom, characterized by scientific rationality, facilitate the leaving behind of 'stultifying debate on the gap between theory and practice or the best techniques for providing a bird's eye representation of markets' (Araujo, Kjellberg, and Spencer 2008, 8). The focus in a practice-based approach therefore moves towards process and performativity of market shaping and enactments and the interactive scripting undertaken to create and develop markets. From this 'market-shaping' view, markets are created through performances of market practices (Kjellberg and Helgesson 2006; Araujo, Kjellberg, and Spencer 2008; Andersson, Aspenberg, and Kjellberg 2008). Such dramaturgy requires scripts (as discursive derivatives of the practical consciousness or habitus of actors). As a result, scripting is a complex process where (explained in structurational terms) a market is made as a 'becoming in practice' (Nenonen and Storbacka 2013) through the habitus (or practical consciousness) of actors being textualised through, for example, a business model or

economic theory, which effectively becomes the accepted action script. This is entirely compatible with discourse structuration, which holds that discourse (communication, language, power) is the key catalyst for the recursive co-invention between structure and agency. This performativity focus of ‘marketing as practice’ goes beyond rationalised managerialist concerns and includes more embodied and critical reflexivity. A bricolaged approach to research using multiple lenses is more likely to be appropriate to this dramaturgical/performativity focus than any single paradigmatic choice. Our paper has proposed that this research object is a multiple, polysemic and rather ‘polyphonic’ process because of the multiple spheres upon which structure and agency interacts through discourse simultaneously.

### **Conclusion**

Our paper is a somewhat ironic attempt at “articulating what at root is inarticulable” (Eriksson, 2005, p. 595); the conclusion of which is that the consequence of complex structural discourse is a mission, should you choose to accept it, to boldly go where no one has gone before into the challenge of exploring structuration as a complex set of inter-related spheres. To navigate this constellation requires development of the skills of the research bricoleur, who is able to cross multiple paradigms using methodological ‘pontoons’ on a heuristic, case by case basis. Using these notions, the polystructural space traveller will select methods, borrow and mix ontologies and epistemologies according to the research problem defined, the resources and access available and the motivation to explore this space adventurously and with purpose.

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