

4.2.1. Corruption of time

(1) Corruption of time – academic articles research

To the best of our knowledge, there is no explicit reference to *corruption of time* within the academic texts available online in databases such as Google Scholar, SAGE, and JSTOR. Instead, there are some references to corruption *across* time. The fact that this specific concept is entirely missing from the academic literature is rather interesting, and is a finding in itself. Taking also into consideration the fact that there are many different perceptions of corruption that vary between cultures, states, and epochs (Petrović, 2015, p. 9), no wonder why there is no universal definition of corruption of time.

From an anthropological perspective, there are different perceptions of time that we are mainly unaware of, as we are used to taking this phenomenon for granted. For example, in the Eastern philosophy, time is viewed as a subjective phenomenon, an illusion that cannot be grasped with the mind, for the process of thinking is part of our personality, which has its cognitive limits. According to Eastern teachings, the only way one can understand time is through the substantive principle behind the personality which represents the very essence of our being (Nedeljković, 2007, p. 15). On the other hand, the Christian perspective brings forth a parallel tendency to “believe either in the full reality of time – so that God, to be worthy of the name, must be temporal – or in the full reality of eternity, with time being merely a derivative appendage and future” (Bradshaw, 2006, p. 1).

We can establish a narrow definition of corruption as “a deviant behaviour, which manifests itself in an abuse of a function in politics, society, or economy in favour of another person or institution” (Agbota, 2015, p. 5) or widely as any “departure from the original or from what is pure or correct” (Merriam Webster Online). Thus, corruption of time can oscillate between being defined as a deviant abuse of time (narrowly), and any departure from the original form of time (widely).

Understanding time: science, religion, and culture

Time as a phenomenon has been discussed in various contexts like the theories of time in physics, or several anthropological understandings of time in different contexts and domains. So while in physics time is defined by its measurement, in the classical non-relativistic

physics time is a scalar quantity¹. Interestingly, however, some physicists (e.g., Tim Koslowski, Julian Barbour, Flavio Mercati) argue that gravity is the one aiming the time’s arrow, and not thermodynamics. Specifically, according to Barbour et al. (2014), gravity caused matter to clump together, thus defining an arrow of time that aligns itself with the growth of complexity. Physics takes it further, with the idea that time moves in more than one direction, and that we just happen to inhabit a section of the cosmos with a single, locally defined arrow of time (Falk, 2016).

In terms of understanding time as plural rather than singular, we can say that the perception of time is bounded by the fact that there are instances when we can perceive time in only one direction, meaning that we are abridged with a single understanding of time. In regards to this understanding of corruption of time, we can say that its comprehension is a limited one – as any other type of phenomenon – and this perspective is one from the present moment. Even if we can say that this is a standard epistemological dilemma, the challenge might reside in the fact that understanding corruption of time varies from one moment to another moment, and is affected by the ephemeral understanding of time.

From the point of view of the central doctrine of Christianity – the resurrection of Christ, there is a distinction between eternity which is endless, and time that is measured by flowing from the beginning to the end (Jackson, n.d). From this perception, time is very limited, with a defined beginning and end, hence very different from the physics’ understanding of time(s). Questions on the afterlife and completing life mission differ within mainstream religions. Specifically, the Christian understanding of death (as the end of time) is defined as a complete act, where one meets their full being. Whereas Hinduists and Buddhists understand this as a dynamic process which happens in the present moment, where one constantly meets themselves in every life, incognito (Tichenor, 2003, p. 12). In contrast, the Nuer people² are not concerned with the beginning and the end. They do not understand time as something actual because their points of reference are mainly the activities themselves, which are generally leisure ones (Akhil, 1992, p. 201).

Taking into account these various understandings of time, how we view corruption of time can be strongly influenced by what we consider time to be and what its characteristics are. If time is multidimensional, as physics argues, we might assume that there are possible several corruptions of time in each dimension. Furthermore, we can talk about corruption of time as a phenomenon related to an earth-born life or as a phenomenon that could be met in every reincarnation of life. Finally, this understanding of time has a significance only in the cultures that perceive the lifetime as such, unlike the Nuers who do not measure nor understand time in the way mainstream cultures do.

CATEGORY	TIME	CORRUPTION OF TIME
Science/Physicist	Multidimensional or one-dimensional	Plural or singular
Religion	Linear or cyclical	Distinctive or repetitive
Culture	Measured or not measured	Possible or impossible

Table 1. Categories of corruption of time

(2) Corruption of time – people’s perceptions research

KL (2020) referred to corruption of time as a “specific flow of time in the Balkans, that is inconsistent with the rest of the world”. Regarding this situation of understanding the corruption of time, we can add the circumstances regarding religion and culture.

Nevertheless, since the Balkan region is multi-ethnic and multireligious, we can say that there is a mainstream understanding of time. That means time is mostly linear and measurable. In these circumstances, a simple understanding of time is a good premise for developing further awareness regarding the umbrella concept of corruption of time.

For example, there is an illustrative story of Muslim and Catholic women living in the different states of Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Even though they were best friends for a long time, when the civil war broke in Yugoslavia, they denied their friendship ties that they cultivated during the earlier peaceful times. This insightful example of the changing of discourse within one post-war region is also a great example of the understanding of the

corruption of time. With the political changes, came also the corruption of time. Therefore, time has been corrupted, pointing in a wider sense to a “departure from the original or from what is pure or correct” (Merriam Webster Online), as previously mentioned. Time became a subjective approximation of what has been the past, based on the point of view of the present. KL’s (2020) understanding of Balkan’s time flow as inconsistent is due to a constant manipulation of the concept of time. Nevertheless, this is not an isolated misinterpretation of time throughout humankind’s history. Many rulers, including Stalin and Hitler, have reconstructed and manipulated the notion of time to obliterate the existence of certain individuals. This was made possible by destroying any material belongings and pieces of evidence from the life of such people (Stanger, 2018).

AB (2020) has noted that we are living an “ahistorical time, because we are not accepting the problems of the time we are living.” Now this idea opens the dilemma of whether corruption of time is similar to *corruption of history*.

The proper understanding of corruption of time can be linked to the different views on possible differences, experiences, and beliefs that include the notion of time.

Therefore, corruption of time is deviant behavior that manifests itself within the abuse of a function or a departure from the original form of time.

(3) Corruption of time – Internet agenda research

The first 5 results after searching for corruption of time:

1. Wikipedia entry on corruption – <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corruption>
2. Link to a spell from World of Warcraft – <https://www.wowhead.com/spell=60451/corruption-of-time>
3. Link to the digital platform time.com and to the articles referring to corruption – <https://time.com/tag/corruption/>
4. Link to Transparency International – the global coalition against corruption – <https://www.transparency.org/country>
5. Link to International Monetary Fund – corruption around the world, document, 1998 – <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/wp9863.pdf>

These results show that there is no reference to what corruption of time actually is, nor to any specific practices associated with it. Rather interesting to discover that while there is a lack of coverage by either academic or media texts, corruption of time still exists in real-life contexts.

These already mentioned practices associated with corruption of time are rather philosophically-oriented: a specific flow of time in the Balkans that is inconsistent with the rest of the world; subjective approximation of what has been the past, based on the point of view of the present moment; reconstructing the time (past) and erasing the whole existence of certain individuals by manipulating the time and/ or destroying any material belongings and pieces of evidence from the life of such people; not accepting the problems of the time we are living.

Nevertheless, the definition of corruption as the *inability of the individual to put the wellbeing of the community above their own interest* could bring to mind some other particular and reality-based corruption of time practices like:

Reporting a larger than the necessary amount of time to complete a work-related activity
Using the time dedicated to working for other purposes (more or less productive) – “another day, another dollar” principle

Disrupting other people's activity while telling them stories

Disrupting other people's activity by giving them other tasks (there is always something more important and more pressing coming up)

Depending on the walks of life, these above-mentioned actions that refer to corruption of time might translate into large-scale society issues – some being more important in the short term, others in the medium/ long term. For example, if a doctor works by this principle of “another day, another dollar”, the patient dies. If a teacher works by the same principle, the impact on students is medium/ long term. For example, students might have low results at their final exams, low performance in PISA tests (see the most recent results of such tests - <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/pisa-2018-results.htm>). Of course, not only corruption of time contributes to such outcomes. Still, some attention should be invested in such situations.

These results show that corruption practices are interconnected. Specifically, corruption in one department might further give results in another department (corruption of time for a doctor might have serious repercussions on the health of the patient). These ideas are supported by the academic literature showing that corruption is a “globally circulating concept that traverses geographic boundaries, sociocultural contexts, and institutional structure” (Muir & Gupta, 2018, p. S5).

1 Scalar quantity in the broadest meaning is the capability of being represented by a point on a scale. It is a real number, rather than a vector whereas e.g. a quantity (such as mass or time) has a magnitude describable by a real number and no direction. (Merriam Webster Online)

2 The Nuer people are being under-counted because of the semi-nomadic lifestyle. A Nuer man's dearest possession is his cattle. Their life depends on cattle and a Nuer would endanger their life to defend them or to even raid their neighbors' cattle. They build only temporary houses or shelters and they live within pattern changes according to the seasons of the year. These people have no formal political authority, but they rather depend on the moral and spiritual authority (Boyd Jenkins, 2001).