

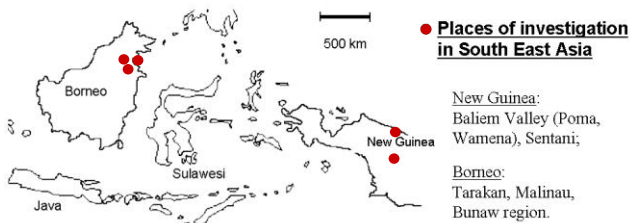
Culturally Specific Time Management

Arnold Groh, Technical University of Berlin, Germany

In this cross-cultural study, every-day time structures of persons from different cultures were investigated and compared. The findings show differences between persons from indigenous and from globalised societies with regard to their time management and the availability of time.

The disposability of time is a central aspect of the cultural changes, which presently a majority of humankind is going through. Within the process of globalisation, it is the non-industrial societies that are subject to a loss of traditional ways of life. Being confronted with modernisation, their social systems become destabilised. The individuals concerned are forced to accept new behavioural patterns, which are characterised by temporal regulations of their activities.

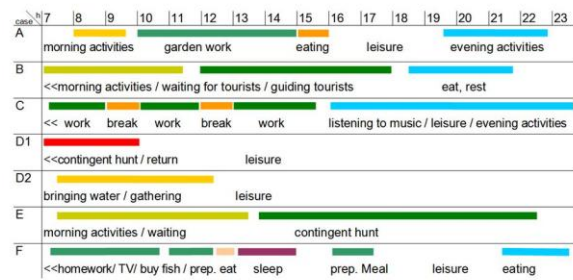
Exploratory studies I



Exploratory studies II



Results South East Asia



South East Asia

A. Inhabitant of the village Poma of the Dani tribe, about 25-30 years old:
He has one wife (polygamy is possible in this culture) and eight children. After having risen at 8 a.m., the usual morning procedures follow. At 10 o'clock, he, like others, goes to garden (the Dani are a horticultural society), where he works for five hours. At 3 p.m., he returns to the village, then he eats for one hour with family and friends. After that, leisure and the usual evening procedures. On Sundays, they go to church. Service starts between 9 and 10 a.m. and takes six hours. Sporadically - about once per week - they go to the nearest town, Wamena: By foot to the locality Kurima, and the rest of the way by minibus.
Remarks: Although their contact to civilisation is only low to medium, the Dani are no hunter-gatherers any more. Rather, their horticulture is already quite elaborate. The times indicated are only approximate, as hardly any watches exist. The interview took place in the village Punaletema with the help of an English speaking translator.

B. Tour guide in Wamena:
Rising at 6 a.m., 30 min. morning procedures. Then waiting for tourists. If successful, 5-6 hrs. of guiding tourists. Then he goes home, eats, takes a rest. If waiting for tourists is unsuccessful, he might start gardening at 3-4 p.m. Alternatively, he goes directly to the garden on some days at 6-7 a.m. On Sundays, he goes to church from 8 to 9:30 a.m. After that, he takes a rest. At about half of the Sundays, he goes to visit friends.
Remarks: This was a collective interview of three tour guides in Wamena, who described a typical course of the day. The activities are not bound to a fixed schedule, rather, they are being decided upon according to necessity. Therefore, there is no regularity as we know it in the global culture. How long someone works in the garden depends on various factors, like: Is the harvesting of the crops very urgent; are there any other appointments etc. These tour guides are familiar with their indigenous culture of origin; yet they try to establish themselves in the largely globalised town context. Their knowledge of their indigenous culture of origin is their fund, enabling access, when they visit that culture with tourists. However, towards their culture of origin, they define themselves as belonging to the industrial culture, claiming a high social status and playing it off against the traditional indigenous people in a dominant and destructive way.

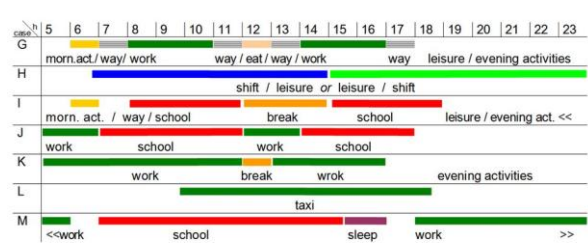
C. Clerk in Sentani, 22 years old, single:
Rising at 6:30 a.m., then morning procedure (breakfast consists of two glass of water only). Leaving home at 7:05 a.m., starting work 10 min. later. Two breaks: 9-10 a.m. breakfast, 12 - 1 p.m. noon break, Work closes 3-4 p.m. At home, he listens for about 20 min. to music, then leisure with undetermined activities. He goes to bed around midnight.
Remarks: This interviewee works at the airport. He is one of the transmigrants, who were brought to New Guinea / West Papua by the Indonesian government. He works six days a week, with one day, sometimes two days off, but the day off is not always the same day of the week.

D. Punan living in a cave, Bunaw region, Borneo -
D1: Man: Rising at 5:30 a.m. If necessary, he goes hunting with other men. If successful - which might be the case at 9 or 10 a.m. - they go back to the camp. He tells the wife, that game had been brought down (but not where - the wife finds the way on her own). Then they feed off the quarry for a certain time depending on the size of the prey. Only, when there is need, they go hunting again. If they want to, they can even go hunting at night, at total darkness.
D2: Woman: Rising 7 - 9 a.m. with the other women. Then, they and the children go together to bring water. On the way back, they take 2-3 hrs., as they collect fruit, vegetable and sweet potatoes. After that leisure, until there is need for any other activity.
Remarks: They do handicraft, when it is necessary. This, too, can take place at night, having light from the flame of burning a particular torch-like wood.

E. Punan in town:
Rising 7 a.m., morning procedure until 7:30 a.m. Planless waiting, until, maybe around noon, someone suggests to go hunting. If they do so, hunting might take up to a week. They dry the meat and sell it together with the grease. In town, the awals will then be turned into clothes, alcohol etc.
Remarks: Cases D-E were reported by a tour guide in Tarakan, who is familiar with the situation of the Punan. The times mentioned are approximate.

F. Housewife, Tarakan, married, one child:
Rising 6 a.m., washing dishes, preparing the son for school, doing laundry until 8 a.m. Then watching TV, waiting for the fish seller, buying fish until 10:30 a.m. Leisure until 11 a.m. (son returns from school, goes to play, returns at about 12:30 a.m.). Preparing meal for about 90 min. They don't have meal together, but each one takes, what he or she wants (due to irregular job times, the husband sometimes participates in domestic life, and sometimes he doesn't). 1-3 p.m. afternoon nap. Preparing dinner from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Then leisure, also with meeting friends. Dinner starts between 9 and 10 p.m. Going to bed 11-11:30 p.m.
Remarks: In the morning, neighbours and friends often come to visit. On Saturdays, the whole family regularly goes to a restaurant.

Results West Africa



West Africa

G. Peasant, 29 years old, Boukombé:
Rises 6 a.m. Mo-Fr. Breakfast, then he leaves for his field at 7 a.m., reaching there after 1 hr. bicycle ride. Works on the field 8 - 11 a.m., then he rides back home, where he has lunch 12 noon - 1 p.m. Then he goes to his field by bicycle again, where he works 2-5 p.m. Then he rides back home. On Saturdays and Sundays, he doesn't go to work on the field.

H. Hotel employee (upper hotel in Natitingou), 23 years old:
There is a two-shift system in this hotel, with one shift from 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the other from 3 p.m. to around midnight. He has no days off. He lives in quite a distance from the hotel, and he does not have family. At short shift changes, he stays in the hotel.
Remarks: Apparently, the interviewee's shifts change alternately, with 24 hrs. off in between.

I. Pupil, male, 17 years old, Natitingou:
Rises between 6 and 7 a.m., puts on clothes, eats, goes to school by bicycle at 8 a.m. Noon break 1 - 3 p.m., then classes continue until 7 p.m. During the break, the pupils can eat, rest and make preparations for school. He goes to bed 9-10 p.m. There is no school on Sundays and on Wednesday mornings.
Remarks: This pupil originates from the little town of Boukombé, which is about 40 km away. During schooltime, he lives in Natitingou, but he also goes to visit his place of origin in between.

J. Pupil (female), 13 years old, Nadoba (border market):
Basically, she helps her parents in their restaurant. Between 5 and 7 a.m., she rises and prepares meals. She attends school 7 a.m. - 12 noon and 2-5 p.m. In between, she is at home, helping. The restaurant is open every day; on Wednesdays, it is moved to the market.
Remarks: With regard to the times mentioned, it has to be considered that there is 1 hr. time difference between Togo and Benin. As usual in Africa, the border is a colonial construct, cutting the territory of a cultural group that has two names now, Somba on the Benin side and Tamberma on the Togo side. However, they rise together on both sides of the border, they go to school at the same time etc. (7 o'clock Togo time is equivalent to 8 o'clock Benin time). The border market takes place regularly, and it is important with regard to the connection of both sides. It has to be mentioned that in Togo, there are school fees for boys and girls, which certainly is an issue for the interviewee to help in her parents' restaurant. There is no school on Saturdays, Sundays and on Wednesday afternoons.

K. Peasants, Tamberma area:
Rise at 5 a.m. and go directly to work on the field. Noon break 12 - 1 p.m. Then they continue work on the field until 5 p.m. They go to bed at 8 p.m.
Remarks: This is based on a collective interview, times are approximate.

L. Taxi driver from Kandé, 19 years old:
He drives his friend's taxi until 6 or 7 p.m.
Remarks: Despite extensive communication, it was not possible to obtain data that are any more precise. Apparently, there are no fixed dates.

M. Security Man, Yoruba, 38 years old:
Works 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. as night guard, except for the night from Saturday to Sunday. After work, he goes home in the mornings, eats, has a wash, and then he goes to school at 7 a.m. (Salvation Army Primary School), where he has lessons until 3:30 p.m. Then he sleeps until 5 p.m., eats etc., and goes to work again.
Remarks: This was a seven-week programme, which had just ended. Four days later, the interviewee was supposed to change to day shifts.

Outlook

- Future studies should investigate a sufficient number of cases from different positions within the cultural spectrum (reaching from indigenous to industrial culture).
- To allocate the respective position, parameters are to be defined, so that correlations between temporal behaviour patterns, cultural loss, well-being and other variables could be determined.
- Particular attention should be paid to contextual factors (including twilight / daylight).
- To reduce interfering factors, invasiveness should always be minimised; researchers should orientate their use of cultural elements as much as possible towards the indigenous tradition, especially with regard to the visitor's self-presentation.