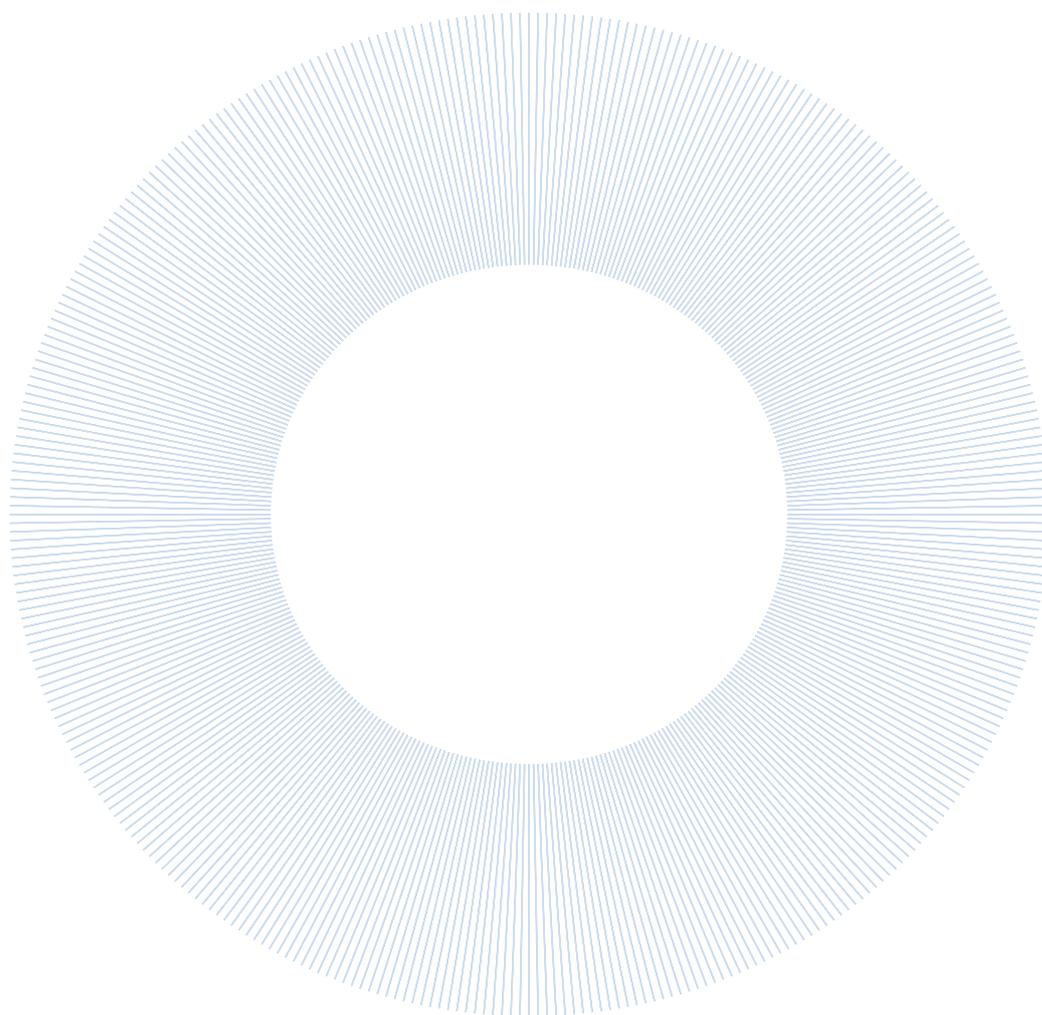# Time Use, Happiness and Implications for Social Policy: A Report to the United Nations

Robert Levine

## *About Insights*

*Insights* captures the ideas and work-in-progress of the Fellows of the Institute of Advanced Study at Durham University. Up to twenty distinguished and 'fast-track' Fellows reside at the IAS in any academic year. They are world-class scholars who come to Durham to participate in a variety of events around a core inter-disciplinary theme, which changes from year to year. Each theme inspires a new series of *Insights*, and these are listed in the inside back cover of each issue. These short papers take the form of thought experiments, summaries of research findings, theoretical statements, original reviews, and occasionally more fully worked treatises. Every fellow who visits the IAS is asked to write for this series. The Directors of the IAS – Veronica Strang, Stuart Elden, Barbara Graziosi and Martin Ward – also invite submissions from others involved in the themes, events and activities of the IAS. *Insights* is edited for the IAS by Barbara Graziosi.  Previous editors of *Insights* were Professor Susan Smith (2006–2009) and Professor Michael O'Neill (2009–2012).

## *About the Institute of Advanced Study*

The Institute of Advanced Study, launched in October 2006 to commemorate Durham University's 175th Anniversary, is a flagship project reaffirming the value of ideas and the public role of universities. The Institute aims to cultivate new thinking on ideas that might change the world, through unconstrained dialogue between the disciplines as well as interaction between scholars, intellectuals and public figures of world standing from a variety of backgrounds and countries. The Durham IAS is one of only a handful of comparable institutions in the world that incorporates the Sciences, Social Sciences, the Arts and the Humanities.

The focal point of the IAS is a programme of work associated with, but not exclusive to, an annual research theme. At the core of this work lies a prestigious Fellowship programme. This programme gathers together scholars, intellectuals and public figures of world standing or world-promise to address topics of major academic or public interest. Their mission is to anticipate the new and re-interpret the old, communicating across and working between disciplinary boundaries.

Every year, the Institute invites as many as twenty highly creative individuals to spend up to three months in Durham. They are located in Cosin's Hall, a magnificent and spacious 18th century mansion which, together with Durham Cathedral and Durham Castle, forms part of Palace Green, dominating the World Heritage Site of Durham Peninsula. During their stay, Fellows engage with departments and colleges, deliver public lectures and seminars, and, above all, join an international community of researchers to address the theme selected for that year. Further details of the IAS and its Fellowship programme can be found at www.durham.ac.uk/ias/fellows

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## TIME USE, HAPPINESS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL POLICY: A REPORT TO THE UNITED NATIONS

*This paper examines the importance of time use and temporal values for the achievement of happiness and draws implications for public policy. First, it reviews literature concerning the inter-relationships of time, money and happiness, with a focus on the relevance of time use to well-being and happiness. Second, it reviews data and issues concerning work and non-work hours around the world, with an emphasis on the quality of time use within these activities. Third, it describes a broader range of temporal issues to be considered in policymaking decisions, e.g. clock versus event time-keeping, monochronic versus polychronic approaches, the definition of wasted time, the pace of life and temporal orientation. Finally, based on this review, suggestions are offered for the formulation of time-use policies intended to increase individual and collective happiness.*

Bhutan is a small, poor, landlocked nation in the Himalayas. In 1972, Bhutan's king decided it was time for his nation to join the modern world. He very slowly opened the doors to visitors, then to investors, tourists and television, began building roads and taking steps to modernize. More recently, he decided the country needed a democracy and set up a parliament and elections for a prime minister. This particular mandate was extremely unpopular among the citizenship, who were more than happy to continue under the benevolence of its royal family. But the king insisted that Bhutan's survival required moving forward.

At the same time, however, he declared that the ultimate measure of development would not be gross domestic product (GDP) but something to be called gross national happiness (GNH). 'Progress,' the GNH designers declared, 'should be viewed not only through the lens of economics but also from spiritual, social, cultural and ecological perspectives.' Happiness and development, in other words, depend on more than growth and the accumulation of money. England, Canada and other countries and country-level organizations have subsequently followed Bhutan's lead and established GNH measures of their own.

In the Spring of 2012, the United Nations implemented a resolution, adopted unanimously by the General Assembly, placing 'happiness' on the global agenda. The nation of Bhutan was asked to convene an interdisciplinary group of international 'experts' to craft recommendations for policies to raise worldwide happiness; more specifically, to develop a 'new paradigm for world development.' One of the nine core domains of Bhutan's GNH index is 'time use,' which is one of my research areas. As a result, I was asked to lead that section of the report. The paper that follows offers a synopsis of the main points I addressed in the longer report I prepared during my residence at the IAS. The longer document will be included in Bhutan's presentation to the United Nations later this year.

## *Time Use and Happiness: Implications for Social Policy*

The systematic study of happiness has experienced enormous growth, not only among social and behavioral scientists (e.g. Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2008) but more recently among economists, as exemplified by the work of Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman and his colleagues (e.g. Kahneman et al., 2004; Krueger, 2009).  Among policymakers, several nations have begun to develop their own indices of happiness.  The Office for National Statistics in the UK, for example, published the results of their first annual happiness survey in 2012.

The study of time use is essential to any understanding of happiness.  It is a virtual truism that time is our most valuable resource.  With this in mind, 'time use and balance' have been designated as one of the nine core domains of Bhutan's pioneering index of gross national happiness.  Social scientists and economists have also focused upon the relationship of time to happiness.  Kahneman and his colleagues, for example, have constructed a sophisticated time-use diary measure in order to understand the consequences of temporal behaviors for well-being (Kahneman et al., 2004).  The present paper focuses upon the importance of time use and conceptions of time for the achievement of happiness and suggests implications for public policy.  It will address four major sets of issues:

I.   The inter-relationships of time, money and happiness.  Most importantly, what is the relevance of time use to well-being and happiness?
II.  Work-hour issues and policies.
III. Other temporal factors that need to be considered when formulating policies to increase happiness.
IV.  Suggestions for policymaking.

## *I. Time, Money and Happiness*

The notion of gross national happiness rests upon the assumption that happiness depends on more than the accumulation of money.  One of these additional dimensions, as defined by the GNH index, is time use and time balance.  The present introduction looks at the relationship between these three dimensions: time, money and happiness.

*Money and happiness*

The relationship between money and happiness is, at best, imperfect.  The dominant theory for the past three decades has been what is known as the 'Easterlin Paradox,' named for the economist Richard Easterlin.  The theory suggests two major conclusions: (1) When comparing individuals within a country, wealthier people report greater happiness. (2) When making international comparisons, however, national income per person is, at best, weakly related to people's happiness levels.  There is a significant exception to this second assertion: the lowest income countries – those without enough money for food and shelter – are least happy with their lives.  Survey data indicate that this is also true on an individual level.  In the United States, for example, people in poverty are more likely than those not in poverty to suffer from a number of chronic health problems and they are most disproportionately prone to suffer from psychological depression.  Thirty-one percent of the poor report having been diagnosed with depression at some point, compared to 15.8 percent of those not in poverty (Gallup, 30 October 2012).

Beyond a minimal standard of living, however, there is almost no relationship between national income and happiness.  People with enough money to meet their minimal needs are no less

happy than those with greater wealth.  Easterlin bases these conclusions on a wealth of data (e.g. Easterlin, 1974).  He explains the paradox this way:

> In all societies, more money for the individual typically means more individual happiness.  However, raising the incomes of all does not increase the happiness of all. The happiness-income relation provides a classic example of the logical fallacy of composition—what is true for the individual is not true for society as a whole.  The resolution of this paradox lies in the relative nature of […] judgments.  Individuals assess their material well-being, not in terms of the absolute amount of goods they have, but relative to a social norm of what goods they ought to have.

It should be noted that there have been recent challenges to the validity of Easterlin's assertions (Hagerty and Veenhoven, 2003; Stevenson and Wolfers, 2008).  In response, Easterlin and his colleagues published a defense of the Easterlin paradox using data from a sample of 37 countries (Easterlin, 2013).  If Easterlin's theory is correct, it has far-reaching implications for policy decisions.  The eradication of poverty should be a primary goal of government policy.  However, economic growth per se, which does little to improve social welfare, should not be a primary goal of government policy.

How people create and use wealth may be more important than absolute monetary wealth.  At what personal 'cost' do the people of a nation create wealth?  Attitudes toward time and time use may be critical in this regard.

*Time and happiness*

Our lives are lived in time.  How we use this time defines the quality of our existence.  The novelist Joyce Carol Oates captured it nicely: 'Time is the element in which we exist... We are either borne along by it or drowned in it.'  It may be argued, in fact, that time – both its availability, how it is spent and how it is conceived – is the most central of all issues in regard to well-being.

The systematic measurement of time use can provide valuable information about the quality of life on multiple levels.  Temporal beliefs and behaviors are mirrored in our culture, geography, climate, religion, social class, educational level and the political and economic stability of our surroundings (e.g. Zimbardo and Boyd, 2008; Levine, 1997). The way we behave and think about the past, present and future, our very conception of time, affects virtually every aspect of our lives – our relationships, careers, successes and failures, the decisions we make, the emotions we feel and, in the end, the very essence of our life experience.

*Time, money and happiness*

It may be argued that time use is the single most fundamental factor in predicting well-being on multiple levels.  It is intricately related to physical, social, psychological and economic well-being.

In our own studies, for example, my colleagues and I have conducted a series of field experiments comparing the pace of life in the largest or other major city in each of 31 countries around the world (Levine and Norenzayan, 1999).  In each city, we measured behaviors such as walking speed, work speed and clock time.  The pace of life, we found, was significantly related to the physical, social and psychological well-being of individuals in those cities.  On the negative side, faster places tended to have higher rates of death from coronary heart disease, higher smoking rates and people were less likely to take the time to help strangers in need.  On the positive side, however, faster places were more economically healthy and residents tended to self-report being somewhat happier in their lives.

The finding that people in faster places tended, on average, to have higher rates of death from coronary heart disease but also to say that they are happier was particularly interesting. The key to this seeming paradox appears to lie in the central role that the pace of life plays in the broader web of community characteristics in which these findings are embedded. Perhaps the two best examples of this are economic vitality and individualism-collectivism. Economic needs are primary forces in creating a sense of time urgency, and that sense of time urgency in turn leads to a productive economy. Similarly, a focus on individualism thrives on a rapid pace of life, which in turn creates pressure for further individualism. These forces – economic vitality and individualism – have both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, the focus on making every minute count and being productive creates the stressors that lead to cigarette smoking and coronary heart disease. On the other hand, they provide sufficient resources to meet people's basic needs, which both Easterlin and his critics argue is related to happiness. Productivity and individualism – which in themselves are very difficult to separate from one another – have double-edged consequences.

Although these data represent a particular perspective on the time/happiness relationship, they underscore the fundamental importance of understanding time use when formulating policies to enhance well-being. The key is to achieve a balance in time use between economic productivity and personal welfare in order to minimize the costs and maximize the well-being of individuals and their communities.

## *II. Work-Hour Issues*

*Work hours*

Individuals must often spend more of their time working than they would like and to the detriment of the well-being of themselves, their families and their communities. The pressures toward longer work hours are especially strong in countries with larger concentrations of poverty. They are also especially strong toward less powerful and/or lower status individuals, particularly children and women in many cultures.

There is considerable data documenting significant differences in average work hours in different countries. There is, however, a scarcity of available data for less developed countries. This is significant in that the greatest need for policies often exists in these places. It has been estimated that more than 20 percent of workers worldwide currently work more than 48 hours per week (Lee et al., 2007), but these data are often of questionable reliability. Policies mandating systematic collection of these data should be encouraged.

The battle over excessive work hours has a long history. In fact, the eight-hour day, often implying a 48-hour week, has been a key demand of labor groups representing the working class even before the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1919 (Alcock, 1971). The ILO has long held this demand as high priority and it is essential that it continues to do so.

However, these policies must be sensitive to the financial needs of the overworked. Workers may feel compelled to work longer hours because of exploitation in the form of insufficient pay, threats to their job security, etc. In many developing and transition countries overtime payments constitute a regular and substantial element of wage packages and are relied on to ensure a decent standard of living. Examples are: China, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Korea and Mexico (see Lee et al., 2007). Policies concerning overwork must be approached in

this larger context, i.e. any policies concerning workers' hours must be accompanied by policies targeting their vulnerability to exploitation.

*Leisure time*

At first glance, leisure time may be seen as the zero-sum complement to time spent inside the workplace, i.e. more work hours equal less leisure time. The functional value of non-work time is, however, considerably more complicated than it appears. Let us examine two components of non-work time that should be considered.

a.  The amount of time spent outside the workplace.
There is ample international data concerning time allocated to life outside the workplace. Some of this, such as vacation time, is mandated by policies at one level or another. There are typically large differences between different countries, even among affluent nations. In Europe and in a number of countries outside Europe, at least four weeks of vacation time is now standard. By contrast, the norm is two weeks in Korea, Japan and the United States (which actually has no vacation law at all – 30 percent of US workers get no paid vacation time).

Holidays and vacation time are only one type of paid leave. Organizations and/or policies may allow for short- and/or long-term sick leaves, personal days, parental leaves, paid leave for jury duty, bereavement leave, community service leave, floating holidays (the option to take assigned holiday days when one wishes), sabbatical leaves, options to borrow leave time, options to buy leave time and options to contribute leave time to another employee. A few countries have created especially liberal leave policies. Sweden, for example, has offered both extended maternity and paternity paid leaves after the birth of a child. Economic pressures make paid leaves more difficult to provide but they should be on the policy agenda at all times.

The importance a culture places on non-work time is reflected in other ways. For example, it is interesting to compare national differences in trade union demands for time-related policies. In the United States, for example, labor strikes rarely mention temporal issues. They are almost always about money. In much of Europe, however, labor strikes tend to be about temporal matters: the length of the work week, retirement age and related issues.

b.  The perceived value of non-work activities.
Sophisticated statistical techniques have been and are being developed to understand better the relationship between time use and happiness in the context of specific activities. Weighted formulas can now measure not only average happiness during individual activities but also enable us to explore more nuanced patterns. For example, Gershuny (2012), of the Centre for Time Use Research, has recently published a measure of 'National Utility' (NU) that quantifies the hedonic value of different activities experienced by individuals. These data can be used to develop policies that maximize the perceived quality of experienced time within a cultural context.

*Work time arrangements*

The pattern of work hours also has significant consequences for happiness. Many arrangements have been tried. Most of these have focused on flexible time working arrangements. While these arrangements can potentially serve the best interest of workers, they also have dangers. Particularly in underdeveloped countries, many such arrangements have been prone to exploitation at the cost of workers. A few examples are:

a. Shift work.

Shift work has a long history. It allows companies to extend their operating hours beyond the traditional work day. Various types of shift patterns are common throughout the world. They are widely employed in Asia (e.g. China, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia), in the Americas and in Africa (e.g. Mauritius, Senegal, Tunisia). Night work is often a part of these arrangements, sometimes to a very large extent. In Chile, for example, 61 percent of shift work arrangements consist of night work, involving about 15 percent of all employees. A few other statistics: 17.5 percent of employees in China work nights at least once/month and 24 percent in the Czech Republic; 20 percent in Senegal work nights at least once/week, compared to 9 percent in Brazil (Lee et al., 2007).

b. Weekend work.

Workers may work part, most or all of their time on weekends. As would be expected, weekend work tends to be most common in businesses such as restaurants, hotels and certain retail businesses. Few statistics are reported for overall rates in different countries, however.

c. Hours averaging or modulation.

These arrangements typically specify an average number of hours to be worked each week but allow workers to meet this target by averaging out their hours over a longer period of time, anywhere from several weeks to a year. These arrangements are becoming more common in some countries, e.g. Brazil, China, the Czech Republic and Hungary (reported in Lee et al., 2007).

d. Weekly rest periods.

There are two main variants on this type of arrangement. The first is to provide a longer period of weekly rest. Some countries where the normal work week has been six days are moving toward extending the weekly rest period to two days. In Malaysia, for example, the main trade union body (the Trades Union Congress) has set the adoption of a five-day working week as one of its top priorities. The second variant is a stricter enforcement of the prohibition to work on rest days.

e. Part-time work.

These arrangements take many forms. They are often done at the discretion of the employer and can be exploitative. For example, two or more part-time workers may be seen as more productive than one full-time employee because they can work with fewer breaks, less fatigue, etc. In some cases, part-time workers are less costly because they do not qualify for benefits, vacations, etc. On the other hand, part-time arrangements, when done in proper consultation with employees, hold the potential to benefit both workers and their employers.

f. Employer-provided services to help employees save time outside the workplace.

Although not strictly work-hour arrangements, some progressive companies try to offer services that save workers time that they might be spending on personal maintenance during their non-work hours. Many large Silicon Valley companies in the United States have taken the lead in this movement. Google, for example, offers free express-luxury buses to its employees for their commutes. They also provide free and convenient on-site laundry, shoe repair and other employee time-saving services. A number of companies offer childcare services to employees. Facebook gives new parents extra spending money, some of which may be used to buy assistance with childcare. Stanford Medical School and other employers are providing housecleaning services and in-home delivery of dinner. Genentech helps employees find last-minute baby sitters when their child gets sick and needs to stay home from school. Companies sometimes offer personal trainers, nutritionists and even free marital counseling. 'The goal is not just to

reduce stress for employees, but [also] for their families [...]. These type[s] of services provide employees with more discretionary non-work time and also signal recognition of the importance of their lives outside the workplace' (Richtel, 2012).

g.  Worker-oriented and/or initiated flexibility.
In both industrialized and developing nations, flexible arrangements have tended to be primarily designed and put in place by employers to maximize their own profits.  However, in a limited number of countries these arrangements have been designed to be of mutual benefit to employers and employees.  These plans have been most common in Europe but have appeared in rare instances in undeveloped countries.  For example, legislative reforms in Senegal several years ago established policies intended to give workers the ability to adapt their work schedules to benefit their personal lives.  These types of plans, which target the mutual benefit of employees and their employers, should be highly encouraged by policies.  This is one domain where a single policy would appear to be beneficial across cultures.

In summary, it is essential to (a) develop policies that encourage systematic tracking of time use data, (b) to use this data to create culture-specific policies that will maximize happiness both during and outside work hours, and (c) to study policies that have been applied both formally and informally in the past and evaluate their value in the larger context.

## III. Other Temporal Dimensions to Consider when Formulating Policies Related to Happiness

There are a number of time-related issues beyond those concerning working hours that should be considered when formulating policies.  Many of these show considerable variation across cultures and a proper understanding of the value that a culture attaches to these issues is essential when formulating policies.  Some temporal issues that are especially prone to cultural variation are:

1.  Work versus leisure.
There are cultural differences in the value placed on work, on leisure and on the balance between the two.  The differences are marked even within highly industrialized countries; the United States and Japan are famous for long work hours, as exemplified by the terms 'workaholic' and 'karoshi' (Levine, 1997).  European nations also tend to emphasize hard work, with many differences between countries, but generally put greater emphasis on preserving non-work time than do people in the United States and Japan.

2.  Task versus social time.
Within the workplace, people tend to spend more of their work time on-task in some cultures and more of that time socializing – informal chatting, having tea or coffee with colleagues, etc. – in others.  For example, people working in companies in large cities in the United States tend to report in the range of '80 per cent task time, 20 per cent social time.'  On the other hand, people working in companies in India, Nepal, Indonesia, Malaysia and some Latin American countries tend to give answers closer to '50 per cent task time, 50 per cent social time' (Brislin and Kim, 2003).

3.  Sequence.
Each culture sets rules concerning the appropriate sequence of tasks and activities.  Is it work before play, or vice versa?  Do people take all of their sleep at night, or is there a siesta in the mid-afternoon?  Is one expected to have coffee or tea and socialize, and for how long, before

getting down to serious business?  There are also customs about sequences over the long run. For example, how long is the socially accepted period of childhood, if it exists at all, and when is it time to assume the responsibilities of an adult?

4.  Clock and event time.
Under clock time, the hour on the timepiece governs the beginning and ending of activities. Under event time, scheduling is determined by the flow of the activity.  Events begin and end when, by mutual consensus, participants 'feel' the time is right (Levine, 1997).  Many countries exhort event time as a philosophy of life.  In East Africa, there is a popular adage that 'Even the time takes its time.'  In Trinidad, it is commonly said that 'Any time is Trinidad time.'  In the United States and much of Europe, by contrast, the right way to measure time is assumed to be by the clock.  This is especially true when it comes to the work hours.  Time is money and any time not focused on-task is seen as wasted time.

These different ways of time-keeping can often lead to cultural misunderstandings.  Individuals operating on clock time are careful to be punctual and expect the same of others.  Those on event time are more spontaneous in beginning and ending events and, as a result, tend to be less punctual and are more understanding when others are less punctual.

5.  Polychronic and monochronic time.
People and organizations in clock time cultures are more likely to emphasize monochronic (M-time) approaches, meaning they like to focus on one activity at a time.  People in event time cultures, on the other hand, tend to emphasize polychronic (P-time) approaches, meaning they prefer to do several things at once (Bluedorn, 2002; Hall, 1983).  P-time goes beyond what is popularly known as 'multi-tasking.'  Progress on P-time occurs a little at a time on each task.  P-time cultures are characterized by a strong involvement with people.  They emphasize the completion of human transactions rather than keeping to schedules.  For example, two P-time individuals who are deep in conversation will typically choose to arrive late for their next appointment rather than cut into the flow of their discussion.  Both would be insulted, in fact, if their partner were abruptly to terminate the conversation before it came to a spontaneous conclusion.

6.  Silence and 'doing nothing.'
In some cultures, notably those of the USA and Western Europe, silence makes people uncomfortable.  It may denote that nothing is happening or that something is going wrong.  The usual response is to say something, to fill the silence or to keep the meeting or conversation going.  People in other cultures, including many Asian and Pacific Island nations, are quite comfortable with silence.  It may be seen as an opportunity to focus inward and gather one's thoughts before speaking. The Japanese emphasize '*ma*,' which roughly translates as the 'space' between things or the 'pause.' It implies that what happens between things, or what does not seem to be happening, is as or more important than what is visibly happening.  As an extreme example, people in Brunei often begin their day by asking: 'What isn't going to happen today?'

7.  Wasted time.
A related temporal difference concerns what people perceive as 'wasted time.'  People, cultures, and economies that emphasize the rule that 'time is money' may see any time not devoted to tangible production as wasted time.  People in other cultures, however, believe that overemphasis on this rule is a waste of one's time in a larger sense, i.e. it is a wasteful way to spend the time of one's life.  If something more worthy of one's attention – be it social- or work-related – challenges a planned schedule, it is seen as wasteful not to deviate from the planned

schedule.  A typical comment may be, 'There is no such thing as wasted time.  If you are not doing one thing, you are doing something else' (Levine, 1997).

8.  Norms concerning waiting.
Cultures differ in their norms for waiting, not only how long it is appropriate to keep a person waiting but how the rules change depending on the situation and the people involved.  Levine (1997) describes a number of 'rules' to waiting and how these rules differ in various cultures. Some useful questions: Are the rules based on the principle that time is money? Who is expected to wait for whom, under what circumstances and for how long?  Is there a procedure for buying oneself a place in front or off the line completely?  What social message is being sent when the accepted rules are broken?

9.  Temporal orientation.
There are individual and cultural differences in people's orientation toward the past, present and future.  Zimbardo and Boyd (2008) have found large individual and cultural differences on both the individual sub-scales and the patterns of the sub-scales taken together.  Further, they describe how these differences affect political, economic, social, environmental and other domains of life and society.

10.  The pace of life.
There are profound differences in the pace of life on many levels – individual temperament, cultural norms, between places, at different times and during different activities – and consequences of these differences for individual, social and economic well-being (described earlier).

11.  The balance between being busy and feeling rushed.
Virtually everyone prefers a certain degree of busyness.  Most people, however, find the feeling of being rushed unpleasant.  More important for people and organizations is the balance between the two.  Findings from the United States indicate that self-reported happiness is highest for people who are unrushed but say they have little excess time.

Understanding the values and assumptions a culture places on these temporal dimensions is essential to creating policies that enhance the quality of people's lives.  There is no single correct way to think about time.  There are different ways of thinking, each with their pluses and minuses, and all may be of value in given situations.

## *IV. Recommendations for Policymaking*

What is the most constructive balance between work and non-work hours, and the composition of activities within these hours, from the perspective of all participants – the worker, the family, the community, the organization and the nation?  It is important to answer these questions with a long-range perspective.  Some general issues that must be considered in policy decisions are:

1.  Human rights issues must take priority.
All policies must begin with this value in mind.  This especially concerns policies pertaining to such issues as total work hours, workplace conditions and coercion and exploitation of lower status individuals.  This is especially pertinent to policies concerning women and children.

2.  Family issues.
There is a need to formulate policies that enable workers to balance their jobs and family lives. This balance is strongly affected by other needs and behaviors within particular cultures. A special concern is gender expectations. Policies should both reflect the increasing numbers of women entering the labor market and ensure a balance that does not shortchange their children and families.

3.  Burnout and overwork.
Workers who are forced to work excessive hours in the short term are more prone to the 'burnout' syndrome. This takes a toll on the psychological and physical well-being of the worker and is ultimately costly to the organization which is left with a less productive worker in the long run (e.g. Maslach et al., 2001). The challenge is to develop policies that reduce the probability of burnout while maintaining sufficient hours and energy devoted to production.

4.  Policies must be crafted which encourage pro-social behavior.
Diener and his colleagues (Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2008) report evidence that happier people are better citizens at work, e.g. they tend to help others more, do better in social relationships, are more capable in difficult situations, are better liked by others and, on average, are more altruistic and attentive to the needs of others. Policies concerning time use should reward these behaviors.

5.  Policies must be crafted that offer individuals control of how they spend their time.
Whenever possible, individuals should, at least, be consulted in matters affecting their time use. The goal is to maximize people's feeling of control over their time. When done appropriately, this leads to greater happiness and production both in the short and, especially, in the long term.

6.  Policies must be sensitive to the cultural context.
Cultures differ on many characteristics that reflect fundamental beliefs and values. The previous section described a number of culturally-sensitive temporal dimensions. Policies must be sensitive to these differences.

7.  Policies must be crafted with flexibility optimally to match the skills and temperaments of individuals within these cultural contexts.
For example, not only are some cultures more oriented toward working on a schedule but, within cultures, some workers may prefer to work on clearly defined schedules while others may prefer to complete their work on their own schedules.

8.  Policies must be crafted with sufficient flexibility to take into account the nature of particular jobs and tasks within jobs.
In a corporation, for example, some positions may require tight scheduling of time (e.g. accountants during tax time). On the other hand, employees in research and development may be most productive when less tightly controlled.

## Summary and Conclusions

Time use and time balance are fundamental to well-being both on the individual and societal

levels.  The evidence supports the thesis that societies that care about healthy time use at the individual level also benefit as a whole.  In conclusion, good time use is use of time in ways that are seen as meaningful and self-congruent and that benefit one's family, community and the larger local and global environment.

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