

# THE TIME AS TEMPORARY DIMENSION OF THE SOCIETY: *THE SOCIAL TIME* (SZTOMPKA)

## INTRODUCTION

**Time and space are universal contexts** of the social life, because everything in society takes place in them.

All social changes take place in the time.

All social phenomenon has **duration and sequence** (or order).

Once something takes place, it is **irreversible**, it is not possible to be undone.

The time is an aspect of the social change that is mixed with the same social change, because **time is ubiquitous** in the social life.

The existence of some type of **perception and conscience of the time** in the subjective level is a universal human experience.

The experience of the time is **different from personal level**, but also **from societal or group level**.

### **Time is a social construction**

The time, as a social construction, is lived and perceived on different forms according to **categories like class, age, nationality**, etc.

There are **psycho-social, social and cultural aspects**, cultural patterns and **styles of life** related with time.

Social time can be analyzed to compare social phenomena and to describe them:

- **External aspects of the time**: speed, interval-regularity, duration... P.ej.: calendar, appointments, turns... in modern societies (UNITS and SCALES OF MEASUREMENT)
- **Internal aspects or properties**: shorter or long phenomena, that follows rythmical or fortuitous intervals, that are divided in different units according to the social construction... (for instance: agricultural season; day-night; etc).

## FUNCTIONS OF THE SOCIAL TIME

**Time as regulator** of the social activities:

1. To **synchronize** simultaneous collective actions (Timetables).
2. **Coordination** of actions (Laboral turns).
3. **Sequences**. Organize phases of the social events (An industrial production. Total Quality. Just in Time).
4. To **regulate the moments** at which it is possible the access to opportunities and resources (Library, transport...).
5. To **measure the duration** of social activities that are of great importance (Extra hours - wage effects -, years studying, etc.).
6. **Differentiation** of leisure-work activities in the time (Young people and the weekends.)


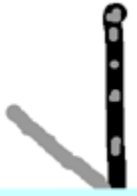

## ACTIVITIES

1) Think of "seasonal activities" and the differences in daily life in Day/ Night; Autumn/ Winter/ Spring/ Summer Autumn; Children/ Adults; Men/ Women. Write different examples.

**Recommended:** Mauss, M. "Seasonal Variations of the **Eskimo**: A Study in Social Morphology".

2) Compare clocks and calendars of different societies and ages, and write some lines about "Social Construction of Time".

## HISTORY OF CLOCKS

 <b>Sand Clock</b>	<b>Sundial - Shadow Clock</b> 	 <b>Hourglass</b>
<b>Water Clock - Clepsydras</b>	<b>Alarm Clock</b>	<b>Electrical Clocks...</b>

See more in <http://users.commspeed.net/k6xf/clock.htm>

## INTERNET TIME

Internet Time is a "new" way to tell time, invented and marketed by the Swiss watch company [Swatch](#). The current Internet Time is the same all over the World (no time zones or daylight saving time adjustments). The current Internet time can be found on [the World Clock](#) just below the long list of cities there. ("Internet time: @xxx .beats")

### Simple Internet Time .beat converter

Beat Date:	<input type="text" value="19"/>	<input type="text" value="April"/>	<input type="text" value="2006"/>	Beats:	<input type="text" value="777"/>	<input type="button" value="Enviar consulta"/>
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### Theory

#### New time unit - the .beat

Instead of dividing the virtual and real day into 24 hours and 60 minutes per hour, the Internet Time system divides the day into 1000 ".beats". Each .beat is 1 minute and 26.4 seconds.

#### New meridian

Internet Time is based on a new Meridian (as opposed to the Greenwich Meridian). This new Meridian goes through Swatch's office in Biel, Switzerland and is called the BMT Meridian.

#### BMT - the reference for Internet Time

BMT, another invention of Swatch, Biel Mean Time, which is linked up to the Central European Winter/Standard time - which is UTC + 1 hour. When it is Midnight in BMT, the Internet Time is @000 beats, Noon is @500 beats.

#### Time unit conversions

Beat Unit	Conversion	Unit	Beat Conversion
1 .beat	= 0.001 day	1 day	= 1000 .beats
1 .beat	= 0.024 hours	1 hour	= 41.666 .beats
1 .beat	= 1.44 minutes	1 minute	= 0.6944 .beats
1 .beat	= 86.4 seconds	1 second	= 0.01157 .beats

#### Advantages of the Internet Time system

It uses the normal decimal system, instead of the ancient 24 hour, 60 minute, 60 second system which makes time telling more complicated.

.beat time calculations are easy, @345 + 456 .beats = @801, compared to e.g. 3:45:20 + 2 hours, 25 minutes, 45 seconds, where the seconds, minutes and hours must all be added.

No need for time zone conversions - the Internet Time is the same everywhere.

#### Disadvantages of the Internet Time system

The use of the Biel Meridian introduces an unwanted additional Meridian - the Greenwich Meridian is the standard Meridian of the world.

Wrong use of mean time - The Biel Meridian is not at exactly 15 degrees east longitude, which it should have been if the BMT (Biel Mean Time) should be 1 hour ahead of UTC / GMT (Greenwich Mean Time)

The second, and not the beat is the basic unit of time in the International System of Units (and using .beats instead, would complicate the system).

The Internet Time system might seem like more of commercial marketing attempt, than a real system.

Milliday would be a more accurate name than beat.

#### Summary

As the current hour/minute/second system is already widely adopted, it is very unlikely that the Internet Time system will be able to replace it, even on the Internet. There is already a common time system without time zones and daylight saving time in wide use today - UTC, which should be used instead.

In <http://www.timeanddate.com/time/internettime.html>