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## **“I will be respectful of the scheduled time.”: Hegemony, Productivity, and Time**

Kyle Levin

*Whitman College*, kylelevin98@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

Although time is a topic that humans have discussed at length for ages, only recently have sociologists examined time and its relationship to society. The goal of this study aims to investigate the relationship between the time schemes of individuals in everyday life and the macrostructures under dominant control. The study uses qualitative in-depth interviews and found (1) a common sense of productivity permeates everyday life and interactions, (2) respect and timeliness are linked through expectations of productivity, and (3) people change their expectations about timeliness given certain contexts. This work suggests that more research is needed that takes into account how everyday routines are embedded and reinforced through hegemonic time.

### **Keywords**

Hegemony, Productivity, Punctuality, Work, Time schemes

### **Peer Review**

This work has undergone a double-blind review by a minimum of two faculty members from institutions of higher learning from around the world. The faculty reviewers have expertise in disciplines closely related to those represented by this work. If possible, the work was also reviewed by undergraduates in collaboration with the faculty reviewers.

### **Acknowledgments**

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In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have necessarily had to change how we spend our time. Some must juggle homeschooling and adjust to working from home, some must care for others, many are now unemployed. Questions about productivity are at the forefront of many people's minds. There is an ongoing debate across online platforms that raise the question of should we be more productive than normal because we have so much "free time," or should we be less productive than normal because we have so much "free time" (Grady 2020). Government officials are forced to ask which is more important: public health or the economy. So how did we get here? How, before the pandemic, did people construct and experience this productivity? In understanding how we adjust to these changing demands, we must examine taken-for-granted notions of common sense productivity that are inherently wrapped up in the way we think about time.

Beginning in the industrial era, time has been viewed as a type of capital, a resource that must be utilized to its fullest potential (Hom, 2010; Thompson, 1967; Zerubavel, 1984). However, Durkheim (1965) introduced the idea of social time, which he defined as all members of a society having the same conception of time in order to have a functioning social life. This was a shift in how sociologists understood time. Time began to be seen as a structure, a fundamental aspect for a functioning society which led to a development of many areas of study concerning time. Since then, sociology has examined the concept of time from several different theoretical lenses.

Durkheim (1965) examined time from a structural-functionalist perspective. He positioned time as a structuring agent. In his works, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Durkheim (1965) argues that "society is an independent set of social facts, whose phenomena were not reducible to those of individual consciousness" (as cited in Bergmann, 1992, p.83); therefore, social time must be studied as a social fact. Other scholars examined time on a micro level, such as Mead,

who looked at the symbolic interactions of time and action where he examined the relationship between personal identity over time and the interaction of multiple perspectives. He articulated that this understanding of multiple perspectives of time through the 'the generalized other' as what makes social time possible (Bergmann 1992). Conley (2017) draws on Mead's work and defines the generalized other as "an internalized sense of the total expectations of others in a variety of settings – regardless of whether we have encountered those people or places before" (p.123).

For example, we might learn from a young age that we will get in trouble if we arrive at school late. We also may see our guardians getting distressed when they are running late for work. Therefore, we would internalize the rule that we should not be late. However, this research addresses in some ways where this expectation of being 'on time' falls apart.

Macro sociologists measure time through the use of time-use diaries (Carlson, 2020; Husain, 2019; Shulz & Grunow, 2012). The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics distributes the American Time Use Survey (ATUS), which asks thousands of Americans to map their schedule over a given time period. They then lump together this data quantitatively and release reports based on the demography of the participants of ATUS. However, in this study, I wish to examine how people interact with time using qualitative methodology in order to better understand underlying thoughts and motivations behind how people use their time.

This study draws upon the work of Alfred Schütz (1945) and his followers Berger and Luckmann (1967), who examine time from a phenomenological lens, as well as Eviatar Zerubavel (1982), who examines the distinctions people make in their everyday lives and the socio-historical construction of time. The overarching theoretical question I explore is: What is the function of the hegemony of time on people's everyday conceptualizations of time? Andrew Hom (2010) coined the term

hegemonic metronome to describe the theoretical lens of understanding time as it is modernly conceived as being innately Eurocentric. Hom (2010) draws on Gramsci (1971) to explain how dominant groups have used the structure of time to hold power over the masses, which in turn influenced how people conceptualize time. Through my analysis, I answered the following questions using the lens of phenomenology:

1. Do people think about time in different social contexts?
2. Is there a common sense about time? If so, how does it change across different social groups?

This project is sociologically significant because it explores time not only through the interactions and consciousness of the individual but also the influence of the larger structural force of hegemony. By adding this perspective, this study will give a better understanding of how our social position influences knowledge production.

## Theory

I primarily draw upon the theoretical lens of phenomenology to investigate my research questions using a micro-level approach to studying time. I employ the work of Schütz (1945) to understand time as a conscious experience that derives meaning from the way we conceptualize it. As Schütz understood the world, large structural forces caused people to change how they conceptualized the world. This change in how people conceptualized the world, in turn, changed those structures. I situate the history of time conceptualization at a structural level through the lens of hegemony, as explained by Gramsci (1971).

**Phenomenology.** Phenomenology borrows from the field of philosophy, initially introduced by Husserl and Heidegger in the early twentieth century. Alfred Schütz expands on their work, arguing that the concepts of phenomenology could apply to other social

sciences. Schütz (1945) defines phenomenology as the study of events and experiences (phenomena) that make up the human consciousness. He states that phenomenological sociology is “the study of the connection between human consciousness and social life, between the shape of social life on the one hand and how people perceive, think and talk about it on the other” (Johnson, 1995, p.227). Through a phenomenological lens, our experience of an object, tangible or not, cannot be divorced from the real world object itself. Schütz (1945) explains that these phenomena can only be “communicated by signs and symbols which are in turn perceptible things” (p.89). Our knowledge of these objects is changed through multiple iterations of our experience with the object.

The sociological study of knowledge “deals with the processes by which any body of ‘knowledge’ comes to be socially established as ‘reality’” (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p.3). Berger and Luckmann (1967) explain that the study of phenomenology turns the focus of the study to the everyday taken for granted knowledge of reality, specifically as it relates to consciousness or the life-world. Temporality, the state of existing within time, is a fundamental aspect of consciousness. Humans’ time consciousness is always in relation to the structure that the people exist in, otherwise known as Standard Time. Berger and Luckmann (1967) define Standard Time as “the intersection between cosmic and its socially established calendar, based on the temporal sequences of nature, and inner time, in its aforementioned differentiations” (p.27). Similarly, Hom (2010) describes Modern Time, which can be interpreted as referencing the same entity that Berger and Luckmann (1967) articulated above as “the time now commonly associated with contemporary clocks and watches, a form of reckoning based on the ‘continuous indication of equal hours’ abstracted from celestial motions” (1149).

However, Standard Time is not necessarily how each individual chooses to operate their lives. Lewis and Weigert (1981)

examined that people reckon with and synchronize their daily life activities to Standard Time, and Lewis and Weigert (1981) define this as time synchronicity. The term refers to the difference between one's personal time consciousness and the Standard Time one is supposed to follow. Failure to synchronize to Standard Time "may lead to a questioning of the person's moral character, accusations of laziness, and untrustworthiness" (Jarvinen & Ravn, 2017, p.247). Therefore, if one did not conceptualize their time consciousness to Standard Time, he or she might be at a disadvantage in the job market as well as other aspects of life such as having reduced income, restructuring of everyday activities, and navigating the work-life balance (Horning, Gerhardt, & Michailow, 1995). For example, when people are constantly late to work, their employers may assume that they do not have other aspects of their life together and may turn them over for a promotion or even fire him or her.

This study applies phenomenology to investigate the everyday taken for granted temporal rhythm that dictates individuals' lives, and examines how closely people from different social categories adhere to Standard Time and possible implications in their professional lives if they do not. However, there are limitations to phenomenology that do not allow me to investigate my questions, and that is why I bring in the lens of hegemony. Phenomenology focuses on a non-reductionist approach to data; however, because of that, it has been critiqued as being too micro-level (Spiegelberg, 1994). Furthermore, phenomenology does not address relationships of power between individuals and larger society. It focuses on the individual while ignoring the broader structural implications that the lens of hegemony can address.

**Hegemony.** Gramsci (1971) introduces the term cultural hegemony in his now-famous *Prison Notebooks*, where he seeks to explain why workers under the capitalist regime, the

proletariat did not develop class consciousness and revolt as Marx predicted (Marx & Engels, 1848). Gramsci attributes this in large part to cultural hegemony. Gramsci (1971) describes hegemony as:

the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by prestige which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (p.145)

He explains that dominant groups gain consent through the control of values, beliefs, perceptions, and prejudices. Gramsci further argues that the class of intellectuals is responsible for the dissemination of the dominant culture as they are in a unique position of holding a monopoly over things like religious ideology, science, education, and justice (Gramsci, 1971, p.137).

Hegemony has a key component that is important for the analysis of this study: this notion of common sense. In this study, I define common sense as a taken for granted set of assumptions and judgments about the world. Gramsci explains that common sense has a significant impact on the life of the masses as it dictates the taken for granted assumptions of how one should conduct themselves (Olsaretti, 2016). Common sense is "especially tied to hegemony, being all-pervasive and organizing the everyday life of the masses" (Jacobitti, 1983 as cited in Olsaretti, 2016, p.342). Hegemony, as it relates to this study, is translating the framework of hegemony as a macro-structure and examining how it is reproduced in everyday life.

## Literature Review

An overview of the literature shows strong evidence of how time as a structure is hegemonic, and I demonstrate this through a

discussion of the emergence of the institution of Standard Time. Then, I summarize some of the findings from studies that focus on time with a phenomenological lens; however, much of the prominent literature on phenomenology is theoretical and not empirical. Lastly, I identify how my study will expand on the literature presented.

***The history of hegemony and Standard Time.*** There is a clear linkage between the concept of hegemony and time, and one has to look no further than the history of Standard Time. The name hints at the hegemonic forces at work; the use of the word “standard” suggests that it is the norm such that all other times should be measured in relation to it. Standard Time was first created, adopted, and implemented in Europe, as evidenced by Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or as it is commonly referred to in the present day, Universal Coordinated Time (UCT) (Zerubavel, 1982). The church, a place of intellectual monopoly, “kept the day and times of the year, it told people which days were holy and which not, it determined when to work and when not to” (Spyrut, 1956, p.70 as cited in Hom, 2010). Monks had many duties, including prayer, so they completed their duty in such a way that maximized the time they could devote to prayer: “time usage was understood as a form of worship” (Hom, 2010, p.1154). This shift in ideology transitions the knowledge of temporality from something that is intrinsically part of nature to an object to be utilized in the market. The understanding of time as a commodity bled into the development of social life in cities (Foucault, 1977).

In comparison to rural settings that tracked time via the sun or perceived time, urbanites tracked time with precise measurement (Lewis & Weigert, 1981). As the bourgeois rose, time became particularly relevant to the emerging middle class because they required formalized Standard Time for commerce and trade. The calculating of interest rates imbued the belief that “time itself

had value” (Hom, 2010, p.1156). The establishment of time gave power to the urban bourgeoisie. Events that previously had a vague start time were now fixed, and the duration of the social or market activities had minimum and maximum lengths of time.

The meaning of time began to alter, as significant cultural changes arose with industrialization, and the hegemonic metronome saw no greater feat than in factories. Today, many of us have a timepiece always at our fingertips, but at the beginning of the industrial revolution, employees relied on a shift clock to tell them how many hours they were being paid, which was only accessible to the employer (Hom, 2010, p.1159). Control of time and knowledge of its passing became synonymous with power. The shift clock became a point of contention between worker and employer, as the worker had to trust that the employer was being honest and not shortchanging his labor. Access to the clock was a reward, where extremely productive workers were given a personal timepiece as a bonus (Landes, 2000, p.241). Time became intrinsically linked with money and thus linking the two constructed time as “a scarce resource, something which the employee had sold to the employer that was then in a sense ‘outside’ of himself” (Loft, 1995, p.133).

Time was not only hegemonized in the workplace, but also through language, which Gramsci (1971) explained can be used as a lens to understand conceptions of the world. The hegemonic control over time can be seen through the metaphors we use, such as “Time is money,” “You’re wasting my time,” “cost me a day’s work” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980 as cited in Loft, 1995). These may appear like throwaway sentences that people use in everyday life, but they illustrate a structural conception of time that is taken for granted and has not always been present.

Hegemony has little value unless we understand it in the context of domination (Lears, 1985). During the 600 or so years of colonization, countless groups were subjugated and forced into a Eurocentric hegemonic

structure; time was no exception, and many groups had to adopt Standard Time and abandon their previous timekeeping system (Giddens, 1990). Before Standard Time, time consciousness was constructed through tasks. In Madagascar, time was measured in ordinary things to cook, such as “a rice cooking” or thirty minutes (Thompson, 1967).

In more recent times, Mazzullo (2012) found that the Sami people of Finland constructed their experience of time around a set of interrelated tasks, a taskscape. Mazzullo (2012) explained that unless the activity was related to school or other official timetabled activity, many of the Sami people were very relaxed about punctuality. For example, during the herding months, farmers would rarely look at their watches to determine how much time they needed to work and instead “it was the accomplishment of the tasks that would take precedence, though quick naps could be taken everywhere and anytime” (Mazzullo, 2012, p.217).

A more violent account of time hegemony occurred in a Papua New Guinea village where capitalism brought forth a rapid-pace lifestyle for the villagers. Institutions such as schools, government, and market “imposed a framework of dates deadlines and schedules on life” (Smith, 1982, p.513). One man explained that before capitalism came to the village, the village had plenty of food because all they had to do was grow. Now, they were short on food because they had all these additional responsibilities that broke up their time and did not allow them to use time at their discretion (Smith, 1982). If one did not organize their time according to the institutions that capitalism brought in, they would be subject to taxation or other financial penalties. This implies that an individual must have a specific time perspective to mold and be successful in the imposed dominant structure. Shir-Wise (2019) identifies hegemonic time by examining how individuals talk about what it means to have free time and how they use said time. She found that people have a need to perform busyness to emphasize the productive

self. Her study illustrates how deeply ingrained the need to be productive or appear productive is in society.

Time is not inherently broken up into discrete hours, minutes, and seconds. This Standard Time framework was constructed by the dominant groups to control ordinary citizens’ everyday lives (Zerubavel, 1982). It is clearly shown that for one to be successful, they must have a specific conceptualization of time that aligns with the dominant group. Time must be viewed as a scarce resource, where the subject must be as efficient as possible or else time is being wasted (Loft, 1995; Smith, 1982; Thompson, 1967).

***Phenomenology and time.*** Many scholars have taken time as a resource as the only conception of time worth examining (Becker, 1965; Lewis & Weigert 1981; Schoenhals, Tienda, & Schneider, 1998). However, this ignores the possibility of different types of knowledge construction, something that needs to be accounted for when using a phenomenological approach. Flaherty (1987) examined that time was something that is subjectively felt. He found five different occasions where a person stated that time seemed to move slower than it actually was. Furthermore, he found the statement that Schütz and Luckmann (1973) made that “temporal consciousness alters with transitions from one province of reality to another, as well as with transitions from one situation to another within the every day” to be true (p.56). His case showed that the uniformity to clock time is not necessarily how individuals experience time, but we have been habituated to translate our experiences into clock time to be able to articulate our own experiences.

Not only is our time consciousness altered when we experience something shocking or traumatic, but even being asked to conceptualize time differently can throw one off from their everyday rhythm. In a study on temporal schemata, Labianca, Moon, and Watt (2005) found that when people were given tasks with a start time that was atypical from

the social dominant temporal scheme (10:37 vs. 10:35) performed worse even when they were given the same amount of time to complete the tasks as the control group who were told to start at 10:35. A temporal scheme is a “cognitive framework that gives form and meaning to experience and general knowledge about a domain” (Labianca et al., 2005 p.678). This suggests that those who are more familiar with temporal schemas related to Standard Time do better at managing their day to day tasks, and when a person cannot, they are at a disadvantage.

***Expansion on past research and theory.*** I have demonstrated that there are many areas of time conceptualization that have not been explored through a sociological lens. This study aims to address these gaps by first, not positioning this study as having to be macro-level or micro-level, rather I reconcile the two by examining how macro-level structures (hegemony) influence micro-level processes (conceptions of time) (Flaherty, 1987; Hom, 2012; Labianca et al., 2005). Second, I examine phenomenology from a conflict perspective. Other scholars who use phenomenology to study time have not situated it in relation to the structures that could be influencing how we think about time. Lastly, an exploration of this topic shows how important it is for researchers to be critical of seemingly objective abstract concepts such as time, because studying how people interact with time reveals the fluidity of how people think about such things. This last point is particularly salient in the time of the COVID-19 crisis, as a large percentage of the population has been required to shift their time schemes to adjust to their new expectations about work/life balance.

## **Methods**

This project uses in-depth interviews with purposeful snowball sampling to investigate the research questions. I began by purposefully sampling, asking friends and family if they knew someone who might be

interested in discussing their thoughts on time. After the interview, I asked the participant if they knew anyone who would be willing to talk with me about the topic as well. This has been especially helpful in getting couples. Once I gathered ten participants, I became more targeted in my approach to interviewees by selecting the remaining interviewees based on demographic qualities that were underrepresented thus far in my sample, specifically gender, race, and socioeconomic status.

Criteria for participation is that the participant must be out of college, so as to not focus on students' time schemes, and they could not be retired, to prevent having people that had no jobs. Therefore, age was restricted to between the ages of 24 – 50. There was one exception to this, as one participant identified as a student; however, she explained that she was a nursing student and a lot of her schoolwork consisted of going to work at a hospital.

Conceptualizations of time are a very subjective experience; therefore, it made the most sense for the data to be narrative-driven in order to gain a deep and rich understanding of how time manifests in everyday life. This method also lends itself to the theoretical framework of phenomenology, where I not only explore how people interact with time in their daily lives through their actions, but also the underlying thoughts and motivations behind said actions.

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), qualitative interviews allow the interviewee to express him or herself by allowing them to speak about their feelings and the world in which they live. The interviewee can define what is important to them. I asked participants about when they would arrive at a variety of different events and why, are there any ways they spend their time that they think others might find weird, what do they think of people who are early/on time/late, and what expectations do they have about their job. Qualitative in-depth interviews allow me to thoroughly investigate people's conceptions of

time in such a way that I can ask clarifying questions, ask for elaboration, and situate their responses in a broader context. I accomplish this by asking many open-ended questions that invite the participant to give examples such as “What type of occasions do you lose track of time/feel like you wasted your time/feel rushed for time?” I developed the interview guide in such a way that it thoroughly asked about many different aspects of a participant’s life, with an eye towards how they thought about time in different contexts.

There were a few limitations to this study due to the sampling methods. Although I did not exclude participants based on the region they were living, this could have impacted the data as it is possible for people to have different perceptions of time based on living in a big city versus a small town or a farm. Another consideration to make is that the age range could have been too small. I did not receive many inquiries to interview with participants who were over 50, and those that were happened to be retired as well, but the gap between 50 and retirement could have included patterns that were not recognized in a smaller age range.

This project was minimally invasive and did not pose harm greater than participants would experience in their day to day life. Interview guides and protocol were submitted to the Whitman College IRB Committee and were determined to qualify for expedited review (number 19/20-15A).

**Demographics** I gathered 16 interviews, averaging approximately 40 minutes in length. Interviews were conducted in the winter of 2019-2020 and were conducted via phone call with a secondary recorder or in-person while recording on my phone. Most of the participants resided on the West Coast of the United States; however, not all of the participants grew up there, and some resided in the Midwest. No participants lived on the East coast of the US. My sample had individuals who ranged in ages from 24 to 49 with an average age of 36.

Participants self-identified their race and gender in a survey that I administered. I had three people who identified as White, four who identified as Mixed Race, two who identified as Latinx, four who identified as Asian, and three who identified as Black/African American. I had an even gender split in my project, with eight people who identified as men and eight people who identified as women. This study did not have a representative sample of socio-economic status. SES was determined by a composite measure of household median income, the number of people supported by said income, and location (Gilbert, 2015).

Participants had a range of occupations, and I used the Bureau of Labor Statistics nomenclature to define the positions that came up among my participants. There were six who were in Management occupations, three who were in Business and Finance occupations, three who had Arts and Design occupations, three who were in Office and Administrative Support, and one student. To analyze my data, I used the online program called Dedoose.com which provided helpful tools to thematically code my interviews. The data analysis occurred in a deductive and inductive process (Glaser, Strauss, & Strutzel, 1999).

**Materials.** The materials used in the interview included an interview guide and interview protocol. The interview guide is a set of 26 open-ended questions based on my readings of the literature. The interview guide also contained a set of statements which participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement. Five of these statements were taken from the survey materials of Brodowsky, Granitz, & Anderson (2008), and the rest were created by me. I developed the questions after thinking through three main ideas that I wanted the interview to encompass: (1) how the participant thought about time as a concept (2) to what extent they saw time being important in their life (3) how they organize their life in regards to schedule.



The first and second points relate more closely to the phenomenological framework I draw upon for this study while the last addresses the hegemonic theoretical framework.

Once the interview guide was finalized, I conducted a practice interview to get a sense of how the questions were interpreted. Most questions left open-ended, specifically, so that participants were free to answer in whatever way they interpreted the questions. Interview guide is available upon request to the author.

Data was collected by me and not made accessible to others. This choice was made in order to protect the confidentiality of participants, as the sample size was small enough that participants may recognize the voices of one another.

## Findings

The study found that people do think about time differently depending on the social context. This was most apparent in how participants talked about their jobs, friendships, and family. These differences demonstrate that there is a larger common sense about time; specifically, people think about how to use their time productively and also to be punctual. These findings suggest that the hegemony over time is particularly pervasive as it has been ingrained to be something that we, as social beings, need to always account for in order to be participating members of society (Durkheim, 1967).

Conversations with participants highlighted a dominant ideology of common sense surrounding productivity. Productivity dictates many aspects of participants' lives, especially in how they presented themselves, friendships, and labor. The productivity mindset encourages people to work longer hours and maximize efficiency in one's work, thus reproducing the hegemony of the dominant group. In this section, I examine how people perceive what it means to "be on time" and how the expectations of timeliness change within different contexts, specifically around friends, job attainment, and working outside of

the normative 9 to 5 schedule. This analysis reveals how fluid people's time schemes can be; yet, there is still a pervasive logic of being productive that dominates different people's time schemes.

***Punctuality and respect.*** There appears to be a Goldilocks phenomenon for the ideal time to arrive, where there is an unspoken boundary between what is too early to arrive and what is too late. A person has to arrive at "just the right" time to be viewed as punctual. How a person navigates the dominant perception of punctuality is directly seen as an indicator of respect. Arrive too early, and the person may be branded as neurotic, arrive late, and the person is offending the other participants of the event. The perceptions of punctuality that many participants share appear to directly tie to the hegemonic view of time in Western capitalist societies (Shir-Wise, 2019).

During the interview, I asked participants what their thoughts were on people who consistently arrived early to events. I specified that these types of people were ones who arrived 10-15 minutes early. Many participants expressed that they imagined that people who arrive early to places seemed to have obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) tendencies or anxiety. Participant 15 (student, age 26) explained that:

To be chronically early . . .  
Maybe I would think that those are the people who are obsessively clean, orderly, or like the people who are conscious about every little detail. That isn't bad. I wish I could be like them.

Participant 15 expresses that people's time habits could be related to how an individual might conduct themselves in other situations as well. However, she explains that being early to things is not something to look down upon, suggesting that the act of arriving early is a good thing, but when thought of as a personal trait, it was perceived as a negative trait. Two other participants indicated this same

distinction. There appears to be a stigma towards people who arrive too early, as having a negative psychological makeup that causes them to need to be early. Participants used the terms “anxiety, OCD, stress” as proxies for this phenomena; although, it is important to note that each of these terms has specific definitions which the patterned behavior of arriving early does not constitute anxiety or OCD.

Participant 4 (HR Manager, age 34) describes the differences between her mother and father in arrival time. She explains that they are complete opposites in their approach to estimated arrival time with her mother being constantly late and her dad always wishing to be early. She states, “When we went on trips and we had to go on a flight, my dad would get anxious and he always wanted to get to the airport probably 2 1/2 to 3 hours early.” She goes on to explain that this is a frequent occurrence, “Um like my dad he’s anxious about time. He doesn’t want to be late, he’s always early. I’m completely not that person.” She continually connects her father’s desire to be early to places as part of an anxious tendency. It appears that participants are engaging in a dimension of public stigmatization referred to as negative affect.

Pescosolido and Martin (2015) define negative affect as “anticipation of unpleasant emotional reactions as a consequence of direct contact with a person with a stigmatized condition and/or status or who occupies a stigmatized condition and/or status” (Table 2: Dimensions of Public Stigma). Participants seemed to interpret earliness as a sign of unstable mental health, and that they did not want to be too early in fear that that is how their actions will be perceived. Participant 4 did this when she qualified that she was not the type of person that wanted to be everywhere early, implying that she was also not anxious. The use of psychological classifications could demonstrate that participants are framing the early time behaviors as essentialized or that only people with mental health disorders are early because they need to be instead of it being

part of a larger structural ideology that being early is important in a productive society. Therefore, they can justify their behaviors for not being early everywhere as well as stigmatizing those who are always early.

This suggests that there could actually be a negative consequence to being early everywhere, even if we are part of a society that emphasizes the importance of being on time to things. This could be rooted in the culture of productivity. Participant 6 (Freelancer, age 47) explained that although it was admirable of people to always be early, it could indicate that they might have “OCD,” and in some ways, it was negative that they needed to be early to everything. He stated, “and it is never bad because you’re always available, always there, but you could be doing something else with that time if you don’t have to get there that early.” There is a value that Participant 6 is voicing that is prevalent in predominantly capitalist economies that you need to be constantly productive. He explained that one could use their time more productively if there were not a need to arrive everywhere so early. Participant 6’s statements, as well as others in this study, reflect a common sense that one should always strive to be productive in some way. The normative expectation in the United States is to maximize time while being respectful of other people’s time, as well (Shaw, 1994). If others do not follow these expectations, such as making their companion wait, they are violating norms by not allowing the other person to be efficient.

When asked about what participants thought of people who were on time, there was an overwhelming response that being on time was respectful. Ten of the sixteen participants mentioned punctuality as a form of respect at some point in their interview. However, where participants differed was in the way that they talked about what the term “respect” was referring to. Some people defined respect as the respect of another’s time. Participant 2 (Educational Director, age 49) explained:

I try to be on time to things to respect people’s time mostly

because I would get really annoyed when people don't respect my time, because if they're not time that's generally okay but only if they let me know that they're gonna be late.

In this instance, Participant 2 is clearly talking about how being on time is respectful of the time of another person. She talks about time as something that a person can possess. This attitude is not only expressed in arriving on time, but also on when an event should end, especially meetings. Participant 14 (Interim Dean, age 30) works in higher education and explains:

I think it's important to be respectful of time. It's important to be respectful of people's time, so when people do show up on time, I like to start the meetings close to "on time" as possible. But for me, it's more about the end of the meeting like we said this meeting is going to end at this time.

Participant 14 is explaining that for him, it is less about starting on time and more about finishing the event on time, as it is seen as a form of respect towards another's time if he does not keep them there. Participant 16 (Educational Director, age 39) stated similar things, as he is also in higher education and is constantly running from one meeting to the next. He said, "The most important times that happen for me are meetings. Right, meetings need to start on time and meetings need to end on time too. I think it's a sign of respect for other people's time." These examples show the pervasive nature of the culture of productivity, as ending a meeting 'on time' acknowledges the expectation that people need to use their time productively afterwards.

Other participants not only viewed people being punctual as a form of respect to their time but also to their person. Participant 4 (HR Manager, 34) explained when asked

what she thought of people who were always on time, "Uhhh I love that. They respect you and your time. I really really appreciate that." Participant 4 is verbalizing an attitude that being respectful of someone's time is not only respectful toward their time but also toward them as a person.

Although most participants agreed that being on time was respectful, participants disagreed on if being late was disrespectful. Only four participants stated that being late was explicitly rude. However, unlike the different interpretations of respect when someone was on time, participants who had this opinion all explained that being late was disrespectful either directly to the person or to the event. When asked what he thought of people who were always late, participant 10 (ER Manager, age 38) stated:

I feel that it is very disrespectful to be late and again it's going to depend on what you're late for. Time is precious, and I don't feel like there's any greater gift that you can give somebody than your time cause that is something you will never get back.

Participant 10's response is exemplary for displaying the feelings that the participants who felt that being late was disrespectful. He articulates the sense that not only will being late have adverse effects on the situation that one was supposed to attend, but also that being late is directly disrespectful to the person who had to wait. Participant 10 also indicated that time has an intrinsic value of being scarce; therefore, it is incredibly disrespectful to the other person because they can never get back the time they waited. In a culture where productivity is common sense, it is highly offensive to waste another person's time.

On the surface, it appears that time and respect are intrinsically connected; however, participants' responses suggest that the underlying connection between the two is rooted in the culture of productivity

(Kopelman et al., 1990; Nevis, 1983; Rubery et al., 2005). One is given more leeway for being too early because they are only wasting their own time waiting for the start time. However, if one is late, it is seen as an affront to another. These findings suggest that there is a limited parameter of when it is acceptable to arrive, and there is a common sense expectation about when to arrive. Being right on time is seen as respectful, not only because one respects the other person or the situation, but also because they are respecting the common sense of productivity that the dominant hegemonic time structure has ingrained in society. However, this gets complicated when friends are involved.

***Time scheme and friendships.*** Punctuality starts to fall away in participants' relationships with their friends; however, the common sense of productivity becomes reinforced in these interactions. I found that although participants do not have consensus on when the appropriate time is to show up to events involving friends, the reasons why someone might be late could be explained through Stryker and Serpe (1982) work on identity theory. They posit that identity salience, the part of one's identity that is most prominent given a specific situation, is relative to the commitment that he or she's identity is attached to a given role. Therefore, many of the participants in this study viewed their identity as a friend as secondary to their identity as a productive member at their job or home life.

I asked participants when they would arrive at certain events involving their friends such as a party, social hangout, or an event where the friend was performing. Within the context of parties, participants discussed feelings of discomfort when arriving too early to a social gathering. Participants were mixed about when to arrive at an event where a friend invited them to watch him or her perform. This suggests that there is a difference in how people think about punctuality and respect in regards to these events that cause people to evaluate their time schemes with friends.

Most individuals gave explanations as to why they showed up late to a party. Unlike a job, which has visible consequences for being late, a party was seen by the participants as a fluid event. Almost all of the participants stated that they would show up to a party at least fifteen minutes late, some even stated as late as an hour. When asked specifically why they would decide to arrive late, participants explained that a party had a different set of expectations than other events. Participants did not want to be at the party too early, or else it would not feel like a party. They also expressed that if they were not familiar with the other party goers, then they would have to engage in small talk. Others stated that you are not supposed to show up on time to a party; people do not expect you to do so. Both of the following quotes exemplify that participants consider not only the social expectations of arriving at a party after the start time but also how uncomfortable it can be when you do not know many of the people at the party. For example, Participant 10 (ER Manager, age 38) discusses occasions where he might arrive early and where he might late:

It depends on the invite list, if they were my really good friends and I'm very comfortable with it I would likely show up a few minutes early. Probably even 5-10 minutes early. But if the guest list is a bunch of people I don't know, I would likely show up a few minutes late.

There is less of a social reprimand arriving late to a party that is not present in other situations. Unlike for a work meeting or a one on one social engagement, the attendance of one individual does not affect the ability for the host to start the party or not. Participant 13 (Public Health Officer, age 47) in his response, explained the exceptionalism of this particular event. Participant 13 stated:

I'm not really that sociable and because I'm not the reason this gathering is happening, I would

probably show up maybe up to half an hour late, because I'm not sure if I'd really like it. I wouldn't want to get there early and have to stay longer than I had to so that's an interesting exception.

He points to that part of the reason it is acceptable to show up late is that the event is not centered around himself, and therefore there is not the expectation for him to show up on time. With this particular question, all of the participants had a thorough explanation of when they would arrive at a party. Unlike with previous questions where a participant might strive to be at a destination at a specific time and end up being late by accident, participants were intentional about being late.

However, when I changed the dynamic and asked when someone would arrive at an event where their friend invited them to watch them perform, participants' responses changed in interesting ways that did not necessarily line up with the way a participant situated their time scheme earlier in their interview. I asked participants when they would arrive at something like a friend's soccer game. I explained that the event was something that a friend personally invited you to, where there was no ticket to get into the event, but there were definitive start and end times.

Surprisingly, participants who stated that they were very punctual were more likely to say they would show up to events like this late. Participant 5 (Vice Principle, age 34) expressed in other questions that he was always on time for things. In response to the question about when he would arrive at the soccer game he stated: "Um in that case because soccer games are so long, I usually try to get there within the first 15 minutes or so, but getting there early like exactly at the start, that in my opinion is trivial because the game is not won in the first 15 minutes." This suggests that Participant 5 distinguishes that for an event that is so long, with soccer games tending to last an hour or more, it is of little value to be there for the entire event. Participant 3 (HR

Consultant, 49) explained that for her, arriving at an event for her friend early is not a valuable use of her time. She would preferably be using her time to get other things done before the event. Participant 3 explained:

Umm I'm that friend who is getting there just as the game is starting, probably because I was trying to get things done before I got there. I don't see value in being there early if they're the one participating in the game. If they want me to be there to watch their game, that's what I'm there for. I see no need to be there early.

In this assertion, Participant 3 implies that she would rush to finish other things and arrive just as the event was going to begin. This statement contrasts Participant 3's earlier statement that "I will be respectful of the scheduled time." She further stated that she walks into events "prepared for whatever I am walking into." These quotes suggest that the participants who said they would most likely not be on time to the event because they viewed taking the time to be productive in other realms of their lives as being more important than punctuality and respect in their friendships.

There could be many explanations as to why this pattern emerged. One possibility is that participants who tended to be on time for work engagements had greater identity salience with their roles as workers, while people who tended to run late to work engagements tended to emphasize their roles as friends. This would make sense, because although the common sense of productivity is reinforced in all aspects of our lives, the commitment to the role of the productive worker could be less salient. It could also be a larger part of social etiquette; DiPetro (2014) found in a cross-cultural analysis of punctuality and social cohesion that there was a positive correlation between the variables. His study shows that in order to have citizens be more included, there must be a greater emphasis on time consciousness. Another explanation for this could be how

people view their friendships as an expressive relationship rather than instrumental, therefore, not requiring as rigid adherence to punctuality (Milner 2006). However, participants that were chronically late to things stated that they would try even harder to show up to events like this on time or even early.

- Participant 1 (Esthetician, age 40): Those things I try to be on time to because obviously if they invited me to see them you don't want to miss what they're doing, so I think that shows how you think about a person. So if they invite you to something that they are in and you're late, that's kind of rude so you should be there on time.
- Participant 9 (Lawyer, age 44): On time to five minutes late. I really need that person to see I am there. And make sure that I am there in which case I'm going to be early so I can get my friend's attention to let them know I made it.

Participant 1 and Participant 9 express that the most important aspect to them in that event is their friend. They feel an obligation to be on time so that their friend knows they are there to support them. Other participants who tended to run late to things stated similar sentiments in relation to this particular question.

I found that the logic of productivity extended into participants' friendships. Many justified lateness with a friend because they were doing something more productive or important instead of being on time. Furthermore, it appeared that many participants saw very little repercussions for being late in this context. However, this does not explain why people who were late in other aspects of their found that being on time was most important with friends. One possible explanation is those participants felt their strongest form of support for a friend was to

be on time and therefore put more effort into those instances. This suggests that people who are prone to being late are not rejecting the hegemonic expectation of punctuality. Instead, they prioritize things that they feel are the most important and being on time only to those things.

Being on time in our culture is a sign of respect, as I established in the previous section, so participants whose more salient identity is that of a friend tend to work harder to arrive to events involving their close friends.

Many participants stated explicitly or implicitly that arrival time indicates something about a person's work ethic. It appears that for those who tend to run late, the evaluation of their friends is most important to them as opposed to evaluations from work colleagues or other venues one would expect productivity to matter.

***Working outside of "Work Hours."*** This study found that the most prevalent example of common sense of productivity was in the context of how participants chose their work schedules.

There were many occasions where participants discussed how they were productive during their work hours; however, this study found that there was a linkage between how willing they were to conduct labor outside of the regular work hour and the type of job they had. I define this type of work as unrecorded work hours because, in most cases, this work was performed outside the standard nine to five schedule that is typically thought of work time. Secondly, most of the participants were salaried; therefore, this additional work was not reflected in their pay.

Participants who did not have children or had adult children were more likely to work outside of the requisite hours to finish their tasks. Participants with young families or who were in management positions over other people were more likely to have the mentality that one should only put in the hours that were required for the day. These participants had management occupations. Nippert-Eng

(1996), in her work on the classification of work and home, identifies that when people have different calendars for their work and home schedules, they are more likely to think of them as discrete, separate activities.

Parents have less flexibility with their time as they have to be ready to accommodate anything that could happen with their kids, and as many of the parents in the study point out there are many occasions where children throw off a parent's schedule. As one mother stated:

I feel rushed when I go out anywhere with kids. If I'm doing an errand with the kids, I know I have a time bomb ticking. When are they gonna be hungry? When are they gonna have to pee next? When are they wanna go take a nap? So, even my shopping habits have changed, I'll just grab stuff. I used to look at which is the better value, now I just grab it. (Participant 4, HR Manager, 34)

This conception of time is especially prevalent with younger children as their demands do not have as much flexibility as a child who is older. Parents in the study seemed to be expressing this feeling of always working against the clock and having to adapt their sense of time to their children's demands while also performing the work expected in the household like grocery shopping, cleaning the home, or work schedule. This suggests that participants who have children, have more constraints about their choices to blur the boundary between work/home. Parents in this study discussed needing to impose a strong boundary between the two so that they could dedicate time to their children.

People who do not have families and tend to complete tasks alone at work have more perceived control over their time outside of work than those with families. Although participants in this job category ranged quite a bit, the jobs did have specific qualities that made them similar to Business and Finance

occupations. Participants who discussed doing unrecorded work frequently talked about working till 8 or 9 in the evening, working on weekends, or even through lunch hours. Participants explained that it is part of their work ethic to finish the task, even if the pay does not reflect the additional labor.

I have a very heavy workload; the expectation of the turnaround time is quick, but heavy workload. So that's why I worked [on Sunday], I am behind on my work, so I have to find time outside of my normal work hours to be able to complete the tasks I need to complete.

Participant 3 (HR Consultant, 49) is explaining that the type of work she has requires her to work outside of a regular schedule. This participant has adult children and is not generally tasked with managing their lives. When I pressed her more about if this was an expectation of her job, she quickly defended her job and explained that in her old job, it was implied that Participant 3 should do unrecorded labor in order to complete the tasks. In her new job, however, it was neither expected nor implied for her to do unrecorded labor, but it was something she did as part of her ethic.

This mentality repositions unrecorded work as a personal choice rather than the more substantial sociocultural factors that lead a person to have a particular "work ethic." The expectation of unpaid labor in the workplace could be influenced, again, by the hegemonic culture of productivity that we have cultivated in the United States (Johnson, Snyder, & Anderson, 1996). Participant 10 (ER Manager, 38) stated that he felt a need to work every single day, even if that be only 10 minutes, to feel like he is being productive. The hegemony of work time has ingrained this common sense productivity that one should always be working, even if job regulations state that the time outside of work is meant for resting (Shir-Wise, 2019).

Another group of participants who tend to work outside of the typical work schedule are freelance and business owners. These jobs fall under the Arts and Design occupations. Participants who were freelancers or business owners had the mentality that they needed to work hard on each job even if that meant working more than the time they allotted for the task. This study found that willingness to do unpaid labor is associated with the amount of autonomy the participant had in their job and other aspects of their lives (Chatzitheochari & Arber, 2012). Three of the participants in this study identified being in this category with two as graphic design artists that did primarily freelance work, and one participant ran her own business.

Freelance work is defined by the characteristic that a person works in a professional capacity without being hired by any single employer. They are free to take jobs as they please from many different employers (Storey, Salaman, & Platman, 2005). Freelance in terms of scheduling, as described by the participants, is where the freelancer and the employer agree on a set deadline for a job to be completed by for a certain pay under a contractual agreement. Even if the contract stipulates a certain amount of hours to be completed, participants explained that they more often than not worked more hours than they charged the client for and worked outside of the nine to five frame to complete the jobs.

I ask [the employer] for a realistic deadline like and by the end of that date I always cram everything in. Sometimes I procrastinate and all that and do an all-nighter. But I just get it done. Those deadlines are important to me. I always try to make sure that is done.

Participant 12 (Freelance, 25) explains that he strives to complete the work by the time that was agreed upon, even if it is at the detriment of his health. Freelancers get pushed under this pressure of having their work be a direct reflection of themselves because there is no

middle man or company that they are representing; they represent themselves. Therefore, they not only have the pressure of their actual work being under scrutiny, but they have a secondary pressure of constant deadlines, which one could view in the same light as being punctual. Their punctuality becomes a reflection of respect and character. One might argue that people in Management occupations have those same pressures put on them, yet, of the participants, I spoke with almost all of them in managerial positions and did not have the level of strictness about deadlines that freelancers did.

A freelance participant explained that “If I can, I won’t just give a mile. I wanna give 2 miles because I believe in if you give clients more than they ask for, it comes back two-fold. They’ll tell two other people about your service.” The style of job encourages freelancers to work harder and outside of regular hours to complete jobs and retain business in a way that other participants were not expected to from their jobs.

Examining why people work outside of the normative work hours illustrates the intensive demands of work-life and how rigid or flimsy the work/life boundary is depending on how one’s time is organized outside of the home. Individuals with more agency in their scheduling often work more during non-standard business This expectation is prevalent in a society that values productivity, although many of the participants situate working outside of work hours as an individualized choice. It appears, however, that it is more the illusion of choice, because it is implied that to maintain one’s presentation of a dutiful worker they must work outside of work (Hochschild & Machung, 2012).

People’s time schemes are a reflection of common sense productivity, and that is readily apparent in areas such as punctuality, scheduling, and work time. The choice of when to arrive somewhere is more than just a mundane scheduled event. It is a choice that is deeply entrenched in our society’s understanding of respect and character.



Identity salience of one role additionally played a large role in the choices the participants made. Arriving at work and working is not just the effect of 9 to 5 schedules, but also an expression of the common sense of productivity that is present in the way we interact with everyday life.

## Discussion

This study used the lens of phenomenology to investigate individuals' understandings of how they organize their everyday lives. The study found that although people's time schemes will change in relation to a given situation, the hegemony of time is ever present in the way that people interact with time. The lens of phenomenology reveals the conscious and unconscious motivations of productivity that we take for granted as common sense. The value of friendship, how one's work ethic is perceived, and respect are all considered in the act of arriving somewhere. An analysis of why people work outside of traditional hours highlights how people struggle in juggling different spheres of their lives while maintaining productivity. Examining the common sense of productivity shows how pervasive the hegemony is in everyday aspects of our lives. The emphasis on productivity inherently supports the dominant group by continually reinforcing a worker mindset.

So many aspects of our lives are influenced by this notion that we must be "on time" in order to signal to others that we are productive beings. By emphasizing the importance of timeliness and not wasting time, the culture of productivity is subtly underpinning the values that makes a good worker. Almost all of the participants in the study were working for a larger corporation or business. Therefore, all of the time they put into work necessarily gets their company more money.

According to Marx's definition of the bourgeois, most of the people who own these companies are also members of the dominant group (Marx & Engels, 1848). Most of the

participants in my study, not including the ones who freelance, would be considered members of the proletariat/middle class. Gramsci would argue that the dominant class, those who own the industries my participants work within, would benefit from imposing this hegemonic view of time.

Telling people that they must be on time to work, they must work every second they are "on the clock" because that is company time, and they should be working until the job is complete not when the clock strikes five are all habits that have been strengthened through other interactions outside of work.

This analysis demonstrates that we are constantly being evaluated by others and are being judged for our timeliness which subsequently signals our productivity. Scholars such as Michele Lamont explore this notion of evaluation and valuation through which she articulates how we give others value through categorization (Lamont, 2012). Furthermore, we evaluate and give value to people based on how much they work. This notion of valuing people based on how much they work may explain why people who are in "non-traditional" jobs like freelance are more likely to work outside of traditional hours. Freelancers in this study appeared to justify that they work outside of typical hours of a nine to five job so that they can be sure to hit deadlines and not be evaluated by others as being unproductive.

The hegemony over time, specifically the common sense of productivity, encourages the "hustle" culture of always doing something to further one's financial gains, and therefore propping up the market, and because of the way the market functions this increases the financial wealth of the dominant group. While many would not see issue with this, there are many problems that are deeply embedded in our society because of not only the notion of productivity, but also the interaction between the hegemony of time, the hegemony of gender, and the hegemony of race. This study illuminates that the need for these institutions

must be viewed critically and in tandem. One limitation of this study is that it does not address gender and race which could reveal further connections between everyday life and intersecting identities. It is critical to examine how people think about these things in order to gain a better understanding of how hegemony functions in everyday life, how it influences the ways we think, and how systems of dominance overlap and connect.

## Conclusion

This study examined the question of what is the function of the hegemony of time on people's everyday conceptualizations of time. The study used interview data and purposive snowball sampling to gather data. By examining how participants thought about time in three different contexts, the study found that there is a critical link between the common sense of productivity and our everyday lives.

The study found that punctuality is related to how we think about respect, and that we are constantly evaluating others and have biases about people who do not meet our expectations of appropriate punctuality. There is a disconnect between productivity and friendship where friendship tends to be viewed as something that is not productive or that does not produce the tangible results of productivity that working at home or the office produces. People have demanding work hours, whether they believe that expectation is self-imposed or not. From the analysis, however, we have been primed to believe that we should be working more than what is expected of us. This study found that it is not necessarily the construction of Standard Time that is the controlling element of the dominant group, but the pervasive norms, attitudes, and expectations of how one should manage their time that supports the hegemony of time.

This study addresses many gaps in our existing knowledge about people's everyday conceptualizations of time. The study brings to the fore that people have this notion that we must be productive in some way and highlights

how the hegemony over time serves to benefit the dominant group. By using qualitative methodology, the common sense of productivity is shown to be extremely pervasive in ways that a survey might not be able to illustrate, such as explaining why it seems so offensive to meet someone outside of an appropriate window of time or how productivity justifies being late to see friends.

As COVID-19 continues to keep large portions of the country shut down, it forces us to reckon with many of our previous conceptions of time. Video chats have changed how we "meet up" with others, which drastically reduces the appropriate window of when to arrive at an event. More people are working "outside" of traditional work hours because they do not have to physically be in an office. It is not apparent how this moment we are living in will affect the common sense of productivity in the long run; however, with conversations more heavily surrounding mental health during times of crisis suggests that prioritizing health over productivity might continue to be the new normal.

There were some limitations for this study, specifically with the sample size. For that reason, this study cannot be generalizable but it does reveal how people think about time in a way that would be more difficult with a quantitative analysis. Future researchers could re-conduct this study, gathering a larger sample size, and analyze differences between race, class, and gender. Additionally, there was the limitation about what jobs the participants held. Most of the participants were young professionals living on the West Coast which is only one small part of the larger dominant group. It would be pertinent to conduct this study taking greater account of participants' jobs, including those who identify as being part of the poor or working class.

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