

## Migrants and Their Experiences of Time: Edward T. Hall Revisited

*Elisabeth Schilling & Alexander Kozin*

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migration;  
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**Abstract:** In this paper we reassess the scientific heritage of Edward T. HALL and his contribution to the area of intercultural communication. The key objectives of our study are to demonstrate the applicability of HALL's theory of culture to empirical research and to establish its compatibility with other methods. Specifically, we propose that Alfred SCHÜTZ's phenomenology of sociality be taken as an extension to HALL. The connection between HALL and SCHÜTZ is made possible by the mutual emphases on the temporal dimension of culture and the temporal aspects of migration. With these foci we analyze six narratives by two groups of migrants: German and Russian. By combining HALL's theory of the cultural time with SCHÜTZ's phenomenological perspective on time and the Other and then applying them to empirical data, we show the terms in which different cultures experience time.

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## 1. Introduction

Edward T. HALL (born 1914) exerted an unprecedented influence on cultural anthropology. His contribution to the study of time as a cultural phenomenon was particularly significant. At the same time, from the perspective of contemporary anthropology, his ideas and methods come across as questionable if not outright outdated. One of the first American academics who theorized intercultural communication, HALL was also a devoted practitioner who, as he put it, "for many years was concerned with the selecting and training of Americans to work in foreign countries" (1959, p.xiv). For some, his first-hand knowledge of the problems with intercultural contacts was an obvious advantage. The examples that support HALL's theory are numerous, varied and well placed. For others, the same emphasis on the actual encounters with the cultural Other led HALL to

make hasty generalizations and create rigid communication models: a problem which has been discussed in the current literature (e.g., MAYRING, 2007). In order to fully appreciate HALL's work, however, one must consider the historical period which influenced his perspective. HALL specialized in cognitive anthropology, which was the state-of-the-art approach some 50 years ago in the USA. The importance of this area for HALL's concept manifests most obviously in the notion of "schema," which is a knowledge structure that, similarly to "frames" and "networks," helps us make sense of the life-world. [1]

In this essay the authors would like to reassess HALL's contribution to the area of intercultural communication by applying some of his key concepts to the analysis of ethnographic data. The driving force behind this study is to determine the range of applicability of HALL's theories to the contemporary research on culture as well as their compatibility with other methods. The reference to other methods does not mean that we embark on this project with a preset conviction that HALL's method should be considered inadequate and thus in need to be revised with the help of some up-to-date analytical devices. As a matter of fact, we are convinced that HALL's intercultural theory has no difficulty of withstanding the test of time. Moreover, we believe that it could be strengthened by—as is the case here—the contemporary phenomenological perspective on the encounter with the cultural Other. [2]

Following this conviction, we suggest that one could understand the encounter with the Other through the temporal dimension of human experience. HALL himself understood time as a cultural phenomenon. In this study we follow suit by examining the experience of time on the basis of oral accounts of migrants living and working in Russia and Germany. The accounts were collected during six months of fieldwork in Russia and Germany from June to November 2003 (SCHILLING, 2005). One of the authors of this article, Elisabeth SCHILLING conducted 42 narrative interviews; 21 of them involved migrants (experimental group) and 21 involved non-migrants (control group). All the interviewees were asked to reflect on their time use in one in-depth open-ended interview and to respond to a series of questions revolving around the theme of time. Since all interviewees were professionals, the interview questions concerned various professional and work related contexts and topics. Special emphasis was laid on communication about time, planning, time scarcity, time saving and time waste; in other words, those themes that could be of an immediate pertinence to the interviewees and thus easily subjected to reflection. [3]

There is a significant body of empirical research that employs HALL's theories (e.g. FARRER, 1991; KOWNER & WISEMAN, 2003; ZHU, NEL & BHAT, 2006). All this research finds HALL's theorizing somewhat simplistic and tends to compensate for the lack of complexity by integrating HALL's concepts into other theories (e.g. French structuralism, communication theories, and cultural studies). In contrast, we do not seek to overcome the apparent undercomplexity as we consider it to be fruitful for the empirical research on time. We believe that, in general, HALL's theory allows for a greater openness and flexibility. However, in order for the sociologist to assess specific matters, such as the migrant's

experience of time, some methodological extras are required. For these extras we propose the social phenomenology of SCHÜTZ and the concept of social time by SOROKIN and MERTON (1937). [4]

We begin with a short description of HALL's conceptualization of time in terms of the encounter with the cultural Other. Next, after a brief summary of the methodological inconsistencies in HALL's approach, we suggest an extension of his theory, which is carried out on the strength of Alfred SCHÜTZ's conceptualization of the experience of the stranger. We proceed by putting the latter to work in a two-tier analysis. Specifically, in the first part of this article we analyze intersubjective and transferable structures of time use (HALL, 1959). In the second part we approach temporality as a lead to the experience of the Other (SCHÜTZ, 1967). By combining the two perspectives, we address both the overall cultural schema and their meaningful variations. We expect that the comparison of two different sets of cultural experiences would create the effect of "convergent data" (GEERTZ, 1983, p.156). The ethnographic implications of this effect bode well for this study. Three sections of empirical analyses illustrate our theorizing. [5]

## 2. The Dance of Time

HALL presents his philosophy and main methodological tenets in his first significant work, *The Silent Language* (1959). The book opens with an abundance of descriptions about common misunderstandings that American foreign aid workers exhibit when working abroad (most of HALL's examples are based on his experience of living and working in the Middle East and Japan). HALL attributes these misunderstandings not only to the lack of proper training but most importantly to the lack of proper theories of intercultural communication that could motivate different training techniques. His solution of this problem is a theory of culture that would be a composite of many elements, which is akin to a musical choir. According to HALL, these elements include interaction; association; subsistence; bisexuality; territoriality; temporality; learning; play; defense (1959, p.38f.). All these elements participate in the creation of communication patterns, which Edward T. HALL and Mildred HALL singled out as the main object of intercultural analysis:

"We search for specific examples of basic patterns: where individuals of a given culture can be placed on various scales; how information flows (freely or through restricted channels); whether power is centralized or diffused; how decisions are made and by whom; how people conduct interpersonal relationships; how much close personal contact and confidence exist between people, etc." (HALL & HALL, 1992, p.xx) [6]

In order to access these basic patterns, HALL suggests that we engage biology, which is the common denominator for all cultures. The significance of biology in the study of communication patterns may appear esoteric if not misleading, but only so if we choose to bypass the ethnographic interpretation of biology—as a coincidence of life and natural cycles. According to HALL, the most foundational

social order is based on these biological principles. By identifying these cycles with "a complex series of activities interrelated in many ways, activities with origins deeply buried in the past when there were no cultures and no men," we can understand culture (HALL, 1959, p.58). Being an essential component of life cycles and rhythms, time is a natural point of attention for any intercultural study. [7]

In his earlier work HALL (1959) is concerned primarily with the basic temporal modes (formal, informal, technical) and the role of chance in the cultural perception of time. His concepts of monochronic (M-time) and polychronic time (P-time) can also be found in that work. Here, HALL presents cultural time as a continuum that spreads between those communities whose members prefer to do one thing at a time as opposed to those cultures where people do many things at once or anything at all, to that matter (1959, p.153). In *The Dance of Life* (1983), HALL refines his earlier views. For example, the social measure of the M-time is an individual, a single decision-maker. For the P-time people, a social measure of time is contact, whilst the decision-maker is a community: It is only after long deliberations with everyone involved that the head of the family in the Arab world decides on the course of events in his business. In the American context, the owner is the most distinct measure of social involvement. In making these distinctions, HALL does not hide his own preference of the collective over the individual: "Polychronic cultures are by their nature oriented to people (...) human relationships, and the family, which is the source of their existence" (1983, p.53). [8]

The methodological significance of the distinction between P-time and M-time lies in the attribution of value. On account of their relational structure M-cultures appear to be more humane than P-cultures. Although it is hierarchically organized, a collective culture features a healthier moral order, asserts HALL. It is beyond the scope of this essay to assess HALL's assertion. What is important, however, is that HALL presents the distinction between M-time and P-time as fluctuating. Moreover, he shows that the changes in one's cultural perception of time follow significant alterations in the value system of a society. In order to make his point, HALL gives the example of Japanese businessmen who in the course of twenty or thirty years after the end of Second World War managed not only to adjust to the style of business communication imported by American businessmen but made this way of conducting business commonplace in Japan. [9]

According to HALL, there are two orientations to time that allow us to distinguish between two distinct cultural types: high-context and low-context. The former cultures are typically enmeshed in personal relationships which prevent them from getting to the point quickly. In contrast, the low-context cultures are linear; they base their communication on horizontal patterns (e.g., while a US defense attorney in her argument would always keep to the details of a specific case and case-relevant evidence, it is not uncommon for an Arab defense attorney to argue in the Arab court in the name of Allah and spend significant time lamenting the plight of the defendant). HALL's example of the high-context culture involves the Japanese, who expect that their Western counterparts would open their emotional world and share with their Japanese interlocutors various personal and cultural narratives. In sum, the high-context/low-context distinction lends itself

readily to the comparison of such apparently divergent cultures as Russian and German (HOFSTEDE, 2001). [10]

Although intriguing and resonant to the common sense, the structuralist tendencies of HALL's theories demand further development and elaboration. We find one such elaboration in the concept of social time by SOROKIN and MERTON (1937) and another one in the phenomenology of the social world by Alfred SCHÜTZ (1970). According to the former, the notion of social time emerges from "social events" (SOROKIN & MERTON, 1937, p.618), or the ways of cohabitation for different social groups, which form culture and enable cultural communication. SOROKIN and MERTON (ibid.) also speak about time "references," which express far more than the nominally equivalent astronomical or calendar referents (ca. 1918-19, 11 p.m., March, 1929), for they usually establish a cumulative relation between an event and the temporal frame of reference. The temporal frame can also be defined as a temporal culture of a national or social group who shows a distinct communicative identity (HOGG & REID, 2006). [11]

Therefore, for the first order of our analysis, we propose to focus on the relationship between the textual references to time and the temporal organization of a particular culture (SCHILLING, 2005). Alfred SCHÜTZ's phenomenology of the social world offers us a basis for the second order of analysis as well as the critical assessment of HALL's method. Our research questions are as follows: How do the migrants from a M-time/ low-context culture express time and how do they adjust these expressions (concepts) to a P-time/ high-context host culture? And vice versa: Which concepts do the migrants from a P-time/ high-context culture use when talking about time and how do they adjust these concepts to a M-time/ low-context culture? [12]

### **3. Research Method I: Migrants and Their Experiences of Time**

We examine the experience of time on the basis of oral accounts of migrants who live and work in Russia and Germany. The accounts were collected during six months of fieldwork in Russia and Germany from June to November 2003 (SCHILLING, 2005). All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated. We took these data as the basis for our hermeneutic analyses. We concentrated on different dimensions of individual time conception: In order to assess the initial time concepts of the migrants we analyzed their cognitions about time, its nature and processes. For a precise evaluation of the content we focused on the emotional (evaluative) dimension of time perception. Finally, to assess the behavior of migrants in all available variations, we analyzed the narratives about both planned and accomplished activities. The processes of communication and negotiation about the own and the alien time use constituted an additional dimension, which could not be covered by HALL's theory but required a complementary instrument. [13]

### 3.1 The respondents

For this analysis we have chosen comparable informants from the experimental group: three Russian migrants residing in Germany and three German migrants living in Russia. The three sets of migrants show certain socio-demographical similarities such as age, income, family, and social status: Vladimir D. (29), software engineer and Rolf B. (36), banker; Elena M. (39), manager and Regina I. (40), journalist; Eduard G. (44) and Gert B. (47), both small-business owners. [14]

#### 3.1.1 Young professionals

Vladimir (29) is a software engineer. He has lived in Germany for five years. All this time he has worked in the same small company, which designs software and informational technology solutions and located in a suburb of a large German industrial city. He is married and has one infant daughter. Recently he and his wife bought a house. He believes that he has achieved full integration into the German society, largely on account of his financial standing. Vladimir is visibly proud of his achievements and holds that hard work, planning, and reason provide the necessary conditions for a successful way of life. It is from this position that he characterizes his German colleagues:

"... they do the kind of things that I don't quite understand. All that sitting in bars and restaurants ... I simply don't understand it! It's a waste of time and money. And it doesn't make sense. My personal opinion is that at home you can eat much better and much cheaper." [15]

From this excerpt one can see HALL's proposition about life cycles and rhythms in action. Food rituals are not only definitional for any culture; they are also highly observable cultural events. Their timing, duration, and relation to other rituals vary tremendously even within one culture. It is particularly curious in that regard to hear that Vladimir identifies the Germans as the people who prefer to eat out (It is not clear if for Vladimir "they" refers to the Germans in general or his German co-workers). If he is unclear as to the basic distinction between the public and the private behaviors as far as eating is concerned, he might have assigned a home value to the alien behavior, which he understands from the perspective of his former life in Russia. In the next segment Vladimir specifies his claim about the not so commonsensical behavior of the Germans:

"For some strange reason everybody here does things at the same time. Why? It's funny, for example, to see what's going on during the lunch break. At 11:55 you walk inside any restaurant, any pizzeria, and it is empty. Ten minutes later there is a huge crowd standing in line. And if you ordered your pizza at 11:55, you would get it in 15 minutes. But if you did it ten minutes later, you would have to wait for an hour." [16]

Vladimir's obvious prejudices aside, the above segment is quite illustrative about the role of time in making value-laden cultural attributions. If in the previous example Vladimir defined the Germans as lacking common sense, this segment presents the same concern in the comical register. Vladimir finds it funny that the

Germans would do the same things at the same time. By this means he takes a notice of the strange rhythms. There are two important questions in this case: why does he notice these rhythms and how does he evaluate them? Collective rhythms are self-evident and implicit: Vladimir is not able to notice and verbalize his own rhythms, and so he is unable to identify any culturally determined routines. Those rhythms which stand outside of his own social world therefore appear more self-evident and become visible by comparison. Vladimir notices and assesses them as irrational, ridiculous or, at best, funny. Thus he evokes the cultural stereotype of orderliness, which is commonly attributed to the German people. However, instead of doing it in the neutral or positive register, Vladimir opts for a negative characterization. For him, the choice of the observed German people to follow a prescribed routine even at the expense of their comfort serves an indication of excessive dependency on the shared cultural norms:

"Why should everybody eat fish on Friday? Or why do they always go out on Friday evening?" [17]

According to Vladimir, the German collective mind-set makes the German people live by the same cycles; this also means that the German people do not make their own schedules and therefore are not in control of their time. This interpretation allows us to make two suggestions: first Vladimir seems to believe that at work people should be able to make personal choices about when, where, and how to spend their free time (lunch break). Second, by criticizing the collective rhythms of the Other, albeit implicitly, Vladimir exposes his own values as pre-formed, since it is on the basis of these values that he is able to make his judgment. However, his alternative world view and the perception of the reality cannot be called purely Russian. It is rather a mixture that comes from the socialization in the Russian time culture, acculturation in the German time culture and individual reflections of the cultural differences, which are made in the process of Vladimir's adjustment to the strange culture. The emphasis on subjective rationality might be the very reason why the respondent does not see the fallacy of his claim about the degree of his understanding of the German culture. The above narrative shows that he has a rather narrow perspective on how a society is organized and what different types of organization might actually mean. At the same time, Vladimir is quite capable of drawing conclusions about German time patterns from the country's tendency to stability and points out that, in contrast, his experience in Russia has been nothing but uncertain: first perestroika, then the collapse of the Soviet Union, inflation, reforms, and continuous social changes. That is why he thinks that he knows about the unreliable character of collective time habits and especially about making plans. From these experiences he advances a view that time (not only historical but also immediate) is not linear:

"Everything can change, rise, and fall, and sometimes a little bit off brings you back to where you were two hours before. In general there is a succession and there is a progress, but it is not so linear. You cannot divide time into equal slices." [18]

One can see from this quote how Vladimir's reasoning about the value of time turns out to be dependent on a rather unstable notion of time. However, Vladimir does not seem to notice this discrepancy. He is quick to forget that in his own culture plans are short lived. Unreliable public transportation and infrastructure in Russia prevent even the most committed from planning far ahead. Spontaneity and the ability to adjust quickly is not only a desirable quality for a Russian businessman but also for an ordinary person irrespective of their gender, age, or social standing. In fact, the German value of stability enables him to make long-term plans (starting a family, buying a house, making a career). [19]

We can suppose that it is the polychronic time that allows Vladimir to mix different time uses and different rhythms. He sees his own ability to master time as a situational requirement. He channels various actions to that effect, paying little attention to their far-reaching implications. We have already mentioned two reasons which might prevent individuals from reflecting about their own cultural practices: early socialization and historical unpredictability. Despite a great flexibility in arranging time, the Russian migrant shows a restricted understanding of "how it should be." This might explain why he does not give much thought about alternative ways to use time and would be less likely to invent new individual time practices. [20]

Rolf (36) is a banker. He has lived in Moscow for over three years. He works in an international bank. He is engaged, but his future plans are still vague. He presumes that as a banker he should take care of his financial affairs; however, this topic does not stand in the foreground of his interest. The more desirable thing for Rolf is to have enough leisure time in order to pursue his cultural interests, e.g. theatre. The experience of a different culture in terms of time is especially important for him as an occasion to reflect on his own time concepts. When speaking about the differences between the two time cultures, he considers it crucial to first focus on planning. Specifically, he experiences his Russian colleagues as hasty and unrealistic in making plans:

"Many people I know have the same problem with keeping to their plans. I mean estimating the possibilities of what can be done within a certain period of time. So somebody says, 'I am sure to be done with this by the end of the week', and then it doesn't happen." [21]

This experience forces him to review his own way of planning. Habitually, he writes down all the plans, even provisional ones, in his calendar. His two main plan categories are personal and professional. He also defines his plans as short-, middle-, and long-termed and as obligatory and desirable. Through these categorizations he tries to position himself as a planning expert, who (in contrast to his colleagues) is aware that time must be managed in all areas of life. At the same time, Rolf's attitude about time has a certain similarity to that of Vladimir. Rolf also reflects on and speaks about the importance of common sense in time use:

"Bad time is the time without any value for the body and mind. It is idle time [...]. Watching TV is bad time. That's why I don't have a TV set. You can learn about the

news on the radio while washing dishes, ironing, that sort of thing. There is no reason to watch the news." [22]

Offering reasons for time-managing ordinary activities seems to be common for all the respondents. At the same time, there are visible differences: while Vladimir questions ritualized behaviors of the host culture, Rolf prefers to question and, wherever appropriate, to change his individual time routines. The new time routine for Rolf means switching to hearing news on the radio, and since he doesn't assign any entertainment value to watching TV, he assumes that he can fill his free time in the evening with something useful. Since Rolf is a relatively new migrant, he remembers the transition point on the way to the no-TV life very well. It started with him realizing that he watches TV too much:

"For me, not having a TV set was a conscious decision because I had one. Once I noticed that I watched it too much ... I stopped." [23]

It is not clear if Rolf has always been against watching TV or not. He does not provide any explanation to that effect. One cannot tell if he quit watching TV in Russia because of some language problems, for example. It is unclear why he started to think that he was abusing his free time by watching TV and how he came to notice that it was a waste. Rolf only remembers his realization and the subsequent decision to get rid of the tube. His capacity to switch routines must be noted: controlling one's time habits, especially those with a pleasure component, is a value in itself. Rolf also seems to be understanding that; he sees his adjustment as a personal achievement. [24]

### *3.1.2 Company managers*

Elena (39) has lived in Germany for five years. She works in a Chamber of Commerce, where she directs a small team of co-workers. She is married to a German and has a son from the previous relationship. Elena is an international commuter. The most important thing for her is observing and translating differences from one "time language" to the other. She likes to compare the two time cultures and is of the opinion that her time attitude is solely Russian and cannot be changed by the present experiences in Germany. Similarly to Rolf, Elena also says that planning is the central differentiating category between the Russian and German times. For her, planning does not only embody the purpose of time but also reflects on the national identity and social events:

"This old woman says: 'In four years there is going to be the European Cup. I have to buy tickets.' I was amazed. We don't plan so far, it's too difficult. And this is the most basic, foundational difference between the Russian and the German mentality, between the Russian and the German view of reality. I think that the Germans use time to plan and to look into the future, even when it comes to the short-termed planning. For them time is development, it is future. And for us time is 'will be'. And 'will be what' and 'will be how.' " [25]

The above quote gives us a clear picture of what Elena means by planning. For an illustration she uses the economic category "investment." Buying a ticket to a soccer match, which is going to take place in four years, requires much faith on the part of the German person, much more so than the Russian person is willing to permit. This is particularly true if the plan involves a conscious attempt to obtain a long-term financial gain. Obviously, one could still purchase a ticket on the day of the soccer match, but it will cost ten times as much and there is not going to be any choice of sitting. However, Elena's reaction can be considered as typical for a number of Russians who, in the face of numerous financial and political disasters, as well as general life uncertainties (What if I get sick?), refuse to make long-term financial commitments. Somehow, this perspective coincides with Elena's self-definition as an independent person, who does not need to give up her habits in order to adjust to the host society. Her flexibility is the other side of conformity:

"In Russia the whole life is like this: someone calls me and says 'I'll be over right now' and here they are. And in Germany even your relatives write down an appointment for you in the calendar. They plan what and when—the future. You get used to it and I've got already used to it. But still it's a little bit anonymous for the private sphere." [26]

As one can see from this excerpt, despite Elena's critique of the German way of planning, her own way of "not-planning" is a ritualized behavior. In order to be open for an unexpected visit and enjoy it, one needs to accept it as a cultural given. Thinking about herself as spontaneous in making plans allows Elena to assign a greater value to not-planning. In fact, it remains but a cultural preference. She explains this preference by speaking about being uncertain, which is indicative of her being only partially used to the host culture. There is a similarity here with Vladimir's account. Vladimir too notes and criticizes the German time rituals; yet, he too is incapable and unwilling to integrate them fully into his everyday behavior. In both cases one sees much planning done in advance. For example, when talking about planning her trips to Russia, despite her critique of the German colleagues, Elena's way of planning is not much different:

"My trips to Russia take much time. I plan in advance in order to coordinate them. If I plan to fly to Russia in August, I start planning in June. Every day my appointments and other things are written down in the calendar hour after hour." [27]

Elena further explains that her German colleagues start to plan their business trips even earlier, three or four months in advance. Importantly, she constructs her plans using a very high degree of detail ("hour after hour"), which she herself admits to be a German influence on her behavior. [28]

Regina (40) has lived in Russia for seven years. She is a TV reporter. Regina is highly sensitive about time issues. She says that she has no planning talent and often creates conflicts because of this disability. She reflects much about the nature of time, about the objectivity and measurability of time and subjectivity of

the working process. Regina is visibly divided between the German normative time use and her personal inclination to manage time differently:

"There are always two explanations: a good time use is always needed if one wants to manage time effectively. A friend of mine who has a child says: 'Now I use my time much better. I used to be very easy going, lived in the moment. Now I have less time but I achieve much more, because I plan and use my time much better.' That is a good time use. And I agree: 'Yes, this is a good use of time.' But to myself I am thinking: 'No, a good use of time is when you take it easy.' " [29]

Regina's experience in Russia has taught her that an alternative way of using time can actually bring positive results. Every day she sees how her Russian colleagues manage to do a good job without making minute plans. She talks much with her Russian friends about time issues, and it has become apparent to her that although some of them seem to be living vicariously, they are still successful in their jobs:

"The difference between my German and Russian colleagues is that the Germans make a clear distinction between work and leisure. And my Russian colleagues make even their office space look like home. They even wear slippers at work [...]. They also talk about private things at work, they put their make-up on and go to the hair-dresser, and then come back and drink coffee first. And it is not bad, because they are still working [...]. I find it to be less different because I do the same thing too. I am more like them than like my German colleagues." [30]

When Regina speaks about the differences between the German and Russian time use, she seems to be ambivalent. She asks herself whether her real observations are not just a prejudice. She questions her bias about the tardy, unreliable, or laissez-faire Russians, which she had brought from Germany. At the same time, Regina does not aspire to switch to the Russian time use. On the contrary, since she works in Russia in a German broadcasting company populated by the German colleagues, she has to adhere to the less flexible German time norms. Her observations about her Russian colleagues seem to help her justify her time preferences but not to change her time habits, at least, not at work. And although she states that the Russian time use is to her liking, she cannot help but wonder how it is possible to dedicate less time to work and still be able to deliver the same results. As she reflects upon this paradox, she finds out that the slow and relaxed atmosphere at her workplace in Moscow brings important advantages when it comes to quality, insights, and good feelings:

"In my job for example there are technical possibilities to prepare a program for broadcasting very quickly. There are satellite dishes and cutting machines, and you can dip into so many sources so fast that I barely have time to reflect upon the outcomes. If I write a text, cut out a picture for it and make a program, I still have to wait until everything else is ready. Only then I get an opportunity to check it all. If I do my job with all this technology quickly, then it comes out about ready, and I have no chance to recheck. Pauses give me an opportunity to think about what I have done and to make corrections if necessary." [31]

This description gives us a clear indication that Regina adjusts her time use to the general considerations about her professional duties. Professionalism seems to be the paramount concern in her work, and although she observes her German and Russian colleagues as well as their patterns of time use and reflects about different possibilities of managing time, she is not in a rush to turn these reflections into practice. One can say that, like Rolf, Regina reflects only superficially on the individual time use. She does not try to generalize her insights or to make statements about the Russian time culture as such. Her objective is to create a practical guidance for her own time use. However this guidance has more often a conceptual character, because it remains on the level of untested theories. It appears that other cultural values and prohibitions kick in at this point (e.g., going to the hairdresser during work time would violate the distinction between the public and the private, something that is much more difficult to accomplish than changing an attitude or activity). If she adopts a new behavior, it fits best to a given situation and her individual preferences rather than the value system of the host culture. For example, she reports that she used to plan more before she came to Russia. Hence our hypothesis that her current understanding of time concepts allows for alteration depending on the general preference, immediate circumstances, and experiences in an unfamiliar culture. Similarly to Elena, Regina does not notice the direct effects of the Russian time culture on her behavior. She is very proud of her ability to reflect on what is going on but avoids falling into strange patterns only because they are widely. [32]

### 3.1.3 *Small business owners*

Eduard (44) has lived in Germany for 12 years. He is married. Seven years ago he set up a small travel agency, which has grown significantly since then. By now he has eight employees. Eduard hires only the migrants from Russia, although a significant part of his customers are Germans. Eduard is pragmatic in his approach to time. He tries to use only objective, measurable explanations of time, while speaking about the working time. He is sure that he has learnt much about time and time use in Germany:

"My concept of punctuality was formed under the German influence. We work with the Germans. Fifty percent of our business involves German customers, companies etc. We had to adopt their ways in order to work with them! It was not hard and it was not unpleasant. We just had to adapt." [33]

Sticking to the time use of the host culture is a must, according to Eduard. If you want to please your customers, you must learn their ways. This business attitude distinguishes Eduard's approach to the alien culture from Vladimir's "I just don't understand these Germans" perspective. Although both Russian informants work with the Germans, the distinction between a self-owned business and an engineering company may play a more significant role in adjusting to the host culture than individual preferences. Pleasing a foreign customer requires at minimum an understanding of those criteria by which these customers evaluate the service. It requires a particular kind of reflection—practical reflection. Obtaining this kind of reflection allows one to make an intermediate adjustment

without changing one's overall time use. This might explain the fact that in his private life Eduard prefers a subjective view of time:

"Time is a patchwork of different events, which had happened to me. They are different pieces, but they are also connected to each other [...]. Good time is enjoyable time. If you have done something and enjoyed it, it's fine." [34]

Since he is self-employed, Eduard is able to import his Russian time use into his German context. Both Elena and Regina mentioned the Russian tendency to attend to the results rather than processes at work. The same attitude characterizes Eduard, who perceives his "adjustment" to the host culture as a necessary concession:

"For example, when it comes to the work, which is inherently not interesting, when it is done, as a result, it gives you even more satisfaction in the sense 'oh, I've got rid of it.'" [35]

Being result-oriented allows Eduard to be flexible as to his own work schedule:

"I can come late to the office. I can even come an hour later, and it will not change much. Our work is organized in such a way that it is not very important if I am there or not." [36]

Eduard demands a very high level of flexibility from his employees as well. They have to be able to switch between the German time, while working with the German customers, and the Russian time, while being among themselves or working with the Russian customers. This duality makes Eduard's flexibility somewhat ambiguous: on the one hand he is able to practice the German time, on the other hand his own well-being and comfort are dependent on the Russian time use. This is the reason why he tries, whenever possible, to organize his work in the Russian manner. [37]

This extreme flexibility with managing time and mixing different time concepts as demanded by this or that situation is a result of the polychronic time, in which model Eduard was first socialized. The perception of the "other" time seems to come from certain cognitive aspects, e.g., a particular knowledge about time use in a high-context culture. Eduard draws a sharp line dividing "their" and "our" time. He has little doubt that these differences go beyond individual preferences. He describes the German time in objective terms (e.g., punctuality, effectiveness, tempo, etc.). The Russian time culture is defined in the subjective terms of individual experience, emotions, and perceptions. Eduard does not realize that this duality derives from his migrant status. He is sure that objectivity and subjectivity are the features of the German and Russian time cultures. He knows both cultures well and although he feels more comfortable in the subjective time, he is unable of completely distancing himself from the objective time. His business presents him with an opportunity of practicing both. When Eduard translates from one time language into the other, he does not reflect about the

differences per se. He relies on this or that time use in accordance with a situation. [38]

Gert (47) has lived in Russia for 15 years with several short intermissions. For four years he has lived in St. Petersburg. He owns three businesses in the Russian building industry. Gert is married to a Russian woman and has an eight-year old son. Unlike Eduard, Gert reflects on different time concepts as well as the consequences of their use. He is quite pro-active in his reflections; his ultimate objective is to find an appropriate time use in accordance with the demands of a particular situation. Sometimes he adjusts his time use, sometimes he manages to avoid an adjustment, more often he forces his employees to adjust their time use to his own. He can do so because of his "owner" status. As an example of his reflections he speaks about the working rhythms and working hours:

"We do not start work before nine [...]. For me it is rather late because I basically start at seven in Berlin. But by now I am almost accustomed to this rhythm." [39]

Gert also says that for him changing to the Russian time use means a compromise:

"We don't have any problems with punctuality. My employees come on time. Because if they don't, I'll kick them out! We start work at 9 a.m. And it is late enough. And, as I have found out, there is no reason here to come too late." [40]

It is obvious that the Gert's idea of compromise does not correspond to the perceptions of his employees. Threatened by a possible dismissal, they must adjust their time to the Gert's rules. His own adjustment emerges as a result of rigid clock-oriented rules. This by no means implies an understanding of the foreign time culture and so features only a very low degree of transformation of the own time use. The position of power allows Gert to create his own time-oasis. In this oasis he can establish his own norms and control compliance to these norms. Since Gert, unlike Eduard, is forced to work with the aliens, the main difficulty for him is to socialize his employees and his family in the "right" way, i.e. to convince them to switch to the German time:

"So you must delegate responsibilities, involve your employees constantly. And like at home, everybody should participate at work. The wife should wash the floor, the kids should take the garbage out [...]. Nothing runs without having it all coordinated." [41]

Like Eduard, Gert does not like to switch from one time culture to another. To him, it appears that less resources are required to remake the actual state of affairs than to change his own time use. Our data strongly suggest that economically advanced migrants prefer to change their environment. A further important similarity between Eduard and Gert is the orientation to the productive and thus measurable time concepts. Obviously, this approach presumes objectivity. In the business context—it gives the employers a possibility to legitimate their claims for their employees and to establish their own time regimes. [42]

Using HALL's method helps explain certain differences in the behavior of the migrants who try to adjust to a foreign time culture. The notion of P-time/M-time cultures can explain how and why the Russian migrants learn to display some aspects of the time culture they consider to be German. The Russian migrants find the "right way" through communication about the time orders, through explicit asking, monitoring and trying on, so to speak, different behaviors. Most often, however, they do not find a way to cope with these differences emotionally and make use of their ability "to be on the German time," but only if necessary. The German migrants, on the other hand, seem to be able of understanding certain Russian behaviors faster due to the low-context of the German time culture. They are more often able to comprehend the strange time culture as different rather than wrong and to reflect upon the differences. New time practices emerge from these reflections and help the German migrants to adapt. [43]

The advantages of the above distinctions lie in the fact of separation between the two types of culture and the two modes of time use. Albeit not altogether clearly drawn, these distinctions certainly inform our view of cultural difference. At the same time, they tell little about the relations between these types and their modes, especially so from the multi-modal perspective. Seeking to understand the differences, it is easy to ignore concrete experiences of the migrant and culture-specific variations on this experience. Therefore, we must ask, what it means to be a migrant for a person from the low- or high-context culture, and what it means for an individual experience of time to reach beyond the M-time/P-time distinction. Some answers to these questions have been indicated from the earlier interpretations; however, they require further investigations. These investigations can be carried out with HALL by way of refining his typology; however, the constraints of structural binarism prevent gathering individual experiences of migrants into a coherent picture. In the next section we attempt such a picture on the basis of Alfred SCHÜTZ's phenomenology of the social world. [44]

#### **4. A Phenomenology of Social Time**

Our belief that Alfred SCHÜTZ's phenomenology of the social world can serve as a methodological modification to HALL can be explained by the general role that SCHÜTZ assigned to phenomenology in specifying social sciences: "It is my conviction, however, that future studies of the methods of the social sciences and their fundamental notions will necessarily lead to issues belonging to the domain of phenomenological research" (1970, p.55). The recourse to phenomenology in the context of this study can be justified by the need to modify the procedure of accessing the cultural notion of time both in terms of individual experiences of being a migrant and in terms of encountering the other (inaccessible totality of experiences). This perspective requires several methodological elaborations. One concerns the relationship between experience and time; the other, between narrative and time. We call these two structures "dual structures" because the relationship between them can be defined as that of co-determination: both structures participate directly and equally in the constitution of social time. And while HALL identified the same components as "essential" for the understanding

of cultural time, he has clearly underestimated the stratified nature of time and the significance of the subjective orientation. [45]

Out of the two routes into phenomenology proposed by Edmund HUSSERL in *The Crisis* (1970), Alfred SCHÜTZ chooses psychology. This means that the starting point for his concept of time is "the personal life of consciousness" (1970, p.57). According to SCHÜTZ, individual consciousness or ego is immersed in time. This kind of time might remind us of BERGSON's "durée," which means a continuous flow of time that prevents consciousness from apprehending itself thematically (BERGSON, 1989). In other words, the stream of experience, once interrupted, can retrieve only past occurrences by way of memories. The primordial flow itself remains inaccessible to experience. The only accessible time is the personal time. SCHÜTZ considers this kind of time as indispensable for a successful construction of any cultural identity, or the "we-relation." In order for an image of one's self to be consistent, identity must be continuously re-enacted; hence, the role of time. It must also be re-enacted for and before others; hence, the role of the Other. Therefore, if migration is to be approached as an identity-forming event, one might anticipate that its experiences would somehow affect migrants in terms of their understanding of time, the self, and the Other. [46]

Performed for the immediate Other and vis-à-vis the distant Other, identity is validated in accordance with a particular cultural normative complex. On the basis of this complex, a person dissociates one cultural world from other cultural milieus. According to SCHÜTZ, the role of time in the process of enculturation is relatively straightforward: personal time is adjusted to the collective time. From our observations of the repeated and therefore sedimented acts of cultural actors, we presume that there exist individual and collective histories. These histories are built around biographical time. Biographical time includes the experiences not only of the current generations but also of the ancestors and the future generations. In contrast to the living time, biographical time is stratifiable, measurable, shapeable, and stackable. It is the time for building all kinds of cultural matters, including everyday beliefs in particular configurations of the world. Taken for the building matter of culture, biographical time is not as easy to isolate as HALL presents it in his work. [47]

SCHÜTZ avoids the presumption of accessibility by suggesting that cultural configurations should be taken for respective symbolic universes. These universes at all times exude an irresistible pull on the human participants, preventing them from the extemporaneous trading of perspectives and behavioral modes. How is one supposed to break through to begin understanding time in the terms of the Other? What does one need to know about our own cultural time? In his essay "The Stranger," SCHÜTZ singles out the encounter with the stranger, that is, the cultural Other, to show that the displaced person, the person who has been uprooted and transposed into an alien environment, can be a perfect medium for such an understanding. His argument develops along the lines of the culture shock that creates a shortcut to the radical reflection. The stranger is in a perfect position to reflect on the basic cultural differences, such as opinions, values, expectations, etc. As one of the intrinsic constituents of experience, time

inevitably forms the content of the latter reflection. The sociologist finds it on the expressive side of experience, in cultural myths and narratives. The value of this approach lies in the assumption that a continuous tension would leave a trace in the narrative, which is capable of bringing into a much sharper focus the otherwise taken-for-granted forms and values. [48]

## 5. Research Method II: The Migrant and the Other

The narrative hermeneutic can be conducted in many different ways. In his essays on intersubjectivity, SCHÜTZ suggests that the cultural universe should be approached in the symbolic key. He suggests then that in order to uncover a particular cultural design in personal narratives, one should be attuned to the symbolic expression. Following his distinction between personal and collective time, we might assume that each kind of time would be symbolically configured in discourse. SCHÜTZ himself does not elaborate on the intricacies of a narrative analysis, but another phenomenologist, Paul RICOEUR, does. In his work on time and narrative, RICOEUR argues that narrative analysis should differ from the linguistic analysis because it is given in the mode of the saying and not of the said. RICOEUR's project is therefore to investigate the experience of saying. For the smallest unit of saying, he takes word, or "the place in language where the exchange between structure and event is constantly produced" (1974, p.80). The transition to word as a unit of saying requires a restructuring of traditional levels of analysis (phonological, lexical, syntactic, etc.). [49]

For RICOEUR, word is not to be conflated with the written or spoken word; depending on the level of analysis, word signifies differently. On the level of narrative, word signifies symbolically. Symbol defines discourse in terms of event: "To speak is to present an event, a transitory, vanishing act" (1974, p.86). RICOEUR is unequivocal in stating his belief in symbolic disclosure: Only through the symbolic language, polysemy, and double meaning establish "a progressive order from elements to structures, then from structures to processes" (ibid., p.95). The symbolic connection links an individual experience to the symbolic apprehension of the other. Importantly, the symbolic meaning does not come from a reference to an object or a phenomenon but from an overall symbolic network one may call culture. The key symbol is the Other constructed through the experience of the migrant. What kind of experience is that? The way that the migrants narrate their time stories indicates that an essential experience of time lies in obtaining a multi-perspectival view of time. For a foreigner, time signifies spatially. Finally, it constructs a perspective on the self and the Other. It is at the juncture of the three foci that time is apprehended as cultural time. [50]

From the previous analyses, we have seen that the basic experience of the migrant is the experience of the divide between what is own (home practices and values) and what is alien (foreign practices and values). Although the differences between one and the other were coded in the interview questions, they also came out naturally in the talk itself. Some of these differences are brought in as cultural stereotypes. For example, Eduard speaks about the German punctuality while Regina explicitly mentions the *laissez-faire* attitude of her Russian colleagues.

When evoked in the context of migration, these stereotypes can be reconsidered and/or their value adjusted. For Eduard, punctuality is essential for his business practices in the German context; however, he manages to avoid the label by adjusting to this character trait through his belief that it is an exclusive property of the German character. Regina, too, assesses her stereotypes and even comes to the conclusion that she is "like her Russian colleagues." However, this realization does not lead her to accept their informal way of behaving in the workplace. [51]

The capacity to adopt this or that idea of time use shows time to be transferable. All the migrants understand culture as a compilation of observable behaviors which can be defined in terms of their use and waste. In other words, the experience of the migrant is such that she keeps the boundaries that separate one cultural milieu from another by borrowing some elements over others and then adjusting these elements (behaviors) in accordance with this or that context. As a means of transfer, narrative must involve its own (narrator's) time, the space of narration, and the figure of the Other. The informants talk about the Other in the non-conceptual way, as "they," or more specifically, as a national identity, such as the Germans or the Russians. However, they differ in their preferred perspectives on "they": Some use the first-person perspective while others prefer the third-person form of address. For example, Vladimir uses "they" throughout, while Rolf addresses the Other from the space of himself. [52]

This distinction is indicative of two different cultural perspectives: the first- and the third-person approaches to the Other produce two different profiles. The first-person perspective places the burden of difference on the self, indicating the personal choice as the main reason for adjusting to the unfamiliar culture. Thus, in his definition of bad time, Rolf elevates himself above the host culture: "Bad time is the time without any value for body and mind." Eduard, on the other hand, uses the other person as the main reason for his adjustment: "We had to adapt in order to work with them." The consequence of this difference is as follows: once the Other turns into a collective Other, and the actions of this collective Other are put to evaluation as either good or bad, the personal idea of time undergoes modifications. The same follows from the hyper-individuation of the self, who becomes the Self in the aftermath of the encounter with the Other. In the Russian case, the modifications arrive in the form of borrowings. In the German case, which exhibits a preference for the first-person perspective on the Other, the modifications appear as exoticisms. In other words, the German informants notice the differences, reflect about them and introduce new ways of using time, which are neither German nor Russian. [53]

The same distinction characterizes the idea of space. By making themselves at home in a formal setting the migrants alter the alien context. For example, in his narrative, Vladimir mentions the home space of his Russian family as an alternative to the German public space: "My personal opinion is that at home you can eat much better and much cheaper." In his opinion, this comparison would not make much sense to a German person who likes to "sit in bars and restaurants." In contrast, when Regina says: "... my Russian colleagues make even their office space look like home. They even wear slippers at work," she

emphasizes the other side of the same difference. The formality of her routine does not change despite the fact that the behavior of her Russian colleagues invites her to do so. Thus, there is a juxtaposition of the experience of formalizing one's free time versus the experience of deformalizing one's work space. Both kinds of experiences presuppose the use of space/time in a mixed fashion, some of one's own and some of the Other's. [54]

At the same time, these examples are clear in demonstrating that in the mixed environment the ratio "formal/informal" is not evenly distributed. We retain these distinctions only because there is no better way to describe a stratified experience. For example, the Russian informants construct the German use of space as too formal because it is not sufficiently mixed, while the Germans think of the Russian use of space as too informal, if not outright inappropriate. The German informants may not assign to it either a positive or a negative value, but it would still be labeled as inappropriate (impure). Importantly, both parties identify the spatial parameters of their respective host cultures in terms of time. For the Germans, the Russian culture appears to be too messy; the emphasis on interrupted activities gives the informants that impression. On the other hand, the Russians think of the Germans as excessively consistent (punctual); hence, an impression of the German time as long (boring) time and the German social space as over-ritualized (excessively complicated and rigid), especially when it comes to personal relations. [55]

The final boundary that emerges from the experience of the migrant is formed by the idea of the Other. The Other in question is always a historical Other. She comes in familiar guises, such as race and gender; yet, she remains to be the Other because of the historical accumulation of various communication patterns, as the phenomenologist would have it. The perception of the Other therefore always includes the generational component of the antecedent and the subsequent generations, who also stand in the historical relationship with this Other. It is therefore against the backdrop of the historical time that a migrant defines the self and the Other. As far as the self is concerned, the Russian informants expressed repeatedly that their anticipation of the future is motivated by historical reasons. The most vocal of these informants, Elena, says that "we [the Russians] do not plan so far, it's too difficult." In contrast, "the Germans make an appointment even with their relatives." For Vladimir, "Everything can change, rise, and fall." It appears to the informants that the Germans are somehow sure or hopeful that history will "develop" as they envision it. For the Russians, history is what "will be." The reliance on the structural integrity defines the "we-relations" for the Germans as normative in the socio-politico-economic ways, while for the Russians, these relations remain most stable on the interpersonal level. This difference becomes definitional for the experience of the migrant, who makes sense of the alien culture by evaluating the distance that separates the familiar from the unfamiliar and then attempts to maintain or eliminate this distance by mixing and matching, borrowing and rejecting various home and alien activities. [56]

## 6. Conclusion

From the above interpretations it may be concluded that the differences between the Russian and German time users are determined by the structural experience of cultural time as P-time and/or M-time as well as narrative experience of history, space, and the Other. Specifically, the Russian time use identifies its users with high-context culture and P-time. The German tendency toward normative social relations allows us to identify the Germans with M-time. Although the Russian migrants find it needful to adjust to the time habits of their German host culture, their understanding of history seems to stand in the way of adjusting to these habits fully; hence, the need to have an alternative microcosm. This tendency to adapt while keeping one's own is stronger for the Russians than for the Germans, who keep their own by not adapting. The intimate component of the Russian model creates the impression of understanding the Other better, including the ability to breach the distance between oneself and the Other. In fact, neither side understands the Other, for in order to achieve this understanding, they would have to share and enact the same cultural configurations in the same way. These migrants do not. They perceive and use time radically differently; so much so that one can talk about two different chrono-cultures. The Russian time appears to be interrupted. It is contaminated with all sorts of intermissions and interjections. Also, in their interpretation of time the Russian migrants tend to rely on their understanding of time as interpersonal, which, for the German informants, creates an impression of chaos and unpredictability. The German time is strongly clock-oriented. It is the time that runs on small increments; these increments appear to the Russian migrants to be so precise that they become self-sufficient, as in the same time for all. As a result, for the Russian person the German person appears to be too distant to appear sufficiently—for a specific cultural outlook—personable. [57]

In order to obtain the above findings, we began by engaging Edward T. HALL's theory of time culture. As a social phenomenon of significant complexity, time demands an instrument, which should be both heuristic and flexible. With his theory Hall provided for this uneasy combination but at the expense of analytical precision. Although well suited for a primary interpretation of the data, an in-depth comparative analysis of time could not sustain HALL's binary logic due to its inability to take into account the transcultural hybridization processes (reflection on the self and the other, negotiation of perceptions, and evaluation of actions). All in all, we have found HALL's theory to be appropriate for a "quick and dirty" analysis but in order for it to access other than static dimensions of the cultural experience of time, another kind of analysis would be needed. The methodological synthesis of HALL and SCHÜTZ allows accessing not only the differences and differentiation processes with migrants, but also the reflexivity and the subsequent change processes (e.g. convergence, bricolage or partitioning-off). We advance a view that this reflected, interchangeable picture represents the subjective time concept of a migrant more precisely than a binary construction of HALL could do. [58]

Obviously, given a limited pool of the presented data, our results can be considered only as provisional: much ethnographic work on the use of time by the migrant population in different cultural climates is needed. The same can be said about the methodological union of Edward T. HALL and Alfred SCHÜTZ. Although indicative of much potential, this methodological synthesis must be tested further on the basis of specific applications. [59]

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## Authors

Dr. *Elisabeth SCHILLING* studied sociology, psychology and German linguistics in Moscow, Düsseldorf, Aachen and UC Davis (USA). Her research interests are time, migration, intercultural communication, diversity, and public health. Her current position is Researcher at ISEG (Institute for Research in Social Medicine, Epidemiology and Health System) in Hannover.

Contact:

Elisabeth Schilling  
ISEG  
Lavesstr. 80  
30159 Hannover, Germany

Tel.: (0511) 530 91 17  
Fax: (0511) 530 91 14

E-mail: [schilling@iseg.org](mailto:schilling@iseg.org)  
URL: <http://www.iseg.org/>

*Alexander V. KOZIN* (Ph.D. in Philosophy of Communication) is Research Fellow at Freie Universität Berlin. His areas of specialization include phenomenology, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, semiotics, and discourse analysis. His current research centers on the phenomenological investigations of the alien experience in the context of law, visual arts, and literature.

Contact:

Alexander Kozin  
Fachbereich Philosophie und  
Geisteswissenschaften  
Freie Universität Berlin  
Altensteinstrasse 2-4  
14195 Berlin, Germany

E-mail: [alex.kozin@gmx.net](mailto:alex.kozin@gmx.net)

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