‘It’s PNG Taim’: Perspectives of Intercultural Understanding

The notion of apparently different cultural concepts of time often leads to misunderstandings in the process of intercultural communication and thus sometimes contributes to the production and manifestation of various clichés stressing the cultural specificity of time concepts and cognition. While in Europe time is since antiquity understood as “counted movement” (Aristoteles), many other societies have other measures of time than numbers. But does this mean that concepts of time vary from culture to culture? Are there really any cultural differences in the conceptualisation of time? Considering ethnographic literature that has been written on the subject (e.g. A. Gell) I will try to outline some of the main thoughts and draw a sketch of my own Ph.D. project (just about to start), which will focus on the understanding of time in Bena (Eastern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea).