RECASTING THE HOME-WORK RELATIONSHIP:
A CASE OF MUTUAL ADJUSTMENT?

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Abstract

Advances in Communication and Information Technologies, changing managerial strategies and changing cultural expectations about the location of (paid) work, have meant that paid work is increasingly conducted from home. Home then becomes the place where the discourse of industrial production meets with the discourse of household production. We analyse the relationship between these two traditionally separate discourses, which through the disintegration of the time/space compression, increasingly come to bear on each other. We report on the experiences of homeworkers and their families coping with the co-presence of the sometimes conflicting and sometimes competing demands and values embedded in such discourses. In doing so, we contribute to current understandings of the complexities inherent in emergent forms of organization, as the relationship between work and home is recast. Theoretically and methodologically, this empirical study is located within a discursive framework, and we emphasise the usefulness of such approaches to studying organizational realities.

Keywords: telework; discourse; temporal metaphors; lived experience

Introduction

Contemporary accounts depict the future world of work as flexible, mobile, temporary and mediated by technology. Within these accounts organizations are seen as flexible networks, virtually dispersed in time and space, so that work can be conducted with anybody, anytime, anywhere. The consequences, opportunities and fallacies inherent in such flexible organization of work have been celebrated, condemned, analyzed and criticized in the accounts provided by different bodies

of literatures and the media. While there is a well established, if not uncontested, body of work on flexibility from the point of view of the work organization, less is known about the consequences of such organizational flexibility from the point of view of the 'household'. To illuminate the more subtle intricacies of such flexible work, we focus here on the experience of home-based telework for a group of management professionals who had begun increasingly to work from home. The arrival of (paid) work into the private sphere of these employees and their families was a potential trigger for change in the relationship between 'home' and 'work', and it is the nature of this change that is the topic of this paper.

Drawing on 'discourse' and 'discourse analysis' as topic and resource, we begin by providing the definition of discourse we employ. Second, we explore the discourses of industry and home, unravelling their respective concepts and normative values and how these might be translated into practice and visible artefacts, including metaphoric language use. We describe and explain our research rationale and methods, followed by our interpretation of data, largely based on an analysis of temporal metaphors, although we acknowledge that space is necessarily implicated in a temporal approach. In the final sections we explore the recasting of the work/home relationship and point to the complexities and contradictions inherent in such change.

Using Discourse

We understand discourse as organized systems of meaning (Burr 1995) in which sets of connected concepts, terms, statements and expressions constitute a way of

talking/writing about a particular theme/issue, thus framing the ways in which people feel, understand and respond to it. In particular, the existence of systematic, coherent sets of images and metaphors (Burr 1995) play a pivotal role in the sustaining of particular discourses (Tsoukas 1993), and it is these metaphors in particular that we focus upon here [i]. Human agents use such images in rhetorically constructing persuasive accounts that provide economic and social legitimacy for them (Billig 1990; Watson 1995). In this regard, metaphors in particular are 'pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action...[they are] the concepts that govern our thoughts [and] everyday functioning down to the most mundane details' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3). Metaphors are key constituent parts of such discursive webs of meaning, which they both express and (re)create.

Whilst metaphors have long been established as a conceptual tool in organisational analysis (Morgan 1986; Grant and Oswick 1996), there is an acknowledged dearth of studies that draw on metaphors as they are used in organizational talk (Oswick and Montgomery 1999). Here, we use metaphors both as a conceptual tool, in that they provide a frame for our analysis, as well as investigating metaphors as expressed in talk and action by our respondents. We do this because metaphors can be conceived as revealing 'labels' for various discourses, and particular metaphors resonate with the values and patterns prevalent within certain discourses. This echoes the view of Tsoukas that it is 'very probable that the most popular metaphors will be those reflecting dominant ideas and biases of the pertinent social era' (1993: 335).

We see discourses, then, as framing and indeed influencing the way people understand their realities and act upon them, and metaphors as having a key role to play in that process. The relationship between grand or macro (institutional) Discourses (D) and local, micro discourses (d) is a difficult one to establish and explore. Alvesson and Kärreman (2000a: 1134) comment on this relationship: 'We think that there is a tension between those two levels … It is not easy, we believe, to accurately account for both in the same study. This should not, however, discourage such efforts. Rigour should sometimes be downplayed for the benefit of social relevance.' In this paper we endeavour to capture discourse as 'lived experience', or micro discourses of localised practices and talk. However, we find an exclusive focus on 'the micro' unsatisfactory, because it can be seen as discursively 'myopic' (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000a: 1130). We attempt therefore, to demonstrate how the macro Discourses of industrial and household production can be conceived as influential, and to show how they are enacted in the context of people's lived experience. In doing so we strike a precarious balance, and (ultimately) we cannot claim to have resolved the dilemma described by Alvesson and Kärreman. But, in exploring empirics, we make a modest claim to social relevance.

Our position then is that the relationship between micro discourses and macro Discourses is a mutual one: They are jointly constructed at the local and/or institutional ends that they serve. Thus, the activities of actors shape discourses, while those discourses also shape the actions of those actors (Hardy et al. 2000). We might name this complex connection D/discourse because of this mutually implicated relationship whereby people dynamically (re)shape and develop such

D/discourses. But how can we know where the influence starts and stops, how it is shaped and influenced in this iterative process? What we can say is that human actors achieve particular projects by drawing on D/discourses, because they use particular discursive resources (expressions, words - indeed metaphors - practices and symbolic behaviour informed by metaphorical concepts; the deployment of artefacts) that are made socially available to them. But this is not to say that individuals enjoy absolute freedom, following a 'pick and choose' approach so to speak, in assembling their identities and access to meaning making. Rather, they are simultaneously constrained (and enabled) by pre-existing D/discourses. From this perspective individuals are seen as dynamic agents positioning themselves actively in existing D/discourses (Harré 1982; Davis and Harré 1990). These positioning actions occur in and through language (as well as other symbolic and material actions) or to be more exact: in and through language *use*.

We do not wish to insinuate that all social actors have equal access to all meaning systems, or that all are equally equipped to draw on them, or that such utilisation is a neutral and rational process, or that meaning systems exist peacefully alongside each other. People need access to symbolic and material resources and authority to make themselves heard, and legitimise their respective projects, but it is easier for some people to do so than for others (Hardy et al. 2000). For example, organisation theorists in the critical tradition have invariably and consistently pointed to the silencing or distortion of voices (Harlow et al. 1995, Wolfe Morrison and Milliken 2003). Thus our thinking does not preclude the study of ideology as the route through which meaning systems can be mobilised in the interests of powerful groups (Thompson 1990).

We are aware of the controversy surrounding the use of D/discourse as a topic and resource for organizational analysis, and as a basis for theorising (Reed 2000). Indeed, the rise of the linguistic turn in organization studies has been subject to much debate, particularly regarding the role of language in reality construction and 'truth claims' in research data (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000b). But, in his contribution to the discussion about the role and standing of D/discourse, Chia (2000: 513) writes: 'The idea that reality is socially constructed, has become an accepted truth. What is less commonly understood is how this reality gets constructed in the first place and what sustains it.' In choosing to analyse the metaphors-in-use of particular D/discourses, we contribute to a processual understanding of the potential recasting of home and work.

Discourses of Production

We discuss here two institutional meaning systems (and therefore use the term Discourse to reflect the macro aspect) that have deeply affected the organisation of life in Western societies. We distinguish between a Discourse of Industrial Production and one of Household Production. These two meaning systems have become culturally different spheres: 'The overall moral and social principle around which today's working and living relationships are organised is that paid work of industrial production and unpaid work of household production are "separate spheres"' (Perin 1998: 41). Industrial production has become associated with paid work and particular localities (the firm; the factory; the office), together with particular social, gender and occupational identities, and said to follow rational, objective principles of scientific management, whilst household

production has become constructed as 'the other' (Brocklehurst 2001), anchored into the (usually female) homemaker, located in the domestic sphere and created and sustained through the unpaid labours of love. Although we agree with Perin (1998) that such clear, dichotomous ordering is based on the myth of discontinuity to some extent, we nevertheless contend that the two Discourses can only be understood in relation to each other (see Adam 1995). We see important differences in their respective normative systems and how they shape social interactions and provide trajectories for conduct and behaviour (Campbell-Clark 2000; Zerubavel 1991). In other words, each Discourse is defined by its 'other' in that the meaning of industry/home; paid work/unpaid work; breadwinner/homemaker etc. are always defined by what they are not, that is by their difference - or différance (Derrida 1978). In this regard we can only understand 'the paid work of industry' in relation to, yet separate from, 'the unpaid work of home'.

Industrial Production

Central to the Discourse of industrial production is one particular metaphor that entails a quantifiable, reified understanding of time, which is used as a commodity to mediate particular exchange processes, as well as a disciplinary tool to control the production process and those involved in it (Adam 1995; 2004; Nowotny 1994). 'Time is Money' is the key metaphorical concept on which the logic of industrial production is built. The principles of scientific management (Taylor 1911/1967) involve the mastery of clock time to generate the most efficient production system for maximum profit. Time becomes a measurable resource that can be planned, controlled and efficiently administered (Sabelis 2001), and this

conceptualisation impacts on the experience of time. E.P. Thompson (1967: 61) writes: 'This measurement embodies a simple relationship. Those who are employed experience a distinction between their employer's time and their "own" time. And the employer must <u>use</u> the time of his labour, and see it is not wasted: not the task, but the value of time when reduced to money is dominant. Time is now a currency: it is not passed, but spent.' Thus, as Thompson notes, the understanding of industrial time is based on time-keeping, time-thrift and time-discipline and as such 'men's mind became saturated with the equation "time is money"' (p.95).

Thus, time has been transformed into a currency, and 'Time is Money' has become one of the most dominant 'metaphors we live by' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Encoded into this metaphorical logic are instrumental social/organisational relationships in which social actors treat each other as a means to an end, because relationships are subject to the same dictates of efficiency and subsequent standardisation as the production process. Even though workers might find spaces within the domain of industrial production to escape from that logic (Roy 1960; Ackroyd and Thompson 1999), it is still one of the most dominant rationalities in the conventional workplace.

<u>Household production</u>

The household has been constructed as the opposite to industrial production (Felstead and Jewson 2000; Kompast and Wagner 1998; Mirchandani 1998) in that it presents the necessary, yet less powerful and less visible 'other' (Brocklehurst 2001). It is traditionally the domain of women and children. Its

language is that of the labour of love, based on values of care, reciprocity and nurture. Being the complementary 'other' involves a different understanding of time that draws on a plurality of temporalities (Daly 1996: 121 - 136; Davies 1990), grounded in experience of recurrent patterns and rhythms of activities. These are cyclic (rather than linear), blurred (rather than clear-cut), task-based (rather than clock-based), embedded (rather than decontextualised). As Adam (1995: 95) puts it: 'times for caring, loving and educating, of household management and maintenance…are not so much time measured, spent, allocated and controlled as <u>time lived</u>, <u>time made</u> and <u>time generated</u>.' The metaphorical base of such temporalities is less understood and refuses to be captured in concise expressions.

We found that the notion of the Tagwerk (German: day's work) best describes the temporalities and ethos of household production. Echoing pre-industrial production, the Tagwerk is a measure of work that is not based on maximising outputs through efficiency, but is grounded in experience of the variability and context-dependency of work (Adam 1990; Sennett 1998). The organising of work, rather than being rigidly pre-given, is controlled by individual workers, who take account of changing circumstance and situational contingencies when making decisions about the fulfilment of tasks, rather than the 'clocking' of time. Events and tasks still need to be co-ordinated, but such co-ordination is achieved in a less calibrated fashion. Tagwerk - or task time – is 'less geared to standardized, bureaucratic rules and [is] more oriented to local custom' (Hochschild 1997: 47).

We do not wish to portray the household as the peaceful antithesis to the 'nasty' ways of industry and commerce. Households are 'greedy institutions' (Coser 1974) that demand undivided loyalty and commitment from their members, and individuals sometimes prefer to escape from them back to the work environment (Watson 2001). However, in the overall constellation between the two Discourses, its position is considerably weakened when viewed in relationship with the industrial Discourse, and the inequalities between these different conceptualisations of time are hardly ever questioned (Adam 1995). Activities governed by commodified work time are prioritised over those that are not convertible into exchange currency, so that 'time-generating and time-giving activities have no place in the meaning cluster of quantity, dates and deadlines, of calculability, abstract exchange values, efficiency and profit' (Adam 1995: 95). However, such Discourses and their time frames are not unalterable. Nowotny for example (1994) points out that the advent of women in the labour market, and their 'different' temporalities, has destabilised these institutionalised structures to some extent (See also Bluedorn 2002: 26 – 30; McGrath and Rotchford 1983; Sirianni 1991 for discussions of dominance and ordering of different temporalities).

We should say here that although we take the 'temporal lens' as our analytic point of departure, we acknowledge that the temporal and the spatial are mutually implicated (Karsten and Leopold 2003) if not impossible to separate (see for example Castell 2000). It is a moot point as to which should be privileged in the analytical process. However, in line with the renewed interest in the temporal (see for example Whip et al. 2002; special editions/themed editions on time in

Organization Studies 2002; *Personnel Review* 2003), we draw on this as our main metaphor in the first instance. But we also acknowledge that the temporal becomes symbolised and expressed in spatial arrangements – as the enactment of the temporal order implies turning empty space into culturally coded localities and places – so that the two are mutually implicated. Conceptually, then, we draw on a binary ordering of time – clock time and tagwerk (or task/event time) - which sees temporal orders as dualistically connected, rather than irreconcilably separated (see also Bluedorn 2002; Clark 1985; Gersick 1994; Karsten and Leopold 2003; Young 1988).

In sum, we view the two Discourses of industrial and household production as relatively stable institutionalised patterns accompanied by durable social relations, which are sustained through material resources and imbued with particular ideologies [ii]. In the next section we argue that telework can contribute to a destabilising process, because in and through telework such discourses can meet and begin to inform each other.

Telework

Telework literally means working at a distance. Through (information) technology it has become possible to work 'anywhere, anytime' (Kurland and Bailyn 1999; Tietze and Musson 2002) rather than from a particular location. Although the literature on flexibility in general and telework in particular is burgeoning (see for example Daniels et al. 2001), we know little about how the private sphere is affected by the advent of paid work and vice versa. While there are many forms of telework arrangements, we are interested here in home-based teleworking because

it is through the relocation of paid work into the culturally different sphere of 'home' that the two Discourses of production meet clearly. Such meetings pose both opportunities and threats. Frequently, home-based teleworking in particular has been welcomed as the golden opportunity to reconcile work and family (Fletcher and Bailyn 1996). It is also often quoted as a key factor in accomplishing work/life balance and achieving a more holistic life (Hogarth et al. 2001).

More sceptical voices point to issues of surveillance, dominance and the rupturing of identity and autonomy of teleworkers (Brocklehurst 2001; Fairweather 1999; Felstead and Jewson 2000; Hergge et al. 1996; Hochschild 1997; Sabelis 2001; Sennett 1998). Similarly, Grey (1999: 557) warns against the dangers of interpreting diverse human activity in terms of 'management' in that such ascriptions are not innocent conveniences but carry 'irrevocable implications and resonances which are associated with industrialism and modern Western terms of rationality and control.' Following this logic, we reason that through telework and the attendant increasing rapprochement between industry and household production, the private sphere has the potential to become colonised by the more dominant vocabulary and practices of industry: In other words, the Time/Money nexus begins to interlace with 'the other' temporalities, so that the D/discourse of home becomes saturated with the practices and norms of industrial production.

We would agree with Brocklehurst (2001: 462) who writes that 'the discourse around new technology homework has yet to generate its other'. In other words, when 'work' comes 'home' definitions and boundaries blur, so that the certainties

of established norms, scripts and practices become eroded and subject to change (Tietze et al. 2002). The unfreezing of clear boundaries between the Discourses of production and the household creates complexities and dynamics that are as yet not fully understood (Felstead et al. 2001). In attempting to address this knowledge gap we focus here on the following broad research questions:

Is the relationship between the Discourse of industrial production and the Discourse of the household being recast with the advent of home-based teleworking, and if so, what is the nature of that recasting?

What happens to the construction of the temporal/spatial map of the household when the two discourses meet?

How are social relationships within the household affected?

Methods

To address these broad research questions, we used existing research contacts to visit twenty-five teleworkers and their families in their homes. Although these teleworkers were diverse in industrial, sectoral or functional background, degrees of seniority and career development, we chose them because they were all in a long-term employment relationship with one employer and had been working from home for some time. While some teleworked regularly (1.5 – 3 days a week), others did so more sporadically but for longer periods. Their age spanned 33 to 48 years; 18 were married or cohabited, 4 in long term relationships, 3 were single. 20 had children – 2 of the single teleworkers had children from previous relationships. Of those 18 cohabiting/married households, 9 had only one breadwinner (only 1 female breadwinner), and the remaining 9 were dual career households, with our main contact being defined by the family as the

'breadwinner'. Clearly then, our cohort was a disparate group, but they did have an enduring and for us central commonality. All the teleworkers were management professionals, with business/management education to degree level and in established careers in the middle layers of their respective organisations. As such they were involved in high discretion work and self-directed in the conduct of their activities. In this sense they all enjoyed some autonomy over the hours of their days, but paradoxically also needed to take account of another enduring characteristic of professional status; 'a willingness to devote surpluses of time above and beyond what is formally required as a sign of trustworthiness and commitment' (Sirianni and Walsh 1991: 424). This apparent contradiction fosters the development of particular internalised emotional and cognitive viewpoints as part of the socialisation of management professionals (Watson and Harris 1999). This was the common bond shared by all our participants, and it was the management and enactment of these aspects that we were keen to explore in the context of telework.

We conducted interviews with the teleworkers and members of their families during our home visits. Prior to scheduling these visits we negotiated with our teleworking contact that we could talk to other members of the household, and that the visit could include a 'tour of the house'. This provided us with important insight into whether work and home spaces were kept separate, and whether boundaries were quite stringently established or whether the distinction had become blurred. There was some variation between each visit. Some teleworkers/families had established a strict protocol, which we obviously respected; others appeared more relaxed and left the management of the visit to

us. Frequently, partners, spouses, children, pets, neighbours and once even builders interacted with us on these visits, offering their viewpoints and commenting on the viewpoints of the others. Sometimes we were invited to stay for lunch or an evening meal, all of which we took as data gathering opportunities, as we made clear to the families involved. Otherwise, we used the semi-structured interviews to talk about how teleworkers structured their days, where and for how long they worked, how they dealt with (unforeseen) interruptions, how they dressed, how they motivated themselves, why they liked/did not like teleworking, what they saw as the advantages/disadvantages and so on. In asking these questions we were happy to digress and explore, attempting to increase and inform our understanding of practices and behaviour. We tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed the interviews to address issues of credibility and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba 1995). We also made notes at the end of each visit documenting our own thoughts and understandings, especially about those parts of the process for which there was no other record.

Epistemological Stance

In using discourse/metaphors as the topic and resource of this paper, we inescapably had to work with language data. We subscribe to Alvesson and Kärremann's (2000b: 151) notion of the 'framing power' of language; that although language may not be able to represent reality 'in toto', it 'seems capable of providing the means to communicate instructively in and on various realities.' However, the interpretation of metaphors-in-use throws open the complexities of working with such talk and symbolic data, because agents do not always use 'clear cut' and unambiguous metaphors. But they do use metaphorical talk, some

of which we believe is more resonant with particular Discourses than with others, and thus it is possible to embark on a meaningful, though not exhaustive, process of making sense of such figurative language use (Oswick and Montgomery 1999, Watson 1995) [iii].

Working from this perspective and taking account of our engagement with context and data, we colour coded those data that involved the articulation of metaphors of time, assuming that when such metaphors are enacted they become visible and observable in talk and arrangement of material artefacts. We coded extracts where patterns and rhythms of time were talked about as linear or cyclic, blurred or clear-cut, task-based or clock-based, embedded in other activities or decontextualised from other aspects of life. For example, wasting time, saving time, rational planning of time (and the concomitant activities) we considered as metaphors pointing to the clock based approach to time, and the industrial Discourse. Whereas, expressions such as 'a good day's work' ' weighing it all [domestic and work tasks] up', and 'contingency based planning' point to a task or event based enactment of time, resonant with household rhythms - or tagwerk. Thus, we explored explanations, contradictions and confirmations within accounts about the conceptualisation and enactment of time (and space), and compared each account with every other, looking for similarities and differences in the texts.

Every researcher has to find a solution about how to make sense of and present findings. Here, we have organised the data so that it resembles a flowing narrative, made up of words taken from the conversations that we had – including longer quotations - which are put into *italics*, and our own words as authors of this

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text. As such, we fully accept our own part in the production of this piece (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000b) and the limitations of the knowledge claims that we make (Holland 1999).

Metaphors of Time

In this section we examine how temporal metaphors were articulated and enacted by our respondents, and explore our understanding of what these metaphors might mean for them. This articulation and enactment can take the form of routines, patterns of behaviour, symbolic behaviour, the use and deployment or artefacts, the carrying of roles, all of which can be expressed in and through talk.

Time (and space) Management

In all our interviews/conversations the importance of being able *to manage your time*; *of working effectively and efficiently*; of *not wasting too much time* cropped up. These regularly occurring expressions are based on the Time/Money metaphor. In such seemingly mundane terms, time is conceptualised as a valuable, but scarce, resource that must not be wasted or squandered. In the same vein, the importance of time management skills, of being *a good time manager,* was put forward as an essential feature for maintaining professional conduct in the absence of external default mechanisms. These time management skills were used to schedule and plan both paid and unpaid (work) activities. As one female teleworker (married, two daughters) put it: *I'm a good time manager. Here and at work. With all our different schedules, we need to sit down once a week and devise the battle plan. This now includes me working at home. Actually, it is really beneficial to get things done efficiently.* Thus, all activities were subject to rational

planning in that they were slotted into a particular part of the overall production process. In this family, weekly meetings had become a regular material pattern through which such life management seemed to be routinely enacted. This approach also spilled over into other aspects of family life. The two daughters (aged 11 and 14) for example, found these time management skills useful for organising their school and social activities, since they believed that it afforded them an *advantage over those* [friends, fellow pupils] *who are all over the place*. Notwithstanding the effectiveness of such linear planning, the use of the metaphor *battle plan* indicates to us the existence of conflict and the necessity to defend one's position in the overall messy 'battle' of living.

Such time management seemed to be considered essential to maximise benefit from the working day, to get as much done as possible. In other words, mastery of time through rational planning based on clock time was often conducted in the spirit of (output) maximisation. Teleworking was seen as beneficial in achieving this, since it was easier to carve out uninterrupted work time at home than at the office. As one male teleworker put it: *It is easier being grumpy at home and tell someone to bugger off than telling that to a colleague let alone my boss.* However, exploring such comments we found that interruptions continued to exist in the home, too. Children, pets, cleaners, gardeners, partners, spouses, friends, neighbours, relatives were often described as disruptive forces which somehow had to be *managed*. This aspect of *managing* often involved others (and in particular wives) taking on gatekeeper roles to protect undisturbed work time - screening access, assuring silence. Some even took on unpaid typing or editing work, not unlike a secretary at work would do. Our enquiries about whether these

extra tasks were welcomed or caused any resentment always received positive responses. For example, one such (female) gatekeeper said: *I don't mind doing this. We are a team, you see, and each member has a particular role. Mine is to do this.*

Turning to issues of physical space, we found this material aspect to be implicated in the enactment of temporal metaphors, for example through *hiding behind my closed door at work time* when availability of dedicated physical space in the home was not an issue to *building barricades with whatever I can when I'm working* when it was. Unlike the responses to changes in role, this intrusion of work into physical space in the home did seem to cause serious resentment on the part of the social 'others' in some cases. Previously private spaces (dining rooms, parts of living/bedrooms, guest rooms) were *occupied*; *taken over* by the paraphernalia of work such as computers, printers, or files. Few families with children had a spare room to furnish as an office and their household space became occupied by work space. Although of course we cannot know that any of this talk necessarily reflects underlying attitudes, it did seem that the loss of physical space was interpreted as more of a problem, whereas people previously uninvolved with work tasks becoming unpaid 'guardians of work time' was not.

One family had established a white flag/red flag system in order to regulate access to the teleworkers, a succinct example of the intermingling of time and space. The white flag was put at the 'office door' when some interruptions of work could be tolerated; the red flag signified that disruptions were unwelcome. These externalised codes facilitated the separation of two discursive environments and

signalled to the social 'others' which position was taken. One father/teleworker described this kind of management as follows: *It's difficult when the boys are around, even if Mary* [wife] *is here. They don't understand the boundaries as yet. When I have to get something from downstairs where they usually play, I treat them professionally, that means with some courtesy, but briefly*. Other families invented catch phrases such as *Pretend I'm not here*, used by the teleworker whenever she did not want to become embroiled in domestic affairs, and which became established as a discursive tool for the all family members whenever they wanted to avoid engagement of any kind. Similarly, a wife said *My friends say, 'how lovely, you've got him at home three days a week. That must make things really easier'. In fact, it does not, because he is not really here. He's at work. Sometimes it makes my life harder.* These words suggest to us an absence/presence paradox. They seem to express the co-existence of the conflicting demands of two different discourses, requiring the continuous precarious denial of one so as to make concrete the other. They also suggest the emotional effort involved in keeping the two discourses apart, both discursively and materially.

We stated earlier that the enactment of temporal metaphors can take the form of routines, patterns of behaviour, symbolic behaviour, the use and deployment or artefacts, as well as the carrying of certain roles. But in the absence or presence of such guardians of work time, some teleworkers drew on externalised coding systems and particular scripts to manage the social relationships at home. In this sense, dress codes were used to signal the transition from one state of being to another. Of course, there were differences in the extent to which teleworkers

dressed formally or informally. Some would *always dress professionally, in suit, white shirt and tie*, whilst others had relaxed those codes, but all had some emblematic marker that signified their being either at work or at home, for themselves and (importantly for them) for others. These included anything from dressing differently (having daytime pyjamas as opposed to night time pyjamas even – when *still being in pyjamas* was criticised by others in the family); using different coloured lipsticks for work and home; eating or drinking habits (coffee for work; tea at home); using different phone lines; avoiding particular parts of the house (in particular the kitchen as the centre of domesticity).

Notwithstanding such normalised dominance of the temporal Time/Money metaphor, we also found instances when teleworkers and their families seemed adept in bending the metaphor so as to fit in with their own desires. Many teleworkers engaged intensively with (paid) work in the spirit of time thrift to save time, but which was then <u>not</u> filled with more tasks, appointments or things to do, but described as *lazy time*; *time out* or used for leisure and family time. One teleworker referred to such time as *Gorgonzola time*, since this cheese symbolised for him culinary pleasure beyond the imagination of the disciplinary ethos. Thus, teleworkers appeared to use the very time discipline resonant of industrial production to protect themselves and their families from it, to create spaces and modes of being outside such rational time frames. In many conversations we discussed the importance of these *snatched moments*, or *time out* or the experience of different temporalities as a recurrent element of their lives brought about by telework. These experiences comprised increased (but not always voluntary) involvement in childcare, and gardening, walking or eating or were more

generally referred to as *playing*. For example a single teleworker explained this experience as follows: *I bought this new house just round the corner from the [seaside] promenade. I love going for walks there, at all times of the day. I love being a teleworker, because I can go there every day, whenever it fits in and even when it does not! It's a reward I give myself – it's my time. Sometimes I think about work when I walk, but often I just forget what it was all about anyway and just enjoy.*

In another example, Tom, a teleworker gave us the tour of the house, including the garden. He pointed, proudly, to the beds of vegetables and borders of flowers. *They are a direct result of being at home more. (…) I had to learn that I can do my thinking work while I am gardening. I don't have to wear a suit or sit in front of the screen.* While these snatched moments are 'only' 'the other', they become more beautiful, because so rare. However, people often told us that they came to occur more frequently, becoming more alluring in their appeal (and therefore potentially rupturing the Time/Money nexus more often), tempting people to join different flows of time through modes of teleworking.

The Tagwerk

While the Time/Money nexus was often reflected in the processes and practices of teleworkers' households, we also found an enacted conceptualisation of time that appeared more task-based, in that the nature of the *task-to-do* or *job-in-hand* provided a different measure for the ordering of the overall day. This conceptualisation existed alongside the Time/Money metaphor, so that none of the households we visited seemed to live by one or the other metaphor exclusively.

A typical expression that suggests task-based thinking and doing was given by one teleworker, who said: *The nine to five is gone. It doesn't exist anymore. I work more or less, it depends on the task. If possible, I structure my day around Peter* [son] *and Liz* [wife] – *sometimes this means finishing a project off after dinner. But mainly, they get priority. As I said, it all depends on the task.* He stresses twice in this conversation that the structure of the (working) day *depends on* the nature of the task, as well as on household contingencies. It seems then that the work task is described as embedded in the domestic environment and is no longer seen to exist independently. This has the potential to change the priorities by which either work or domestic tasks are pursued, which perhaps signifies an inversion of the two D/discourses in that the industrial discourse is not always and unquestioningly 'put above' the domestic one. We do not claim that this reordering has become the norm, but it did occur in some families quite regularly, although usually not often enough to create a complete reordering of daily life. But, in two more extreme cases we found that teleworking triggered off a reconsideration of *what life is about* to the extent that career aspirations were said to be temporarily put on hold for the sake of more involvement in child rearing or enjoyment of *a slower pace of life* respectively. Still, in many households domestic and industrial tasks were weighed up against each other on a regular basis. A female teleworker (cohabiting, no children) said: *Well, you've got x number of things to do: from walking the dog, washing the car to checking your e-mails and working at the costing* [of a project]. *You've only got so much time. You weigh it all up and than you go about doing it in whatever order.* Other teleworkers described this way of completing tasks as *pottering around from one*

task to the next, or that *some days are more like a shrapnel of tasks*, so that the day began to resemble an assembly of tasks, rather than a monolith of clearly defined blocks of being either 'at work' or 'at home'. These experiences, however, sat side by side with experiences of uninterrupted engagement with tasks whenever needed.

Whilst these management professionals had always seen themselves as self-directed in the pursuit and conduct of their work tasks, as teleworkers they remained self-directed and self-controlled, but enjoyed more autonomy over the overall ordering of their time. This exercise of choice, however, also appeared to constitute a source of stress, because the co-presence of an increased number of demands and responsibilities was often described as difficult to cope with. Teleworkers expressed this metaphorically as *being stretched thin*; *juggling several balls*; *struggling to satisfy everyone* or that *everyone gets a tiny bit of me*. This experience was for some teleworkers a concomitant side effect of telework, finding themselves in an ontological limbo of being *neither here nor there*; of being *eternally in-between tasks or people*. This in-betweenness was also experienced as a loss of identity: On the one hand the task-based approach to telework enabled them to make decisions about when *a good day's work was done*, sometimes resulting in a shorter working day. On the other hand, this did not always coincide with the internalised norms of industry and business, in which working long hours is visible proof of commitment and professionalism. Some teleworkers attempted to compensate for this by volunteering for more work, thus perhaps proving to themselves that they were still *true professionals*, while also demonstrating their commitment to their employer: *I could take on some*

additional responsibilities because I got more done at home. It's quite important. You can't have colleagues thinking you are enjoying a cushy number at home. In another case a teleworker expressed concern about loss of status and respect in the eyes of colleagues so much that, aggravated by the demands of his family he renegotiated a return to traditional work patterns. Overall, however, partner, spouses and children talked positively about the possibilities of *sharing tasks more evenly*, found it helpful *to run the household* and to manage the vicissitudes of their everyday existence.

Commentary and Implications

We use the broad research questions identified earlier to structure this section, and comment on the implications of the data presented here. Although these questions are easy to separate conceptually, the material relationships on which they focus are so intertwined, that they are difficult to treat as discrete entities.

Is the relationship between the discourse of industrial production and the discourse of the household being recast with the advent of home-based teleworking, and if so, what is the nature of that recasting?

Traditionally, the Discourse of industrial production has been seen as privileged over that of the household (Adam 1995; Daly 1996; Perin 1998). In many instances we found this ordering intact in that articulations resonant of the industrial Discourse were frequently more influential than those of the household. Household roles are redefined, and gate keeping and secretarial responsibilities become integrated into previously private roles. Drawing on the team metaphor (an image taken from the industrial Discourse if not necessarily originating there), and echoing instrumental control (Sabelis 2001), gave legitimacy to this reordering. We see these changes as far from innocent, but rather as evidence of

the *potential* colonisation of the private sphere with the images, practices and values of industrial Discourse (Grey 1999). Yet, demonstrating the complexity of the macro/micro D/discourse relationship, such D/discourses might also (simultaneously) empower, in that voices of children or partners/spouses were heard in family/team meetings, albeit not perhaps as 'loudly' (Wolfe Morrison and Milliken 2003) as those situated more centrally in the industrial D/discourse.

To an extent then, the industrial Discourse moderates the behaviour of the household, as with the mother who pretends not to be 'here'. She experiences the paradox of conflicting demands in her roles as 'mother' and 'manager', painfully suspended between the two discourses – neither here nor there – eventually, but not always, subduing the domestic one through discursive and material practice, often accompanied by feelings of guilt (Tietze and Musson 2002). This confirms, to some degree, the concerns of the sceptics (Hochschild 1997; Kompast and Wagner 1998; Hergge et al. 1996; Sennett 1998; Sabelis 2001) that many areas of life are increasingly subject to the practices of management and industrial production. The temporal and spatial flexibility of telework enables such practices to gain a foothold in the previously distinct area of home.

What happens to the construction of the temporal/spatial map of the household when the two discourses meet?

The decisions made by the teleworkers and their social others about the ordering of time <u>and</u> space, empirically confirms the inherent relationship between the two (Castell 2000; Karsten and Leopold 2003). Frequently, such 'choices' of temporal enactment symbolised and expressed in culturally coded spaces, were made by default within the parameters of the industrial discourse, resulting in the recasting

of the relationship between 'work' and 'home' in the image of paid work. In this recasting, the internalised disciplines of industry appeared to pull the strings of teleworkers. According to some commentators, we can understand this alleged self-directedness as being no more than a mask for unconscious dependence (Hergge et al. 1996; Kompast and Wagner 1998).

But, we cannot subscribe wholeheartedly to the view that 'the private sphere seems to be increasingly dominated by the exigencies and logic of [paid] work' (Hergge et al. 1996: 30). Rather, some teleworkers and household members occasionally appropriated the Time/Money metaphor, for example, according to their own needs and desires, sometimes to *snatch moments* away from its instrumental logic, and sometimes to protect the home environment. We understand these snatched moments to be markers of rejection of the Time/Money correlation, with the potential to rupture its ethos. But it is important to stress that such moments achieved their significance for the speakers because they were *time out*, and as such, defined as 'the other' time that exists as an ephemeral antidote to commodified time – echoing Derrida's (1978) point that meanings are always defined by (and therefore contain traces of) their opposites. These speakers appeared to transcend the assumptions of an objective, measurable and reifiable reality into the subjective experience of the moment of being, in which the exchange relations between time and money can – momentarily – be suspended. Commodified time becomes, fleetingly, subjective experience. Nowotny (1994: 124) calls these moments 'residues of relations in which time can only be exchanged for time, and in which the norm of reciprocity determines the prevailing tone of human gatherings.' These small moments are the more valuable

because they escape the time/money nexus, and because they are so rare – confirm, ironically, the economic rationale that scarcity increases value.

These data have led us to think of this appropriation of time as 'gift' time – a gift of time to oneself, to another, or even to an activity. The teleworker who gives herself the *reward* of walking on the beach each day, or the father who donates time *saved* from working more efficiently to playing with his son, or the man who uses *saved* time to tend his garden are all evidence of a potential new economy of time. The development of this new time economy demonstrates the ability that some teleworkers have to bend, rework or perhaps remove altogether previously immutable boundaries, in pursuit of achieving a more holistic life. It emphasises the potential (if not always the reality) of flexible/home-based work for living integrated and richer lives (Fletcher and Bailyn 1996; Hogarth et al. 2001)[iv].

How are social relationships within the household affected?

The metaphoric 'professionalising' of associations between family members echoes the tenets underpinning work relationships, and through this 'professionalisation' the organisation of the home can seem to take on industrial overtones and facilitate the development of instrumental relationships (Hochschild 1997: 48 - 49). But in some of our households telework facilitated existential question marks. In these cases, continual mutual adjustment between the two discourses emerged as a modus vivendi, so that the warranting of voice order was sometimes reversed and the needs and demands of children/families, gardens or pets were privileged over those of industry. This points to the possibility of at least temporarily inverting the status quo, and in two households this questioning process saw the start of a more serious unravelling of cast relationships. But in

most households the process was more hesitant, inchoate and sometimes such change was shunned to seek refuge in traditional, clear-cut demarcations between paid and unpaid work, and in one case a complete return to the office environment.

Although the employment of task time might afford degrees of reprioritising relationships, this cannot be seen as a straight forward liberating process. In enacting task-based concepts of time, some households experienced the change in relationships as liberating and enriching, <u>at the same time</u> as stressful and exhausting. Because continuous negotiations over the use of time and space are accompanied by constant adaptation, conciliation and concession (Tietze et al. 2002), these effortful processes can begin to grind at the nerves of both teleworkers and others in their respective households, impinging on their private life worlds in a way that paid work outside the home did not. In addition, organising activities based on task time, can tempt one to strive for completion of a maximum of tasks, which in turn opens the backdoor to the rationality of instrumentality and efficiency, because it is always possible 'to do more'. Indeed, such speed-multi-tasking resonates with Sennett's (1998) concern that forms of flexibility can lead to more frequent, yet more superficial involvement in a multitude of tasks and relationships. From this perspective, not only can task time be seen to accommodate clock time and the accompanying logic of the industrial Discourse, but it can also extend this reasoning into the private sphere – an ironical turn indeed. Yet, the positive flipside of task time is that it can empower some teleworkers to create temporal niches and enclaves (Sirianni 1991), outside of and away from the dominance of the industrial Discourse, thus, potentially at

least, spreading an ethos of regeneration. Task time then is not the pure and liberating conceptual counterpart to clock time. As with clock time, its functions have changed, to become more complex and possibly more problematic, and its character more ambivalent.

Conclusions

We set out to contribute to the body of knowledge about emergent forms of (work) organisation and how through one such form, home-based telework, the relationship between the two D/discourses of industrial production and household production might be recast. We found no monolithic evidence that points to a unilateral recasting of the home/work relationship in the image of paid work. Neither have we found that 'work' is recast in the image of the 'home' with redefined roles, responsibilities and values. Rather, the case for some mutual adjustment can be made. The different temporal orders co-exist in a dynamic fashion. They inform and impact on each other, but our data shows that this co-existence, brought into closer focus through telework, can cause changes in the function and character of both. However, such adjustment is set within the continued influence, if not complete dominance, of the logic of the Time/Money metaphor.

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[i] We are aware of current debates about further exploration of the generative capacity of metaphor and claims by some writers (Oswick et al. 2002) that it is sufficiently well understood in organisation studies, and we support the claims for greater inclusivity of other tropes such as metonymy (see Musson and Tietze 2004 forthcoming). But further analysis of metaphors found in the field is still a fertile frame because of the relationship this trope holds with dominant ideas (Tsoukas 1993) and therefore dominant discourses.

[ii] We are not suggesting that there only two monolithic discourses. Rather, we see the two discourses of paid work and home work as particularly significant for our study, although they exist (alongside, competing with, included in or including) other discourses. The discourse of gender for example, could be considered an intrinsic part of both. Other constituent discourses might be, for example, a management, team and efficiency discourse in the industrial meaning system. The household discourse might be said to include discourses of love and/or caring, or household management (different to industrial management we believe) and/or leisure discourses.

[iii] There are different discourse analytic approaches emanating from different traditions (see for example Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) for speech act theory; Fairclough (1992) for critical discourse analysis; Garfinkel (1967) and Sacks et al. (1974) for conversation analysis; Grice (1957) for pragmatics; Hymes (1974) for ethnography of communication; Hodge and Kress (1988), for social semiotics; Potter and Wetherell (1995) for psychology; Townley (1994) for a Foucaldian approach) and these might be considered mutually exclusive in their philosophical lineage, albeit sometimes similar in practice and scope. However, whilst we probably have most in common with Fairclough's 3 dimensional approach (text, discursive practice and social practice relating to self, social relations and dominant knowledge systems, respectively) in order to achieve our aims, and following other discourse analysts we have, in this instance, adopted an eclectic approach focusing mainly on the analysis of metaphors.

[iv] Of course, this potential may only be realised by certain teleworkers involved in high discretion, self-directed work. Furthermore, part-time telework is experienced differently to that of full time telework in the relationships of home/work, on a conceptual, discursive and structural level. In sum, teleworking is not a monolithic concept, arrangement or activity.