



Review Article

Time in international strategic alliances: Progress and prospect

Nuno Oliveira^{a,*}, Fabrice Lumineau^b, Africa Ariño^c^a Associate Professor of Organization Studies, Tilburg University, The Netherlands^b Professor of Strategic Management, University of Hong Kong, China^c Joaquim Molins Figueras Chair of Strategic Alliances, IESE Business School, University of Navarra, Spain

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ABSTRACT

Time has significant implications for the functioning of international strategic alliances. Drawing on a systematic review (1943–2022), we consolidate the literature around types of time (i.e., clock, event, cyclical, and life-cycle) and time facets (e.g., duration and speed) in international strategic alliances. This review's findings aid us in developing a temporal-relational framework that intends to advance the study of how partners' similar as well as dissimilar perspectives about time can engender either friction or enrichment. This framework supports a research agenda that emphasizes subjective time to advance theory about international strategic alliances.

1. Introduction

Time is a fundamental, but often neglected aspect in international strategic alliances (ISAs). Such alliances consist of voluntary, enduring relationships involving the exchange and sharing of resources and services between partners who are located in different countries (Nippa & Reuer, 2019; Robson et al., 2019). Time intrinsically relates to ISAs since they are “intentionally temporary arrangements” (Inkpen & Li, 1999, p. 35), which typically cut across different time zones and feature culturally constructed meanings about time. The hybrid nature of these interorganizational relationships (IORs)—as arrangements that lie between market and hierarchy—makes time across borders challenging to manage effectively (Williamson, 1996; Foss, Frederiksen, & Rullani, 2016). Deadlines and milestones can be written in contracts, but these time-structuring elements require *ex-ante* information which can be unavailable and be interpreted differently between international partners. Communication channels are typically dispersed, when compared to single formal organizations, making time a common source of misunderstandings and coordination neglect between international partners.

The role of time in research about ISAs is fourfold. First, time is a central concept in understanding the phenomenon of ISAs (*time-as-concept*). The field of international business and international management (IB/IM) has long examined, for example, time duration of international ventures (e.g., Barkema & Vermeulen, 1997; Couper, Reuber, & Prashantham, 2020), international market entry timing (Lavie, Lechner, & Singh, 2007; Papyrina, 2007), and life cycle of ISAs (Pak, Ra, & Lee,

2015; Reuer, 2000). Given the importance of time as a central concept in ISAs, the conceptualization and measure of time in ISAs has received wide attention (e.g., Nemeth & Nippa, 2013; Shi Sun & Prescott, 2012).

Secondly, time underlies the activities of ISAs; that is, how ISAs actually function (*time-as-activity*). A typical example is the sequence of changes in ownership arrangements as part of the entry mode in international markets (Delios & Henisz, 2003; Guillen, 2003). The study of time can unpack how the ISA partners perform a single major activity (e.g., to enter a foreign market) and multiple activities (e.g., to enter a foreign market and to develop a joint product) within an ISA. The IB/IM literature has paid attention to a vast array of temporal aspects, such as the frequency of interaction between partners as well as the rhythm and sequence of activities across borders (Arikan & Shenkar, 2013; Doz, 1996).

Thirdly, time is pivotal in many theorizing efforts about ISAs (*time-as-theory*). That is, time is often explicitly included in explanatory models, either as an outcome of interest (i.e., time as what needs to be explained) or an important explanatory factor (i.e., time as containing the explanation). For example, there has been a long-lasting interest in the precursors of the duration or longevity of ISAs (e.g., Glaister & Buckley, 1998; Meschi & Riccio, 2008), the key factors influencing pace and tempo of ISAs (e.g., Ganitsky, & Watzke, 1990), and in time as an explanation of strategic choices and outcomes in ISAs (e.g., Guillén, 2003; Martin, Mitchell, & Swaminathan, 1995). Further analysis of time can advance theory on canonical issues in IB/IM research by challenging some of the commonly-held practices and assumptions, such as when the process of internationalization—which often entails partnering with a

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: n.r.barrosdeoliveira@uvt.nl (N. Oliveira).

local firm—actually starts (Kriz, Rumyantseva, & Welch, 2023).

Finally, IB/IM researchers have also been interested in how partners, located across national borders and embedded in different cultures, relate to time (*time-as-attitude*). For example, IB/IM scholars have paid extensive attention to different aspects of time such as managers' time-spending patterns (Lorange, 1986) and international partners' temporal orientations (Beamish & Lupton, 2016). National culture influences how managers process past, present, and future, as well as how they perceive and interpret time (Shipp & Jansen, 2021). Time culture in ISAs is nested in different levels of analysis from individual-level factors about time (e.g., country managers' perceptions) to firm factors (e.g., internationalization strategies), interorganizational aspects (e.g., nature of the cross-border IOR), and country factors (e.g., shared meanings and norms about time).

Without a systematization of research about time in ISAs, efforts to address open calls in IB/IM (Eden, 2009; Hilmersson et al., 2017) to add time as a major research topic (Connelly, Ketchen, & Hult, 2013, p. 239; Ganitsky & Watzke, 1990, p. 37) risk accelerating the proliferation and amalgamation of time-related terminology (Elsahn & Earl, 2022). With time being a multi-dimensional notion (Ancona, Okhuysen, & Perlow, 2001; Hilmersson et al., 2017) manifesting in a variety of ways in ISAs, without further conceptual clarity, "time remains a hollow promise" (Meschi, 1997, p. 222). Conceptual clarity offers the possibility of parsimonious theorizing without losing out on important nuances of time. From a practice vantage point, ISAs have paved the way for shortening production times across borders and time zones through global supply chains (Connelly et al., 2013), but have often engendered behavioral contradictions and fault lines between parties along the way (Das & Teng, 2000). If left unaddressed, diverging insights about the role of time in ISAs risks slowing down the advancement of theory about this important issue for IB/IM.

The vast array of literature concerning time in ISAs is yet to benefit from a review and a consolidation effort. As a result of this lacuna, prior research offers relatively limited theoretical elucidation about (i) the plethora of time approaches in ISAs, and (ii) the consequences of partners' similar vs. dissimilar perspectives about time on IOR operations.

We directly address these shortcomings by conducting—to the best of our knowledge—the first systematic review of research about time in ISAs. The first aim of this review is to map the array of time approaches—such as duration (e.g., MacDuffie, 2011), event (e.g., Andrevski, Brass, & Ferrier, 2016), speed (e.g., Surdu et al., 2018), and life-cycle (e.g., Hagen & Zucchella, 2014)—used in the literature about ISAs. A consolidation of research about time approaches is important for building stronger conceptual foundations to theorize the role of time in ISAs. This review's second aim is to address diverging findings about the implications of time in ISAs. Making progress in research requires paying attention to the interplay between cultural norms and managers' perspectives about time (Ancona & Chee-Leong, 1996; Standifer & Bluedorn, 2006).

Our systematic review advances the IB/IM literature in three ways. First, we not only take stock of different time approaches in the literature, but we also add a conceptual clarification that is long overdue to address calls for further studying time in IB/IM (Eden, 2009; Elsahn & Earl, 2022). Specifically, we suggest distinguishing between time types and time facets. The former describes *how* time is studied while the latter captures *which* aspect (in relation to any given time type) is being studied. Conceptually, time types and time facets help consolidate prior research as a step forward in addressing criticism that IB/IM is "time-insensitive" (Poulis & Poulis, 2018, p. 524). Secondly, we make specific suggestions about the study of (i) time facets for a given time type and (ii) multiple time types within ISAs. By examining time from the viewpoint of partners—as opposed to a single organization, particularly as "most studies took the perspective of the foreign firm" (Beamish & Lupton, 2016, p. 172)—we develop an integrative approach to examining the temporal complexity in ISAs (Barkema, Baum, & Mannix, 2002; Eden & Nielsen, 2020). We offer preliminary insights into how

partner similarities as well as dissimilarities about time influence ISAs. Contrary to what conventional wisdom would suggest, partners' time similarities are not necessarily beneficial and time dissimilarities can in fact be beneficial in ISAs. Finally, we heed the advice that "a neglect of the time problem implies a lack of interest in theoretical problems" (Innis, 1952, p. 57). Our proposed research agenda offers new theoretical directions to think about time in ISAs and highlights evolutionary dynamics and contingencies in ISAs.

In the following, we provide a conceptual background about IB/IM research on time and national culture directly relevant to ISAs. After that, we introduce the review methodology. We then report on the findings about the theoretical underpinnings of the reviewed literature, time types and time facets, and international partners and national culture. Next, we build on this review's findings to develop a temporal-relational framework to analyze the implications of partners' (dis) similar perspectives about time in ISAs. This framework bridges the review findings and the agenda for future research.

2. Conceptual background

Time refers to "a nonspatial continuum in which events occur in apparently irreversible succession from the past through the present to the future" (Ancona et al., 2001, p. 513). Prior reviews have synthesized research on time and strategic change (Kunisch et al., 2017), qualitative studies about time (Elsahn & Earl, 2022), subjective time (Shipp & Jansen, 2021), or ways of theorizing time (Hoorani, Plakoyiannaki, & Gibbert, 2023). However, the plethora of concepts about time used in the IB/IM literature about ISAs has also created barriers to research cumulativeness and our ability to understand the role of time in IORs spanning across national borders.

We broadly draw on major conceptual works about time in management to offer a framework articulating the importance of time in ISAs. Below, we first consolidate research by distinguishing between time types and time facets—mainly relating to objective time—and then explore the link to the international dimension of time cultures—mainly relating to subjective time.

2.1. Time types seen through different time facets

Prior literature tends to amalgamate time types and other time-related concepts. For instance, in a review of research on M&As and strategic alliances, Shi et al. (2012, p. 171) identified over 30 concepts relating to time. In a recent review, Aguinis and Bakker (2021) focus only on duration, frequency, timing, and sequence. Other reviews on time specifically examine, for example, organization change (Kunisch et al., 2017) and entry timing (Zachary et al., 2015). Despite that wide interest, or perhaps because of it, time is referred to in multiple ways in the prior literature on ISAs. However, the existing proliferation of temporal terminologies prevents a comprehensive analysis of time as well as cumulativeness of research.

To start addressing the conceptual ambiguity that characterizes prior research, we draw on previous conceptualizations of time. These entail four main types: clock, cyclical, event, and life-cycle time (Ancona et al., 2001). Clocks represent time as linear and quantifiable, uniform, regular, and deterministic units (McGrath, 1988; Zaheer et al., 1999). Cyclical time depicts phenomena as evolving through relatively similar and repetitive patterns. Differences in harvest seasons and lunar calendars across countries exemplify cyclical time. Event time provides the reference point for what happens before and after. In IB/IM, disruption caused by political turmoil in the host country and natural disasters are common instances of event time disrupting ISAs (e.g., Zhao, Zuo, & Blackhurst, 2019). Life-cycle refers to stages of a process where the "trajectory to the end state is preFig.d, and requires a specific historical sequence of events" (Van de Ven, 1992, p. 177). An ISA's new product development cycle and a host country's economic cycle exemplify this fourth and last time type.

Distinct from time types, time facets refer to ways of describing the passage of time (e.g., duration, rhythm, and speed). Speed is probably the time facet most used in IB/IM research, featuring in the early frameworks about a firm's international expansion strategies (Johanson & Johanson, 2021; Vermeulen & Barkema, 2002) and international joint ventures (IJVs) (Hennart & Zeng, 2002; Reuer, 2000). The notion of internationalization speed has also been referred to as "earliness of internationalization," "early foreign market entry," or "accelerated internationalization" (Hilmersson et al., 2017). With an interest in how time varies across individuals and cultures, Mosakowski and Earley (2000) discuss five time dimensions: nature of time, experience of time, time flow, time structure, and temporal referent. The authors provide an instructive discussion of how a better understanding of these five dimensions helps to theorize about firm choices, industry conditions, and competitors' strategic choices. On the one hand, prior research attests the diversity of time facets that are of interest to IB/IM scholars. On the other hand, the clarification between time facets and types offers a parsimonious way to understand time in ISAs and advance research into the temporal complexity that characterizes ISAs. Parsimony and conceptual clarity are hallmarks of conceptual developments (Suddaby, 2010).

2.2. Time cultures

The foregoing distinction between time types and time facets adheres to an "objective" conceptualization of time as opposed to "subjective" time (Crossan et al., 2005). The former refers to the actual passage of time while the latter concerns how individuals experience time (for reviews, see Shipp & Jansen, 2021 and Tang, Richter, & Nadkarni, 2020). Subjective time concerns how individuals and groups experience and "create or culturally construct different types of time that become shared meanings about the continuum [in which events occur]" (Ancona et al., 2001, p. 515). Individuals are socialized and embedded in different national cultures that influence perceptions and cognitive responses to time. For example, Western cultures tend to prefer short-term performance while Eastern cultures generally pursue long-term performance (e.g., Malik & Yazar, 2016). Perceptions of "time vary dramatically across individuals and cultures" (Mosakowski & Earley, 2000, p. 796).

Time is a "silent language" (Hall, 1983) embodied in a country's values and norms (Ancona & Chee-Leong, 1996; Shipp & Jansen, 2021; Zimardo & Boyd, 2015). Managers' enactment of time generates temporal structures which, in turn, define rhythms and working practices (Beck & Plowman, 2014; Das, 2004; Orlikowski & Yates, 2002). Research in sociology suggests that a short-term focus is common in monochronic cultures compared to polychronic cultures (Schriber & Gutek, 1987; Standifer & Bluedorn, 2006; Hall 1983). The socially construed understanding about time concerns the meaning of events and can vary substantially from mathematical and biological notions of time (Sorokin & Merton, 1937). Differences in the way members across national cultures understand time are commonly captured in the distinction between societies based on clock time vs. societies based on event time (Lauer, 1981; Levine, 1997). In event time societies, individuals start and end a task when the time "feels" right (Avnet & Sellier, 2011), thus adopting a highly subjective understanding of time instead of guiding their actions based on objective time, as commonly found in clock time societies. In psychology, research indicates that norms about time help define group membership and behavior patterns (e.g., the extent to which meetings start on time; Doob, 1971). Time preferences—defined as the current relative valuation placed on receiving goods or cash at an earlier date versus receiving it later—offer another illustration of the importance of time cultures. While time preferences have typically been understood as stable, research shows that these preferences are intrinsically linked to the national culture (Hoff, Kshetramade, & Fehr, 2011; Mahajna et al., 2008; Wang, Rieger, & Hens, 2016). For instance, based on a multi-country sample of two parties negotiating, Adair and Brett (2005) find that time—captured in terms of

the sequence of negotiation—varied according to participants' country of origin. While in some countries, such as Switzerland, punctuality and time management are an important aspect of doing business, in other countries, such as Morocco, being late can be seen as a sign of social status and time is primarily experienced based on naturally occurring events. Such differences manifest in ISAs through, for example, the suppliers' level of attention to buyers' schedules and the timeliness of decision-making. Time cultures influence how individuals relate to time, which in turn affect work processes in organizations (for a review, see Shipp & Jansen, 2021).

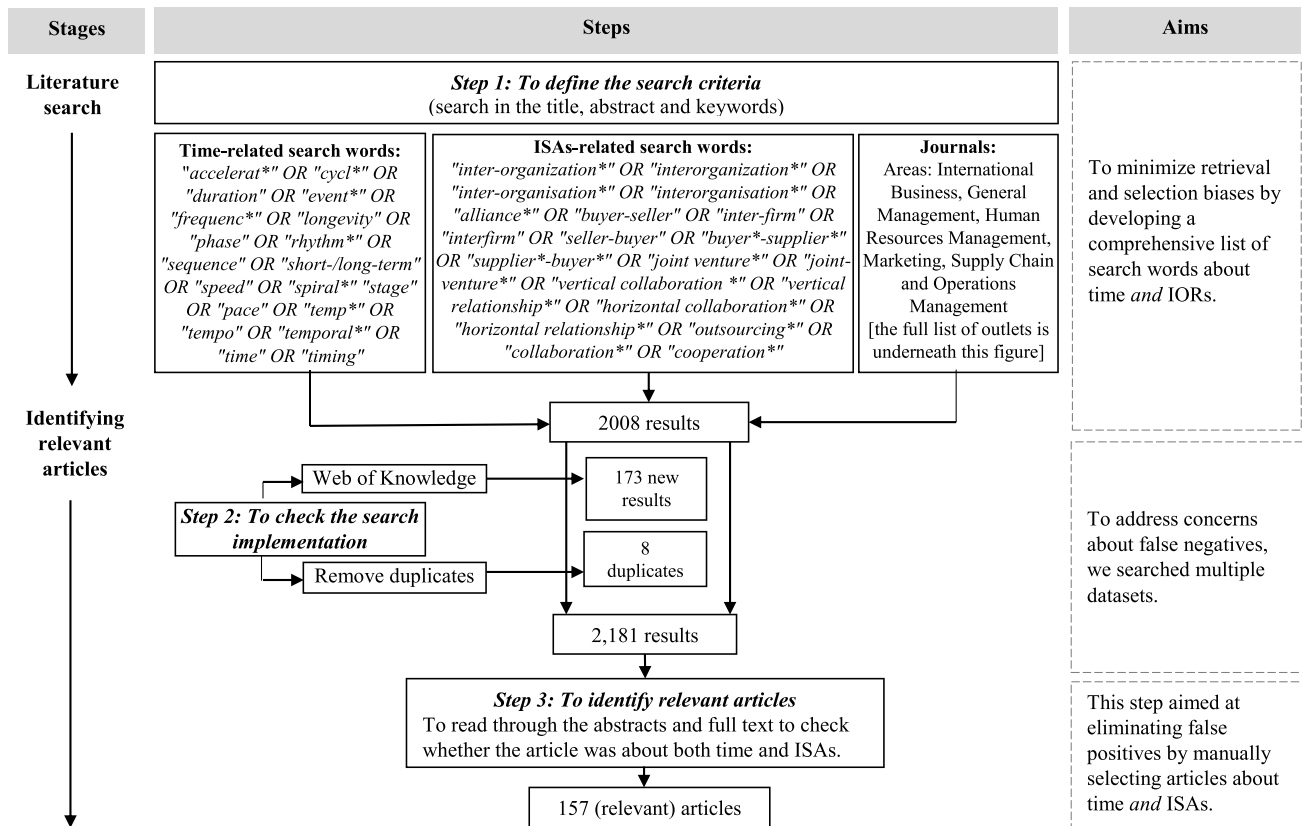
Overall, a set of shortcomings across the literature on time types and time facets, as well as time cultures, has precluded the furthering of theory about time in ISAs. First, the literature remains ambiguous in relation to what we know about time types, time facets, and time cultures as three interrelated, but distinct ways of characterizing the phenomenon of time in ISAs. We have taken a step forward toward integration of the prior literature by distinguishing between time types and time facets. Secondly, received wisdom offers a dispersed and rich terminology about time in ISAs while overlooking the overlap as well as disconnect between research traditions—a major contributing factor to the lacuna about the role of (dis)similar perspectives about time in ISAs. We offer an organizing framework that features, first, the distinction between time types and time facets and, second, time cultures. To shed light on the role of time in ISAs, however, scholarship is yet to benefit from a systematic analysis of time approaches used in prior research, in order to identify major findings as well as areas that merit future research.

3. Review methodology

Given the foregoing shortcomings, we conducted a systematic review of prior research on time in ISAs. We benchmarked our methodology against prior systematic reviews (Cuervo-Cazurra & Li, 2021; Nippa & Reuer, 2019) and calls for using literature reviews for advancing theory (Breslin & Gatrell, 2023). Fig. 1 shows the multi-stage search procedure we adopted for conducting this review.

3.1. Data collection

We followed a stepwise approach to retrieving articles. The first step concerned the delimitation of our search to the phenomenon of interest based on ISAs and time. As for ISAs, we created alliance-related search words—at this point, without specifying ISAs—including both domestic and international alliances. Such an approach of initially capturing alliances in general (of which ISAs are a subset) was desirable because it minimized the risk of erroneously excluding relevant articles that, for example, used only the term *alliances* to refer to ISAs (e.g., Belderbos, Gilsing, & Lokshin, 2012). In line with prior research, we considered that "international joint ventures (IJVs) are an important type of international strategic alliance" (Nippa & Reuer, 2019, p.555) and we also included long-term buyer-supplier arrangements (Dyer, 1996). We therefore developed a string of search words that captured the variety of alliances, as detailed in Fig. 1. In terms of time, we directly built on our conceptual framework. We also acknowledge that the "lack of coherence in the field" (Ancona et al., 2001, p. 512) and the common practice "that scholars have built on multiple conceptions of time" (Kunisch, et al., 2017, p. 1008) presented a unique challenge for devising an effective set of search words. A choice of limiting our search to the term *time* alone would result in an incomplete search while the use of a specific definition of time would risk epistemological biases towards a specific definition of time as part of our phenomenon of interest. We overcame this challenge by capturing core terms discussed with management research and identified in the conceptual background above (Aguinis & Bakker, 2021; Ancona et al., 2001; Crossan et al., 2005; Kunisch et al., 2017; Shipp & Jansen, 2021; Zachary et al., 2015) to develop our string of search words (for the list of search words, see Fig. 1).



List of outlets: "Academy of Management Journal" OR "Academy of Management Review" OR "Asia Pacific Journal of Management" OR "Global Strategy Journal" OR "Human Relations" OR "Human Resource Management" OR "International Business Review" OR "International Journal of Human Resource Management" OR "International Marketing Review" OR "Journal of International Business Studies" OR "Journal of International Management" OR "Journal of International Marketing" OR "Journal of Management Studies" OR "Journal of Management" OR "Journal of Marketing Research" OR "Journal of Marketing" OR "Journal of Operations Management" OR "Journal of Supply Chain Management" OR "Journal of World Business" OR "Manufacturing & Service Operations Management" OR "Management & Organization Review" OR "Management International Review" OR "Management Science" OR "Operations Research" OR "Organization Science" OR "Production & Operations Management" OR "Strategic Management Journal".

Fig. 1. Literature review procedure.

List of outlets: "Academy of Management Journal" OR "Academy of Management Review" OR "Asia Pacific Journal of Management" OR "Global Strategy Journal" OR "Human Relations" OR "Human Resource Management" OR "International Business Review" OR "International Journal of Human Resource Management" OR "International Marketing Review" OR "Journal of International Business Studies" OR "Journal of International Management" OR "Journal of International Marketing" OR "Journal of Management Studies" OR "Journal of Management" OR "Journal of Marketing Research" OR "Journal of Marketing" OR "Journal of Operations Management" OR "Journal of Supply Chain Management" OR "Journal of World Business" OR "Manufacturing & Service Operations Management" OR "Management & Organization Review" OR "Management International Review" OR "Management Science" OR "Operations Research" OR "Organization Science" OR "Production & Operations Management" OR "Strategic Management Journal".

We had to strike a balance between the breadth and depth of our review scope in terms of outlets. We started by searching in leading outlets that are generally recognized for publishing on IB/IM: *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, *Global Strategy Journal*, *International Business Review*, *International Marketing Review*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of International Management*, *Journal of International Marketing*, *Journal of World Business*, *Management & Organization Review*, and *Management International Review*. Our list of IB/IM outlets builds upon and extends lists used in prior reviews (e.g., Cuervo-Cazurra & Li, 2021; Griffith, Cavusgil & Xu, 2008). Because IB/IM is a multidisciplinary field and time in ISAs has attracted interest by researchers from adjacent fields, we also searched in top-tier journals in general management, human resources management, marketing, and supply chain

and operations management¹. Our approach enabled us to zoom into IB/IM outlets while also including articles published in leading outlets in adjacent fields (Fig. 1).

We searched in EBSCO (Business Source Ultimate) and set no restrictions to the time window (1943–2022). In total, our initial search returned 2,008 potentially relevant articles.

In a second step, we endeavored to check for and minimize potential retrieval and selection biases. Specifically, we replicated the search in *Web of Knowledge* to avoid missing relevant articles due to indexing differences between these two major bibliographic databases (i.e., false negatives). We also checked for duplicates (i.e., false negatives). As reported in Fig. 1, we added 173 new results from the *Web of Knowledge*, having already eliminated those results that also appeared in the search

¹ *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Human Relations*, *Human Resources Management*, *International Journal of Human Resources Management*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Operations Management*, *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, *Management Science*, *Manufacturing & Service Operations Management*, *Operations Research*, *Organization Science*, *Production & Operations Management*, and *Strategic Management Journal*.

carried out on EBSCO. We also excluded 8 duplicates (these were results that appeared only in one of the searches, but had two entries).

In total, we created a database of 2,181 potentially relevant articles.

3.2. Data coding

The aim of the data coding was twofold: to identify relevant articles, and to code their attributes. First, we coded the results returned by our search in order to identify articles that were relevant to this review. We manually checked every result and made sure that only articles about time in ISAs were included. For example, we excluded articles about importer-exporter relationships (Styles et al., 2008) and cross-border acquisitions (e.g., Li, Xia, & Lin, 2017). Other results did not explicitly examine or theorize time in ISAs (e.g., Burgers & Padgett, 2009), or the use of time-related terminology was not relevant to our research aims (e.g., “high-speed trains”, e.g., Genin, Tan, & Song, 2021).

We minimized biases in the data coding procedures by developing a coding booklet with instructions and supporting examples. Two researchers coded the articles based on the coding booklet. The article-by-article coding was then compared between the two researchers, and we found a high degree of agreement between researchers (Cohen’s alpha = 0.86). The few cases of disagreement were discussed, with input from a third researcher, and the final codes were agreed upon. In total, we identified 157 relevant articles (the full list of articles is available upon request) that make up this review’s database (Table 1).

To facilitate the synthesis of the reviewed literature, we drew upon both statistical and content analysis techniques to analyze the relevant articles. Statistical techniques helped us to identify the core issues and develop an overview of the literature. For instance, we investigated the

Table 1
Number of articles included in this systematic literature review.

Journals (Ranked by no. of relevant articles)	Results (No.)	Relevant articles (No.)	Relevant articles (%)
<i>Strategic Management Journal</i>	198	43	21.72%
<i>International Business Review</i>	77	28	36.36%
<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i>	88	26	29.55%
<i>Journal of World Business</i>	48	13	27.08%
<i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	70	5	7.14%
<i>Journal of International Management</i>	28	4	14.29%
<i>Asia Pacific Journal of Management</i>	37	4	10.81%
<i>Journal of Management</i>	57	4	7.02%
<i>Organization Science</i>	137	4	2.92%
<i>International Journal of Human Resource Management</i>	27	3	11.11%
<i>Journal of Supply Chain Management</i>	47	3	6.38%
<i>Journal of Management Studies</i>	67	3	4.48%
<i>Global Strategy Journal</i>	9	2	22.22%
<i>Journal of International Marketing</i>	24	2	8.33%
<i>Academy of Management Review</i>	35	2	5.71%
<i>Human Relations</i>	38	2	5.26%
<i>Management Science</i>	343	2	0.58%
<i>Human Resource Management</i>	13	1	7.69%
<i>Management & Organization Review</i>	17	1	5.88%
<i>International Marketing Review</i>	41	1	2.44%
<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	46	1	2.17%
<i>Manufacturing & Service Operations Management</i>	52	1	1.92%
<i>Journal of Operations Management</i>	58	1	1.72%
<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	71	1	1.41%
<i>Operations Research</i>	453	0	0.00%
<i>Production & Operations Management</i>	100	0	0.00%
Total	2,181	157	7.20%

main theories used in the literature and the frequency of the use of time types.

4. Review findings

We directly built on our conceptual background to structure this review’s findings about the (i) theoretical underpinnings of research evoking time in ISAs, (ii) time types and facets (iii), time cultures, and (iv) time in partners’ relations as described in the literature about time in ISAs.

4.1. Theoretical underpinnings of research about time in international strategic alliances

We first mapped the key authors and theories in extant research about time in ISAs in order to gauge the extent to which this literature reflects the multidisciplinary research in IB/IM (Griffith et al., 2008; Inkpen & Beamish, 1994). Table 2 shows the main authors and theories in the prior research. The largest share of articles (61 out of 157 articles) leveraged theories that originate in the IB/IM field—such as the role of national culture models (e.g., Hanvanich et al., 2003; Meschi & Riccio, 2008) and stages of internationalization (e.g., Guillen, 2003; Reuer, 2000)—to analyze the formation and dissolution of ISAs. The primary focus of this literature concerns the influence of national cultures on the stability of ISAs and firms’ internationalization strategies (Geringer & Hebert, 1991; Barkema & Vermeulen, 1997; Delios & Henisz, 2003). In this research, time in ISAs has been commonly examined in terms of longevity of the IORs, speed of internationalization, and stages in the internationalization journey across national borders (e.g., Guillén, 2003; Meschi & Riccio, 2008; Pasquali, 2021).

In analyzing time in ISAs, another set of studies (53 out of 157 articles) drew on theories from organizational economics and strategic management, such as real options theory (e.g., Puck, Holtbrügge, & Mohr, 2009; Song, 2017), resource-based view (including knowledge-based view and dynamic capabilities) (e.g., Isobe, Makino, & Montgomer, 2000; Pollitte, Miller, & Yaprak, 2015), and transaction cost economics (e.g., Hennart, 1991; Martin et al., 1995). For example, Martin et al. (1995) brought together economic considerations and time-related factors, namely long-term buyer-supplier relationships and buyer and supplier entry timing to the new location. The formation and longevity of ISAs have attracted wide attention within the reviewed literature that draws on organization economics (e.g., Jiang et al., 2011; Meschi, Norheim-Hansen, & Riccio, 2017; Ott, Liu, & Buck, 2014). The interconnection between economic and time considerations is particularly evident in the study of the longevity of ISAs from a real options theory vantagepoint (Reuer, 2000; Song, 2017). An ISA is thought to “resolve partly the tradeoff between buying flexibility now and waiting to invest and focus later by internalizing the [ISA]” (Kogut 1991, p. 22). The termination of ISAs due to acquisitions can occur due to developments in host markets leading partners to exercise the option to acquire the venture.

In total, 31 articles built on organization and management theory—mainly, institutional theory, resource dependence theory, social network theory, and stakeholder theory—when analyzing time in ISAs. The most cited authors within this research stream are credited with advancing processual research to illuminate the evolutionary dynamics of ISAs (e.g., Doz, 1996; Ariño & de la Torre, 1998). Tie stability and dynamics of ISAs have been commonly examined within articles that draw directly on organization and management theory (e.g., Cepa, 2021; Greve et al., 2010).

Others have followed an explicit cross-fertilization approach by drawing on theories across research streams to examine time in ISAs. Instances of cross-fertilization include drawing on transaction cost economics and institutional theory to shed light on the choices of contractual governance for IJVs (e.g., Luo, 2005) and partners (e.g., Wong & Ellis, 2002). Explicit cross-fertilization has gained prominence

Table 2
Embedding of the research on time in interorganizational relationships within international business / management literature.

		Predominance		Top 3 most cited articles (As of January 31, 2023, <i>Web of Knowledge</i>)	Representative literature
		No.	%		
International Business / Management (IB/IM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ National culture model ■ Internationalization theory / model 	61	38.85	<i>No. citations rank:</i> 1 Geringer & Hebert (1991) [569 citations] 2 Barkema & Vermeulen (1997) [402 citations] 3 Delios & Henisz (2003) [213 citations]	Barkema & Vermeulen (1997) , Buckley & Casson (1996) , Guillén (2003) , Malik & Zhao (2013)
Organizational Economics / Strategic Management (OE/SM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agency theory ■ Real options theory ■ Resource-based view (and knowledge-based view or dynamic capabilities) ■ Transaction cost economics 	53	33.78	<i>No. citations rank:</i> 1 Doz (1996) [1,162 citations] 2 Lane, Salk, & Lyles (2001) [1,147 citations] 3 Dyer (1997) [941 citations]	Hennart (1991) , Martin, Mitchell, & Swaminathan (1995) , Pollitte, Miller, & Yaprak (2015) , Rao & Schmidt (1998)
Organizational and Management Theory (OMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Institutional theory ■ Resource dependence theory ■ Social Network Theory ■ Stakeholder Theory 	31	19.74	<i>No. citations rank:</i> 1 Ariño & de la Torre (1998) [480 citations] 2 Barkema, Shenkar, Vermeulen and Bell, (1997) 3 Musteen, Francis, & Datta, (2010)	Cepa (2021) , Dorobantu, Lindner, & Müllner (2020) , Greve et al. (2010) , Hoppner & Griffith (2011)
Cross-fertilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OE/SM-IB/IM ■ OE/SM-OMT ■ IB/IM-OMT 	12	7.63	<i>No. citations rank:</i> 1 Kotabe, Martin, & Domoto (2003) [571 citations] 2 Luo (2005) [148 citations] 3 Yu, Gilbert, & Oviatt (2011) [125 citations]	Iriyama, Shi, & Prescott (2014) , Jensen (2012) , Li & Choi (2009) , Puthusserry, Khan, Knight, & Miller (2020)

Note: The categorization of theories builds on [Parmigiani and Rivera-Santos \(2011\)](#) – for theories in organizational economics / strategic management (OE/SM) and organizational and management theory (OMT) – and [Connelly et al. \(2013\)](#) – for theories native to IB/IM. We categorized the articles based the theories cited and used by the authors inside the paper.

within the literature, albeit relatively recently ([Yu, Gilbert, & Oviatt, 2011](#); [Parente, Geleilate, & Rong, 2018](#)).

Theories play a central role in establishing relationships between concepts ([Hoorani et al., 2023](#); [Suddaby, 2010](#)), thus we turned our attention to the specific conceptual role of attributes of time approaches in scholarship about ISAs. Time approaches are marshalled as both *explanans* (i.e., time approaches as containing the explanation) and *explanandum* (i.e., time approaches as what needs to be explained) in the extant literature on ISAs. We read through every article and recorded the conceptual role of time as *explanans* and *explanandum*. Cognizant of the fact that most articles in our sample follow a quantitative research design (114 out of 157 articles), we opted to study the *explanans* in terms of independent, mediator, and moderator variables and the *explanandum* in terms of dependent variables. As for qualitative studies, *explanans* refer to factors or constructs illuminating an outcome (*explanandum*).

As for *explanans*, time approaches mainly feature as independent variables (70 articles), followed by moderation or mediating variables (15 articles). Time approaches are also marshalled to examine processes and dynamics of ISAs (16 articles). We found that a total of 56 articles actually aim to explain time (*explanandum*), mainly in terms of the duration of ties, longevity of ISAs, and entry/exit of international partners.

Below, we build on the core ideas of our conceptual background to continue exploring these issues in the literature, first, by leveraging the distinction between types and facets of time and, second, by exploring the study of time cultures.

4.2. Types and facets of time in international strategic alliances

The analysis of time in ISAs tends to follow an approach that is “unitary (subject to only one interpretation), linear (progressing steadily

forward from past to present to future), and mechanical (containing discrete moments subject to precise measurement)” ([Blueborn & Denhardt, 1988](#), p. 302). This view of time encompasses four types (i.e., clock time, event time, cyclical time, and life-cycle time) and, we argue, a plethora of time facets (e.g., duration, rhythm, and speed) describe time types. [Table 3](#) summarizes the types and facets of time in the literature about the ISAs we reviewed.

Firstly, clock time has been the most prominent type of time in prior research in ISAs (107 out of 157 articles). As a result of the prevalence of clock time in past research, received wisdom about time facets is mainly restricted to this specific type of time. As an example, duration is examined in relation to the number of years an ISA has been in operation (i.e., relating to clock time) and to a lesser extent to event time (e.g., duration of an armed conflict affecting an ISA) or life-cycle time (e.g., duration of an ISA formation stage). Several constructs evoke subjective time, but a closer inspection of the measures shows the prevalence of clock time (e.g., temporal distance measured as the number of hours between differing time zones, [Hong & Shao, 2021](#)). Although common to the literature on interorganizational relationships broadly ([Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011](#)), the prevalence of the study of clock time in ISAs (e.g., longevity, frequency) cannot be detached from the observation that researchers have extensively relied on secondary data from existing industry datasets (see also [Schilling, 2009](#)).

Secondly, research about event time has focused on change in equity ownership (e.g., [Hennart et al., 1999](#); [Iriyama, Shi, & Prescott, 2014](#)), disruption (e.g., [Reimann, Kosmol, & Kaufmann, 2017](#); [Zhao et al., 2019](#)), and divestiture (e.g., [Liu & Li, 2020](#); [Mata & Portugal, 2015](#)). We found only 23 articles (out of 157) focusing on event time, but several of these studies show the importance of using novel data to advance research about event time in ISAs. Taking advantage of secondary data, [Andrevski et al. \(2016\)](#) gathered a dataset of competitive actions (i.e.,

Table 3
Time in research about international strategic alliances.

Time types	Definition	Prominence		Time facets commonly studied in IB/IM	Connections to core issues in IB/IM	Representative literature
		No.	%			
Clock time	Time refers to a “continuum as linear-infininitely divisible into objective, quantifiable units” (Ancona et al., 2001, p.514)	107	68.15	Duration, longevity, pace, rhythm, sequence, speed, time series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Working across time zones ■ Formation and duration of IJVs 	Eberhard & Craig (2013), Song (2020), Surdu et al. (2018)
Event time	Time refers to events (e.g., spike in prices in the international market)	23	14.65	Disruption, episode, frequency, termination, timing, event analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Disruption in global supply chains ■ Entry in new international markets 	Chi et al. (2019), Pollitte, Miller, & Yaprak (2015), Wassmer & Dussauge (2012)
Cyclical time	Time refers to occurrences repeating over and over (e.g., harvest seasons)	6	3.82	Cycles of technological change, repeated ties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Seasonal demand peaks in global supply chains ■ Season-related production cycles 	Barmeyer & Davoine (2019), Hagen & Zucchella (2014)
Life cycle	Time refers to a relatively predictable pattern of developments (e.g., product life cycle)	17	10.83	Dynamics, evolution, life course, life cycle, stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ IORs associated with internationalization (e.g., MNE-SME ties) ■ Dynamics / evolution of global alliance networks 	Ariño & de la Torre (1998), Jensen (2012), Nell, Ambos, & Schlegelmilch (2011)

Note: The percentages are based on a total of 157 articles, but 4 articles (2.55%) were coded as subjective time.

events) comprising 12 global carmakers with 1,471 unique partners and 37,520 alliances. In our review, however, we found only one article about major events exogenous to the ISAs—that by Liu and Li (2020) studying terrorist host country attacks and divesture decisions.

Thirdly, cyclical time unfolds in a repeated way over time (e.g., harvest seasons, lunar calendar). In our review, only six articles (out of 157) addressed time cycles (e.g., Barmeyer & Davoine, 2019; Hagen & Zucchella, 2014). This review finding is somehow perplexing given that cyclical time can often vary between the countries of origin of the partners (e.g., harvest seasons in the Northern vs. Southern hemispheres). Even if partners experience the harvest seasons—relating to cyclical time—simultaneously, they might differ in their practices and those differences can have important implications for ISAs. Cyclical time also concerns seasonal demand peaks in global supply chains and season-related production and harvesting.

Finally, life-cycle time concerns stages of a process (Van de Ven, 1992). We found 17 articles (out of 157) dealing with life-cycle time (Table 3). This research stream has predominantly focused on internationalization through ISAs and IJVs. For instance, Reuer (2000, p. 1) examined how “the benefits that firms obtain from investing in IJVs can be reinforced or reduced by the management of later stages of collaboration.” This literature has examined stages of the ISAs (e.g., Santangelo & Meyer, 2011; Zeira & Newbury, 1999) and evolution dynamics (e.g., Doz, 1996; Hagen & Zucchella, 2014). While most studies about life-cycle time have discussed stages endogenous to ISAs, Danis, Chiburu, and Lyles’ study (2010) offers a rare example of stages exogenous to IJVs, namely time periods (1993 vs. 2001) that capture changes in Hungary’s institutional environment.

Our review’s findings show that research on ISAs has overwhelmingly focused on objective time with little attention being paid to subjective time (for reviews about subjective time in organizations, see Elsahn & Earl, 2022; Shipp & Jansen, 2021). We caution that several studies we reviewed do not directly capture subjective time. Instead, studies have used country-based metrics, such as the GLOBE’s future orientation (e.g., Meschi & Riccio, 2008; Reuer, Klijn, & Lioukas, 2014) and Hofstede’s short-term vs. long-term orientation (e.g., Barkema & Vermeulen, 1997; Choi & Contractor, 2016), to extrapolate about time and how it influences ISAs.

We found only four studies (out of 157 articles) that explicitly examine subjective time in ISAs (Hoppner & Griffith, 2011; Rao & Schmidt, 1998; Walsh, Wang, & Xin, 1999). Hoppner and Griffith (2011) used a questionnaire to elicit managers’ perceived immediacy of reciprocity (e.g., “Favors extended to us by our partner will be returned over the life of the relationship,” p. 923) in relationships between a U.S.

supplier and its Japanese buyers. Drawing on game theory, Rao and Schmidt (1998) found that U.S. managers who display a long-time horizon also use more soft and rational tactics when negotiating the formation of ISAs with foreign counterparts; in contrast, managers who display a short time horizon tend to engage in hard negotiation tactics with their counterparts. Temporal complexity in ISAs is particularly apparent when considering the interplay between “clock time” and subjective time. Looking at differences between expatriates and local managers, Walsh et al. (1999) presented first-hand accounts of managers’ dissimilar perspectives about time. In the words of a Chinese manager interviewed in Walsh et al.’s study:

Expatriates [US managers of IJVs] are on 3-year or 5-year term. So they usually do not think long-term, other than three or five years. They do not want to build up a foundation for five years later. They want to get their results, especially short-term results. There is a very big impact on the business. For us, we may stay here longer. (1999, p. 79)

A three-year or five-year time window concerns clock time (objectively defined and measured) while a three-year or five-year horizon can also refer to a long-term or short-term that is culturally created and defined (i.e., subjectively experienced). A three-year time window might be considered short-term by a partner from a country characterized by a long-term oriented culture (e.g., China) while a counterparty from a country characterized by short-term oriented culture (e.g., USA) might actually consider the same period to be long-term. Unlike research on organizations that has examined subjective time also using in-depth qualitative analysis (for reviews, see Elsahn & Earl, 2022; Tang et al., 2020), research in ISAs has paid less attention to subjective time and seldom collected primary data about managers’ actual perceptions of time. The limited attention to subjective time in empirical research on ISAs has offered us further impetus to examine how time—mainly objective time—has been linked to differences in national culture in research about ISAs.

4.3. Time cultures

Cross-border differences about time have often been captured in IB/IM literature in terms of a country’s future orientation of societal

practices² (House et al., 2004) and temporal orientation (Hofstede, 2001). To gauge the extent to which the articles we reviewed cover countries that vary in temporal orientation, we coded each article first using the GLOBE’s dimension of future orientation of societal practices. We found that 79.62% of the articles (125 out of 157) cover ISAs involving partners from countries that display low and high scores³ of future orientation societal practices (Table 4). This finding points to the very frequent co-existence of different time approaches across partners in ISAs. Prior research has examined several pairwise combinations of low vs. high future orientation of societal practices, such as Peru and USA (Marshall, 2003), Japan and Pakistan (Khan & Nicholson, 2014), China and South Korea (Guillén & García-Canal, 2009), and China and USA (Liu, Adair, & Bello, 2015).

We also coded the countries using Hofstede’s score of temporal orientation as perhaps one of the most used cultural dimensions about

Table 4
Time and national culture.

	Prominence		Prior research	
	No.	%	Examples	Illustrative literature
Future orientation of societal practices (GLOBE) (N=157)				
<i>Low (all partners)</i>	11	7.00	Spain-Argentina	Ariño & Ring (2010), Meschi (2004), Thomas et al. (2007).
<i>High (all partners)</i>	21	13.38	US-Japan	Dyer (1996), Ryan et al. (2020), Wareham et al. (2005)
<i>Low and High</i>	125	79.62	France-Germany	Barmeyer & Davoine (2019), Guillén (2003), Surdu et al. (2018).
Temporal orientation (Hofstede) (N=157)				
<i>Short-term (all partners)</i>	8	5.10	Ireland-USA	Edwards & Buckley (1998), Geringer & Hebert (1991), Marshall (2003), Ryan et al. (2020).
<i>Long-term (all partners)</i>	21	13.38	France-Germany	Barmeyer & Davoine (2019), Demir & Söderman (2007), Peng & Beamish (2007).
<i>Short-term and Long-term</i>	128	81.52	Japan-USA	Couper, Reuber, & Prashantham, (2020), García-Canal et al. (2002), Hennart et al. (1999).

² The GLOBE survey distinguishes between “future orientation of societal practices” and “future orientation of societal values.” Because we are interested in the influence of time on attitudes and actions in ISAs, we focus on the “future orientation of societal practices” instead of the “future orientation of societal values” that mainly capture aspirations. Moreover, respondents from countries scoring low on “future orientation of societal practices” often score high on “future orientation of societal values,” thus explaining the commonly reported negative correlation between “future orientation of societal practices” and “future orientation of societal values.”

³ We gathered the country-level scores of the future orientation of societal practices (source: <https://globeproject.com/data/GLOBE-Phase-2-Aggregate-d-Societal-Culture-Data.xls>). We used the median (3.81) as a cut-off value for low and high scores of future orientation societal practices. For example, Japan shows a score of 4.07 (> 3.81), thus Japan was coded as displaying high scores of future orientation societal practices. Singapore shows the highest score (5.07) while Russia shows the lowest score (2.88) for future orientation societal practices.

time in prior research. Table 4 shows that a handful of studies (8 out of 157 articles) examine IORs spanning only countries that share a short-term orientation, such as Ireland and USA, and Australia and UK (e.g., Edwards & Buckley, 1998; Ryan et al., 2020)⁴. In total, we found 21 studies (out of 157 articles) about IORs involving only countries that display long-term orientation. For example, researchers have examined ties between partners from Pakistan and Japan (e.g., Khan & Nicholson, 2014), China and Japan (Isobe, Makino, & Montgomery, 2000), and China and Singapore (Lu & Hwang, 2010). Most studies (128 out of 157 articles) have examined IORs involving partners from short-term orientation countries and long-term orientation countries (e.g., Couper et al., 2020; García-Canal et al., 2002; Hennart, Kim, & Zeng, 1998).

Prior research has predominantly focused on partners originating from countries that differ in temporal practices and orientation. The analytical distinctions between low vs. high future orientation of societal practices, and short-term vs. long-term orientation overlap, but this overlap is partial (for a comparison between GLOBE and Hofstede’s dimensions, see Venaik, Zhu, & Brewer, 2013). For example, Barmeyer and Davoine (2019) studied France and Germany which are two countries that score high on temporal orientation, but France scores low on future orientation societal practices while Germany scores high in this dimension. Such differences between typologies are also salient in China-USA and China-Japan IORs that are commonly examined (e.g., Andrevski et al., 2016; Li, Lam, Qian, 2001). This finding stresses the importance of a better specification of time when studying ISAs.

4.4. Time and partners’ relations

ISAs are multi-faceted arrangements, involving multiple parties and time types that can be nested across levels of analysis ranging from individual managers to the interorganizational and country levels (Cropper et al., 2008; Lumineau & Oliveira, 2018). Table 5 summarizes the literature we reviewed according to these attributes.

Firstly, time has been mainly examined from the vantage point of a single party (137 out of 157 articles). A single party approach is feasible for a range of time facets, such as longevity of the cross-border IOR, the firm’s age or entry/exit of partners. However, parties in ISAs can differ in their assessment of time types (e.g., life-cycle, events) and time facets (e.g., perceived duration and time horizons). We found that only 20 articles (out of 157 articles) explicitly gather data from more than one party in the ISAs (e.g., Cepa, 2021) (Table 5).

Secondly, reading through the articles helped us to unravel time as a core dimension of the complexity of doing international business via ISAs (Eden & Nielsen, 2020). Researchers have investigated, for example, the stage within a new product development cycle (relating to life-cycle time), whether a tie was terminated (relating to event time) (Taneri & Meyer, 2017), and stock market reactions to ISAs announcements (relating to event time) (Miller et al. 2008). Prior research on multiple time types primarily analyzes clock time and life-cycle time (Doz, 1996, Jiang et al., 2009) and clock time and event time (Santangelo & Meyer, 2011; Westman & Thorgren, 2016). However, the majority of research we reviewed (140 out of 157 articles) has examined one type of time only (Table 5). The choice for a single time type might be explained by the pursuit of parsimony, and perhaps, by editors and reviewers encouraging authors to develop narrowly focused articles. As a result, a rethink of the balance between parsimony and complexity of ISAs is desirable in order to narrow the gap between empirical research and the phenomenon of time, if IB/IM research is to continue offering

⁴ Using the country-level scores of temporal orientation (available here: <http://geerthofstede.com/research-and-vsm/dimension-data-matrix/>), we determined the cut off value based on the median (44.58). Trinidad and Tobago (13) and South Korea (100) display the lowest and the highest score for long-term orientation, respectively.

Table 5
Time and partners' relations.

	Prominence		Time		Illustrative literature
	No.	%	Dominant time types	Examples of time facets	
Single party focus					
Yes	137	87.26	Clock and event	Longevity and priorities	Badorf et al. (2019), Gabrielsson, Gabrielsson, & Dimitratos (2014), Lu & Hwang (2010)
No	20	12.74	Clock and life-cycle	Evolution and phases	Cepa (2021), Couper, Reuber, & Prashantham, (2020), Samaddar & Kadiyala (2006)
Time types					
Single	140	89.17	Clock and event	Longevity and entry/exit	Barkema & Vermeulen (1997), Hennart et al. (1998), Meschi & Wassmer (2013)
Multiple	17	10.83	Clock and life-cycle	Firm's age and product life cycle	Taneri & Meyer (2017), Miller et al. (2008), Westman & Thorgren (2016)
Analysis levels					
Individual	5	3.18	Subjective and event	Time horizons	Rao & Schmidt (1998), Walsh, Wang, & Xin (1999)
Partner	65	41.40	Clock and event	Firm's age and survival	Eapen (2012), Indro & Richards (2007), Menzies, Orr, & Paul (2020)
IOR	65	41.40	Clock and life-cycle	Longevity and NPD cycle	Ott et al. 92014), Petersen et al. (2005), Wasti & Wasti (2008)
Country	22	14.02	Clock and life-cycle		Choi & Contractor (2016), Tower, Hewett, & Fenik (2019)

Note: The total for each of the 4 categories (first column) is 157 articles. The coding is in relation to each article's time-related variable or construct.

insights about how ISAs strive or fail.

Finally, an often-neglected feature of ISAs refers to the nesting of time across multiple levels of analysis. Having already noted the predominance of clock time, time types have been evenly examined at the firm (65 out of 157 articles) and interorganizational levels (65 out of 157 articles) (Table 5). Somehow surprisingly, given that national differences are a primary issue for the IB/IM literature, only 22 out of 157 articles have examined time at the country level (e.g., Choi & Contractor, 2016; Tower, Hewett, & Fenik, 2019). Only five articles studied time at the individual level, particularly (subjective) differences about time (e.g., Rao & Schmidt, 1998; Walsh et al., 1999).

The findings about level of analysis deserve two observations: time is mainly examined in relation to the firm and the IOR levels; and the role of time cultures receives limited attention in a field primarily interested in studying differences between countries (Zaheer et al., 2012). The prevalence of country-level analysis about time needs to be understood in the context of a widespread use of readily available databases (e.g., GLOBE) about a country's temporal practices (House et al., 2004) and temporal orientation (Hofstede, 2001). However, measures in those databases overlook the heterogeneity of time-related attitudes and experiences by international partners (Tang, Richter, & Nadkarni, 2020). Perceptions about time occur at the individual level, and these

perceptions fundamentally shape actions at the collective level (e.g., firm, IORs). ISAs may be conceptualized as teams that bring individuals from across partner firms to achieve collaborative outcomes (van der Kamp et al., 2022). The interplay between individual and group factors offers an example of the importance of micro-foundations (e.g., Abell, Felin, & Foss, 2008).

4.5. Summary and outstanding issues

The foregoing review provides three interrelated insights that call for further integration of the literature about time in ISAs. First, research is yet to fully embrace the temporal complexity of cross-border differences, contributing to shortcomings with respect to the intertwined nature of culture and time in ISAs. Second, existing research focuses on clock time while paying less attention to other types of time (i.e., event, cyclical, and life-cycle) that are inescapable in most, if not all, ISAs. Third, received wisdom favors a single party perspective, thus overlooking partners' perspective about time as a defining element of ISAs. Parties seldom experience time in the same way.

Each of the foregoing insights provide an impetus to develop a perspective suitable to shed light on why and how partners' time influences ISAs. The dominance of clock time calls for an augmented temporal perspective that attends the variety of time types and type facets as a way to unpack the temporal complexity that characterizes ISAs. The single-party focus brings to the fore the need of a relational perspective capable of illuminating time from the vantage point of more than one party in ISAs. The extrapolation of time from one partner to the whole ISA risks missing, for example, how parties' dissimilar perspectives about time can be a source of stability in IORs, but also how partners' similarities with respect to time might prompt friction.

5. A temporal-relational framework

To start addressing the foregoing issues, we develop a temporal-relational framework that draws together time types and relations between cross-border partners in alliances. This framework is directly informed by the review's conceptual framework and key findings, but we enrich it with insights from the broader management literature about time to offer a springboard for research that extends current research and breaks new ground about time in ISAs.

Fig. 2 depicts our temporal-relational framework. From a temporal vantage point, this framework builds on (i) the distinction between types of time and time facets, (ii) brings in subjective time in ISAs, and (iii) draws attention to partners' perspectives about time in the ISA. To help bring together research about objective and subjective time, our framework highlights how subjective time can engender attitudes and actions that influence perceptions and interpretation about (objective) time facets, such as speed, rhythm, and timing. Subjective time influences how managers approach types of time (e.g., how do ISA managers define event time, say, for a host country disruption?) and time facets (e.g., what do ISAs managers understand as a fast vs. sluggish response?). Our framework further disentangles the extent to which partners hold similar or dissimilar perspectives on a specific type of time in order to start unraveling how partners' perspectives about time influence the functioning of ISAs.

This temporal-relational framework offers a novel way to illuminate temporal complexity (Barkema et al., 2002) as a critical element when involving alliance partners across borders (Eden & Nielsen, 2020). This framework directly taps into the temporal complexity of ISAs by zooming in on how partners' (dis)similarities about time engender

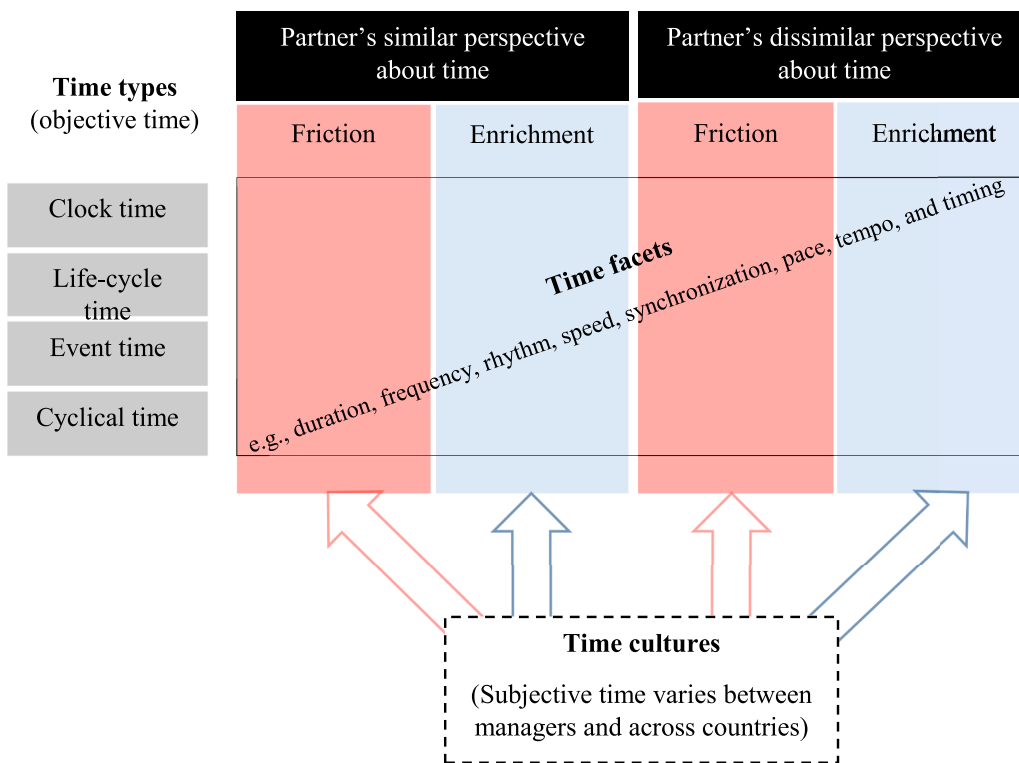


Fig. 2. A temporal-relational framework (color-coded exhibit). Note: The following elements originate in our conceptual background: time types, time facets, time cultures. We build on these elements to propose a temporal-relational framework where objective time and subjective time are interrelated in illuminating how partner’s perspectives on type(s) of time can engender friction or enrichment of the ISAs.

friction or enrichment in ISAs.⁵ Friction refers to the stalling of effective or productive actions between partners (Das & Teng, 2000) while enrichment broadly denotes enhancement of actions (Lumineau, Hanisch, & Wurtz, 2021). Partners’ (dis)similarities can encompass how managers use time (e.g., American managers tend to prefer many short meetings while Asian managers typically opt for fewer and longer meetings; Robinson & Godbey, 1999) and, perhaps more importantly, understand time.

Below, we synthesize prior research using a single type of time followed by studies covering multiple types of time to study partners’ (dis) similar perspectives about time and implications for ISAs. As we assess the progress made so far in the literature, we also offer immediate directions for future research about specific elements of the proposed framework.

5.1. Research using a single type of time

As observed above, prior literature commonly examines a single type of time in ISAs to study partners’ perspectives about time (see Table 6). Prior literature generally treats partners’ similar time perspectives mainly as a source of enrichment, and time dissimilarity as a source of friction. However, as we explore below, such similarity can also engender friction (e.g., by creating inertia) and time dissimilarity can enrich ISAs (e.g., by promoting synergies between different perspectives held by each partner).

Friction. Prior research mainly views partners’ dissimilar perspectives about time as engendering friction. Friction can surface because of diverging culturally embedded uses and understandings about time and time expectations in ISAs (Brett & Okumura, 1998; Malik & Zhao, 2013;

Ott et al., 2014; Schneider & Meyer, 1991). In the context of negotiations between US and Japanese partners, Brett and Okumura (1998) found that offering too much too soon was interpreted by Japanese counterparties as trying to buy favor, and actually harmed rather than helped in developing a trusting relationship. A commonly found view in prior research is that “managers in long-term orientation cultures prepare long-term plans” (Malik & Zhao, 2013, p. 703). Furthermore, friction is widely reported after the formation phase (honeymoon) of ISAs since managers progressively attribute the persistence of time-related differences more to the partner’s individual characteristics than to the partner’s national culture (Hennart, Kim, & Zeng, 1998; Lu, Shenkar, & Gurnani, 2008; Meschi & Riccio, 2008).

However, partners’ similar perspectives about time can also add strain to the relationship between international partners and in so doing undercut the functioning of ISAs (Table 6). A canonical example is when partners share a short-term orientation, but such orientation prevents the cross-border IOR from fully realizing its potential value (e.g., to learn and to develop new products) (Anderson, 1990; Jensen, 2012). Partners who share a long-term orientation typically maintain long-lasting (i.e., clock time) ISAs (Ott et al., 2014), but such similarity of temporal horizons might also precipitate instances in which partners end up locked in ailing partnerships over long periods (Chung & Beamish, 2010; Lee, Chung, & Beamish, 2019). From an event time vantagepoint, Isidor et al. (2015) reported that jointly experienced events of ISA reconfiguration (e.g., changes to the ownership structure of the ISA) might erode the norms of reciprocity between partners and consequently create instability in ISAs. Others also report that, although the presence of prior ties (i.e., event) can support continuity of ISAs, the existence of ties with third parties can also precipitate joint withdrawals (Greve et al., 2010).

Enrichment. The underlying assumption in the literature we reviewed is that partners’ similar perspectives about time enriches ISAs by providing a common understanding about goals and timing of task execution between partners (Albert, 2013; Isobe et al., 2000). The accomplishment of tasks benefits from partners’ similar perspectives about time, more so if those tasks display strong temporal specificity; that is, the tasks must be performed in a timely manner in order to not

⁵ For the sake of clarity, we focus on how partners’ (dis)similar perspectives on time prompt either friction or enrichment as opposed to friction and enrichment simultaneously. We also found no article in our review that explicitly addresses how such (dis)similarities simultaneously lead to both friction and enrichment.

Table 6
Prior literature on the partners' perspectives about time.

		Examples	Illustrative literature
Friction	<i>Partners' dissimilar perspectives</i>	In cross-border negotiations, offering too much too soon can undermine trust between parties as opposed to showing goodwill. Partners grow frustrated over time with time-related differences in ISAs.	Brett & Okumura (1998), Luo, Shenkar, & Gurnani (2008), Meschi & Riccio (2008)
	<i>Partners' similar perspectives</i>	Partners who share a short-term orientation might lead to the dismantlement of an ISA before realizing its full potential. Partners who share priorities, particularly with third parties, can precipitate premature withdrawals from ISAs.	Chung & Beamish (2010), Greve et al. (2010), Isidor et al. (2015), Jensen (2012)
Enrichment	<i>Partners' similar perspectives</i>	A shared understanding about time (e.g., stages of product development) can harmonize expectations between partners. Partners who share a past working relationship experience shorter negotiation time of contracts (even if contracts might have more clauses).	Ariño et al. (2014), Guillén (2003), Isobe et al. (2000), Malik & Yazar (2016), Surdu et al. (2018)
	<i>Partners' dissimilar perspectives</i>	By experiencing differences about time (e.g., to meet deadlines), partners progressively develop awareness of the differences and possibly nurture converging expectations. ISAs in which partners different in short- vs. long-term orientation might offer the possibility to develop a holistic view of the business and work in complementary ways.	Barkema & Vermeulen (1997), Björkman, Stahl, & Vaara (2007), Hatani & McGaughey (2013), Simonin (1999)

Note: We find few articles about the partners' perspectives about multiple types of time, thus this table focuses on prior literature about single type of time (mainly clock time).

lose their value (Masten, Meehan, & Snyder, 1991). Two research streams have made explicit contributions to partners' time similarity as a source of enrichment in ISAs. A first research stream suggests that similarity between partners about temporal orientation aligns their expectations. The implications of similarity in partners' orientation are apparent when partners pursue exploitation vs. exploration, where the former is typically short-term and the latter entails a long-term orientation (Lavie & Rosenkopf, 2006; March, 1991). The trade-offs between short-term vs. long-term gains are less salient when partners share a temporal orientation (Malik & Yazar, 2016), thus aligning actions in ISAs. A similar temporal orientation between international partners can reduce uncertainty and extend the longevity of ISAs (Parkhe, 1991; Tower et al., 2019).

A second research stream focuses on shared events and experiences as a source of enrichment of ISAs (Ariño et al., 2014; Guillén, 2003; Liu & Li 2020; Surdu et al., 2018). For example, international partners who have worked together in the past also experience shorter negotiation

times, albeit this positive effect can decrease amid diverse learning mechanisms used by partners and the type of provisions being negotiated (Ariño et al., 2014). Looking at the time window between entry and exit, Surdu et al. (2018, p. 923) found that "the length of experience accumulated in the market between initial entry and exit delayed re-entry, meaning that firms with more experience accumulated over time wait more than ten years to re-enter." This finding suggests that experienced partners might opt to take longer, allowing ample time for the interpretation of information about the host county and local partners and therefore be better equipped to address potential informational ambiguity about international markets.

Although largely unacknowledged, partners' dissimilar perspectives about time can enrich ISAs (Table 6). Cultural differences—including temporal orientation—can contribute to superior performance and longevity of ISAs (Meschi, 1997; Simonin, 1999). For example, the distance based on long-term orientation is reported to increase the duration of ISAs (Malik & Zhao, 2013). Concerning inter-partner differences about temporal orientation, Barkema and Vermeulen (1997, p. 849) conjecture that "the aggressive attitude of one partner (aimed at individual achievement and performance [short-term orientation]) and the relationship orientation of the other [long-term orientation] may complement each other rather than collide." A view of time differences (e.g., length of international experience and temporal orientation) as enrichment echoes a broad literature suggesting that cultural differences can create complementarities and beneficial dynamics in ISAs (Björkman, Stahl, & Vaara, 2007; Madhok & Tallman, 1998; Tung & Verbeke, 2010).

Cognizant of the counterparty's dissimilar perspective (e.g., short-term vs long-term orientation), partners might approach ISAs as "small wins" and progressively build a robust partnership based on nurturing shared understandings and converging expectations (Parkhe, 1998). Prior research found that "IJV partners who perceive themselves to be in a culturally incongruent IJV partnership employ more frequent communication in an attempt to establish appropriate decoding of communications" (Zeybek, O'Brien, & Griffith, 2003, p. 504). At its core, the expectation is that time differences can sensitize partners to temporal incongruence and thereby enrich ISAs by easing mutual adjustment between partners.

A finding of the review worth noting is that most research about dissimilarity between partners draws on clock time. An exception is the work by Hatani and McGaughey (2013) that directly explored synchronized cycles between Toyota and its suppliers. Shared understanding about cycles between suppliers and Toyota engenders routines at the network level (Dyer, 1996).

Progress and prospect (single type of time). Partners' perspectives about a single type of time can engender friction or enrichment in ISAs. As for friction, most of the prior research examines partners' dissimilar perspectives about time, and primarily in terms of clock time. Less attention has been given to partners' similar perspectives concerning other types of time. Partners might also be at identical internationalization phases (i.e., life-cycle time), but this type of similarity might cause distrust between partners as inter-partner competition may surface (Parkhe, 1993). As for enrichment, prior literature primarily discusses the effect of prior experience—either as clock time (i.e., duration and frequency) or as an event (i.e., present or absent)—on enhancing the functioning of ISAs. Much less is known about event time, cyclical time, and life-cycle time as a precursor of enrichment of ISAs. Overall, prior research offers limited insight into how partners' dissimilar perspectives about time can actually enrich ISAs. Thus, there is an opportunity for research that explores the partners' (dis)similarities not only about clock time, but also about other types of time as an important step toward better understanding the temporal complexity of ISAs.

5.2. Research using multiple types of time

Time in ISAs is seldom restricted to a single type as partners work

across countries and cultures. However, we find limited research that explicitly examines multiple types of time (e.g., life-cycle time and event time, [Hatani & McGaughey, 2013](#)) so that research remains largely incipient about the connections across multiple time types. International buyer-supplier teams might be working across time zones to shorten the time of the product to the market (i.e., clock time) and to be able to adjust to seasonal changes in market preferences (i.e., cyclical time). Culturally embedded notions about time become more apparent as multiple types of time characterize ISAs. Below, we explore multiple time types in order to gain a better understanding of how the plurality of time types can either engender friction or enrich the functioning of ISAs (e.g., [García-Canal et al., 2002](#); [Parkhe, 2003](#)).

Friction. Partners' dissimilar perspectives about types of time may create and amplify opposing expectations between partners in ISAs. Business cycles can also undergo downturns, pushing buyers to abandon long-time suppliers—and thereby adding friction to the relationship—as pressure grows to search for new low-cost sources ([MacDuffie, 2011](#)). For example, ISAs tend to be very short in the research contract industry, typically not lasting more than a few months (i.e., clock time), while industry cycles have been previously described to run at snail's pace (i.e., life-cycle time) in the auto industry ([Parkhe, 1998](#), pp. 267-268). However, this industry is changing fast. Car makers must now move faster than ever to adapt to disruptive events (e.g., shortage of magnesium in global markets) and shorten the production cycles to avoid lagging behind competitors in key areas (e.g., electric batteries) ([Hume, 2021](#)). The speed and timing of actions can be compromised by dissimilar perspectives about time across a global, multi-tier network of suppliers spread across the globe.

However, partners' similar perspectives about types of time might also operate as a major source of friction in ISAs. The literature we reviewed does not explicitly examine instances of partners' similar perspectives about types of time engendering friction, even though such examples are common when partners work with counterparties across borders. For example, consistent with the literature on strategic alliances as learning races ([Hamel, 1991](#)), two partners who form several ISAs (i.e., event time) and are at similar stages of their internationalization (i.e., life-cycle time) might develop redundancies and overlap in their products such that competitive dynamics might evolve in ways that are detrimental for the ISA. Two young partnering firms (say, less than 2 years, relating to objective time) might be driven by preference for short-term gains (relating to subjective time), but such orientation might collide, precipitating dysfunctional dynamics between partners.

Enrichment. Our review of the literature shows a scarcity of research on how partners' similar perspectives about types of time might enrich ISAs. Nonetheless, some studies are suggestive of partners' similar perspectives about types of time in enriching ISAs. A multi-year partnership (i.e., clock time) and the timing of entry (i.e., event time) in a new country (e.g., a Japanese supplier opening a factory in the US) influence whether existing buyer-supplier ties are transferred and successfully replicated in a new market ([Martin, Mitchell, & Swaminathan, 1995](#)). Partners' similar perspectives about time types (e.g., shared events, same stage of development, comparable length of experience in a specific market) can contribute to the development of convergent expectations between parties, thus easing negotiation as well as decision-making. These similar perspectives about time types can therefore speed up joint responses to the international markets (e.g., shifts in market preferences and price fluctuations of raw materials).

Partners' dissimilar perspectives about types of time often enrich ISAs. Such dissimilarity can prompt mutual learning about counterparts, and ultimately contribute to a high-order goal of ISAs about bridging cultural gaps, such as knowledge flows between the East and West. Reflecting on several years of experience, an India-based e-commerce service provider noted that:

My experience helped me understand about foreign clients' expectations. They always look for transparency and this is a real issue

with the Indian start-ups. For example, some people will under-price their product—sometimes to get an order. It may lead to chaos... they wouldn't normally be able to supply quality products on time if they under-price it. They support you if you are honest and open... they will allow us to outsource or even give us time to develop the capabilities. ([Puthusserry et al., 2020](#), p. 527)

This quote alludes to cultural differences about quality and delivery time expectations and how such differences can actually support the development of mutual understanding between parties. Dissimilar perspectives about time are not limited to IORs spanning continents. Consider Germany and France, two neighboring countries also sharing a long-term orientation. Nonetheless, there are important differences about time that can either provide an opportunity to learn or be a source of conflict between partners. German's DB and France's SNCF entered a partnership (relating to event time), but the parties had to progressively discuss their culturally rooted differences about punctuality (delays measured using clock time). As a result, these international partners progressively reached mutual agreements that enabled them to recombine and modify specific operational aspects, and thereby ensuring that train service ran smoothly across borders ([Barmeyer & Davoine, 2019](#)).

Progress and prospect (multiple types of time). The few studies offering a glimpse into partners' dissimilarities about types of time allude to friction due to unmet expectations and growing frustration between partners. Less examined, however, is how partners' dissimilar perspectives about multiple types of time can also enrich ISAs by providing a source of complementarity (e.g., striking a balance between short-term and long-term orientation, at different stages of ISAs) and sensitizing managers in ways that promote mutual adjustment between international partners.

How managers use and understand multiple types of time in ISAs remains largely neglected in prior research. [Table 7](#) offers several illustrations about the study of multiple time types concurrently, commonly occurring in ISAs. ISAs provide bountiful examples of the pertinence of examining multiple types of time. For instance, ISAs are exposed to different political and electoral cycles (i.e., cyclical time) in their partners' countries of origin while operating across international markets and industry cycles (i.e., life-cycle time). Partners' similar perspectives about types of time can enhance the ISAs. A partner's experience with a given phase of product development (relating to life-cycle time) can add diversity of expertise that is instrumental to supporting the counterparty's season-based production cycle (relating to cyclical time). However, partners' dissimilar perspectives about types of time might also prove to be a hindrance. A partner's growth as a large player over time (relating to the organization's life cycle) can become incompatible with the counterparty's season-based production cycle (relating to cyclical time). A partner's change in expectations across stages of the ISA (e.g., relating to life-cycle time) can precipitate conflicts and, in extreme cases, formal disputes and lawsuits (relating to event time).

In sum, examinations of types of (objective) time and subjective time are perplexedly limited. We call for research that delves into how the partners' perspectives about types of time can engender friction or enrich ISAs.

6. Future research

Thus far, we have synthesized the literature on time in ISAs and offered a temporal-relational framework to guide the study of the temporal complexity that characterizes ISAs. We now move on to articulate a broad research agenda in which subjective time is given more prominence in order to advance theory about the role of national cultures in defining managers' perspectives about time in ISAs. Instead of pitting subjective and objective time against each other, we view them to be inherently interrelated: subjective time gives meaning to the snapshots, events, seasons, and stages captured by types of (objective) time that

Table 7
Using multiple types of time to move research forward (color-coded exhibit).

		Partner A			
		Clock time	Event time	Cyclical time	Life cycle
Partner B	Clock time	(Table 5)	Events at Partner A slow down production at Partner B. <i>E.g., disruptive events in a partner's country delay the counterpart's production.</i>	Partner A's season-related adversities hinder Partner B's speed of response to international market trends. <i>E.g., partner A's low performance due to harvest-related disruptions causes Partner B's withdrawal from an IJV.</i>	Partner A's product life cycle is disrupted by Partner B's recurrent delays. <i>E.g., delays (measured in days) with the delivery of core components across product development stages.</i>
	Event time	Extension of the duration of ISAs following events at Partner B. <i>E.g., a partner who faces domestic decline of sales and extends existing IJVs.</i>	(Table 5)	Partner A's season-based operations disrupt Partner B's operations. <i>E.g., monsoon-related disruptions cause disruptions to Partner B's operations</i>	Partner A pursues separate priorities at stages of the IOR, causing conflicts with Partner B. <i>E.g., an incumbent MNC and a start-up dispute the timing of the international launch of their product.</i>
	Cyclical time	Partner B's season-related production cycle lends speed to Partner A's operations. <i>E.g., a farming business from the Northern Hemisphere sets up an ISA with other farms in the Southern Hemisphere.</i>	Partner B's season-related adversities prompt Partner A's episodes of mutual assistance. <i>E.g., one partner helps the other partner overcome disruptions due to weather.</i>	(Table 5)	Partner A's evolutionary processes clash with Partner B's season-based requirements. <i>E.g., a MNC's supply demands are not met by a local seasonal producer.</i>
	Life cycle	Partner B gains expertise about a stage of the product life cycle from their long-term partner. <i>E.g., a young firm benefits from MNCs accumulated experience in the global market.</i>	Partner B takes actions that are complementary to Partner A's development stage. <i>E.g., an incumbent MNC sets up a venture with a young local firm to support their international growth.</i>	Partner B's evolutionary processes add expertise to Partner A about seasonal operations. <i>E.g., an incumbent MNC supports a young partner to cope with seasonal demand.</i>	(Table 5)

Note: The diagonal captures analyzes using a single type of time. The off-diagonal captures multiple types of time; the below-diagonal area refers to time as enrichment while the above-diagonal area captures time as friction.

lend temporal complexity to ISAs.

6.1. Subjective time in international strategic alliances

A major lacuna in the literature we reviewed concerns the dearth of in-depth analyses about managers' subjective time, and how time influences managers' expectations and actions in ISAs. The issue at stake is not that international partners' management teams must share a meaning of one or more time types, but that they need to understand each other's meaning of time for IORs that span across different countries in order to succeed. A promising avenue for research pertains to the intersection between language and time because conceptions about time crystallize into language and, in turn, language influences how individuals perceive and understand time (Boroditsky, 2001; Evans, 2003; Mosakowski & Earley, 2000). To illustrate this point, consider ISAs between native English- and Mandarin-speaking partners. The English language has multiple tenses while Mandarin is tenseless since temporal interpretation arises from a combination of linguistic and contextual factors (Joshi & Lahiri, 2015). Consequently, the grammatical features of English and Mandarin equip speakers directly to think and talk about the past, present, and future.

Future research can explore how subjective time affects what managers attend to and how they organize ISAs. A canonical example is managers' short-term vs. long-term orientation. Temporal orientation influences what managers pay attention to and how they use time across stages of the product life cycle. We also invite researchers to explore how managers' expectations in ISAs are affected by the managers' own perspectives about different time types. For instance, subjective time affects how managers interpret facets of the same time type—e.g., the speed of product development (i.e., clock time) and the duration of an ISA (i.e., clock time). Age and duration are typically measured by the number of years (chronological approach), but a further exploration of subjective time can disentangle the meanings of longevity of ISAs. For example, a counterpart's age can be understood by a manager in terms of experience (the older, the more experienced) and status (the older, the more

reputable). Experience and status are strategic resources, and managers often use time to estimate these resources when doing business across borders, but a manager's interpretation about time as a proxy for experience and status cannot be detached from cultural values and norms.

Below, we provide a glimpse into the many opportunities at the intersection of objective and subjective time to address central questions about evolution and contingencies in ISAs. Table 8 adds illustrative research questions.

6.2. Evolution of international strategic alliances

Subjective time provides opportunities to delve into the core issues of synchronization and entrainment as driving forces of the evolution of ISAs (Johanson & Johanson, 2021; Pérez-Nordtvedt et al., 2008). Synchronization is distinct from entrainment insofar as the former focuses on the execution of tasks between partners within the ISA while the latter stresses the relationship between the ISA and the environment (e.g., naturally occurring cycles).

Synchronization. This refers to the fit between partners' rhythms within the ISA. Managers' subjective time plays a central role in defining the rhythm of international partners and consequently the synchronization between partners' actions. Partners who display dissimilar time orientations can be expected to attend and organize differently, and such differences might prompt a poor fit between partners' rhythms. Limited synchronization can slow down product launches or can hamper innovation, but future research can explore how limited synchronization might stem from partners' (dis)similar perspectives about time (Table 7).

Other studies might examine the influence of subjective time in sustaining synchronization and its performance implications for ISAs. Synchronization is crucial for supporting time-based competition (e.g., being the fastest and first to market). This type of competition hinges on shortening the time at every stage of the production cycle (Dibrell, Davis, & Danskin, 2005), but successful time-based competition across

Table 8
Directions for future research on dynamics of international strategic alliances (color-coded exhibit).

	Topic	Illustrative research questions about time in ISAs*	Core issues in the broader IB/IM literature
Evolution	Synchronization	When can partners' (dissimilar) perspectives about time hinder sustained synchronization? How does limited synchronization slow down product launches by ISAs? How does synchronization enable problem-solving in innovation-driven projects in ISAs? How can synchronization sustain time-based competition (e.g., to be the fastest and first to market)?	Innovation in international markets Global time-based competition
	Entrainment	How do managers adapt the production cycle within an ISA following disruption by a major natural disaster? Which governance structures hinder adaptation to disruptive events by ISAs? When do managers leverage culturally defined rhythms to create value to stakeholders? How do naturally occurring rhythms influence contract management in ISAs?	Disruptive events across borders Governance between international partners
Contingencies	Partner factors	To what extent does managers' experience weaken the relationship between partners' dissimilar perspectives on time and (unplanned) termination of ISAs? What is the influence of managers' nationality on the relationship between partners' dissimilar perspectives about time and negotiation tactics? To what extent does team size influence the link between synchronization and problem-solving in ISAs? To what extent does diversity of job-related experience in teams influence the relationship between partners' dissimilar perspectives about time and negotiation style in ISAs?	International human resource management Negotiation between international partners
	Country factors	To what extent do institutional voids amplify the relationship between partners'	Cross-border institutional environment

Table 8 (continued)

Topic	Illustrative research questions about time in ISAs*	Core issues in the broader IB/IM literature
	dissimilar perspectives about time and the likelihood of (unplanned) termination of ISAs? How do political ties affect the relationship between partners' dissimilar perspectives about time and the duration of ISAs? How do institutional voids affect the relationship between governance structures and adaptation to disruptive events by ISA? To what extent do national values moderate the relationship between power and the resolution of conflict episodes between partners in ISAs?	Political ties in foreign markets

*These are guiding research questions based on time as friction and time as enrichment.

national borders requires continued alignment of time perspectives between international partners to facilitate synchronization between these parties. In addition, most of the research has examined long-term ISAs while short-term ISAs offer a theoretical—and managerial—puzzle that merits future attention. Short-term ISAs are extensively used in resource extraction projects, often involving partners from cultures with reportedly distinct approaches to time and pace of life (e.g., an ISA between an Australian mining firm and a Sudanese partner), and yet a fit between the partners' rhythms must be accomplished within a short time span.

Entrainment. This refers to instances of when “endogenous cycles are captured by and come in rhythm with exogenous oscillation (or more endogenous ones)” (McGrath & Rotchford, 1983, p. 62). ISAs are affected by naturally occurring elements, such as national holidays, harvest seasons, and seasonal demand. We call for research about, for example, how partners' perspectives about cyclical time hinders coordination between them. Current research remains largely scant about the importance of a specific type of time to support entrainment, and how entrainment can be a source of value creation in ISAs.

By focusing on multiple time types, future studies can contribute to a better understanding of the functioning of ISAs by exploring, for example, how features of the production cycle (i.e., life-cycle time) can hamper adaptation following ownership changes (i.e., event time). Specifically, the study of partners' dissimilar perspectives about time can offer a granular specification of how managers adapt the production cycle following disruption by major disruptive events (e.g., natural disasters, armed conflict) affecting ISAs.

Future research about entrainment is essential for advancing IB/IM as it expands its focus to regions, with distinct cultural and naturally occurring rhythms and that have thus far been relatively under-examined, such as Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions (see also, Fainshmidt et al., 2018).

6.3. Contingencies about partners' time (dis)similarities in international strategic alliances

The extent to which partners' (dis)similarities about time engender

friction or enrichment is not context-free. A defining feature of ISAs is the requirement to adjust strategies to partner and country factors (Tang & Rowe, 2012).

Partner factors. Demographic characteristics of managers (e.g., educational background, national cultures in which they acquired managerial experience) and firm characteristics (e.g., age, organizational culture) shape how managers experience time. We call for research about the role of managers' demographic characteristics and job roles in influencing what temporal aspects partners attend to and organize for. For instance, managers can have different time horizons at different stages of their careers. Managers' job experience has implications on how each manager treats time and ultimately on the functioning of ISAs. At the ISA formation stage, managers at the corporate level typically want to get the deal done fast in order to move on to the next one, while those at the business level want to address the issues they see as relevant for running the business, even if this may delay negotiations.

Moving the focus to the ISA as a whole, future research can extend our temporal-relational framework by exploring the connection between governance and time. An area for further development is about ownership trajectories (shifts between equity vs. non equity) and subjective time (e.g., partners' understanding about short- vs. long-term). Many ISAs involve multinational firms and local family-owned firms, thus presenting an opportunity to explore the influence of partners' ownership structure, partners' perspectives about time and strategic outcomes. Such research can contribute to better specifying sources of friction or enrichment in ISAs and the temporal aspects driving changes in ownership.

Our review focused on ISAs, but a major opportunity for future research is to extend the study of time in other relatively understudied kinds of interorganizational arrangements, such as international franchising networks, and international consortia. These arrangements differ structurally (e.g., degree of formalization, anticipated longevity, and tasks), thus providing an opportunity to examine how these structural differences may engender partners' (dis)similar perspectives on time as part of explaining the sources of differential strategic outcomes.

Country factors. The study of differences in subjective time across national borders helps to specify when time differences can engender friction or enrichment in ISAs. One opportunity for research is to draw on the distinction between clock vs. event societies (Levine, 1997) to develop specific links between the partners' actions and their interpretations of types of time and time facets. Future studies might explore how ISAs in which partners come from clock time and from event time societies can enrich the ISA through complementarity between viewpoints on time.

To further comprehend temporal complexity in ISAs, researchers can investigate the link between specific types of time and national features; for example, to what extent do institutional voids amplify the relationship between partners' dissimilar views about time and unplanned termination of ISAs? Other studies might adopt a temporal perspective to advance research on how national systems of values affect the relationship between power and time. While the sources of power are widely reported on (e.g., relative size), the exercise of such power varies across national contexts and the use of specific power tactics might be interpreted differently across national cultures. The use of time is an important aspect of power in negotiations among cross-border partners. Eastern managers know that Western counterparts want to get the deal done quickly, thus Eastern managers often lengthen negotiations up to the point where the Westerners simply surrender to the Eastern managers' requirements.

7. Conclusion

In this review of research about time in ISAs (1943–2022), we offer a synthesis of the literature in which we distinguish between time types and time facets as a starting point to address conceptual ambiguity endemic in this literature. We also build on this review's findings for the

development of a temporal-relational framework that offers insights into how partners' (dis)similar perspectives about time can engender either friction or enrichment in ISAs. We call for explicit analyses of subjective time as it influences how managers interpret time and organize ISAs. We hope that this review consolidates initial forays in research and promotes a long-overdue stream of research about time in ISAs within the IB/IM literature.

Supplementary materials

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.jwb.2023.101456.

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