

“Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns Grow”

IATUR's Roots

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Colleagues all. I am delighted to share some thoughts with you in Budapest at the 40th Jubilee celebration of IATUR. I wish I could also share the fellowship & learning experiences that are the heart of IATUR conferences. The conferences are as much what you enjoy and take away as what you bring to them. I also wish I could be there because Budapest is one of my favourite cities.

In the next few minutes want to share with you what I think makes IATUR. You might say our “corporate” culture. I want to tell you, for now, not so much what we do but how we do it. how we met, what our forerunners thought about comparative time use research.

Budapest and Hungary are special to me because of Alexander Szalai's contribution to time use research as Director of “The Multi-National Comparative Time-Budget Project” which conducted time diary surveys at 13 sites in 12 countries and differing cultures and languages. And, Alexander Szalai indirectly helped to shape my career. Budapest has played a significant role in launching and developing time use measurement through the contributions of Alexander Szalai, Rudolph Andorka, and others.

Roots and Aims of IATUR

The Multi-national project started in the late 1960's and ended in Vienna in 1970. However, while in Vienna, the projects researchers, given the spirit of international cooperation and friendships, agreed to continue. The group established itself as the “Research Group on Time Budgets and Social Activities”. Their first reunion took place in 1970 at the International Sociology Association (ISA) World Congress in Varna, Bulgaria as “Ad Hoc Group 1.”

The group aim was “to promote the continued Spirit of co-operation and friendship that has characterized the development of the time use field. It

provided the foundation for our approach to time use measurement and data that is to:

promote high standards,

increase access to technical information, and

expand the dissemination of the latest research results.”

It is significant that since its formation those precepts have continued to guide our group.

The first reunion of the group took place in Brussels in 1972 followed by a meeting in 1973 in East Berlin. Thanks to Bill Michaelson, who was Group Chairman, the group reconvened at the ISA Congress in Toronto in 1974. The first publication, of the group, edited by Bill Michaelson, consisted of papers presented there.

I have an example of the spirit of cooperation that helped to develop the group over time. I started my career as a Urban and Regional research economist at The Institute of Public Affairs at Dalhousie University in Halifax Canada. In 1969 was there a call for proposals to study pollution. Jokingly I thought, to me the most polluted thing is time. That day a planning professor was referred to me thinking I might be interested in his work. Our discussion led us to realize that we needed to know what people did and how they organized activities. Our research found a report on time-use studies by Alexander Szalai. I called him and explained our discussion and thoughts and he unhesitatingly came on board and volunteered to help. He directed us to others, Phil Stone of Harvard University, organized and provided all the data collected from the 13 sites. John Robinson, of the ISR at the University of Michigan shared the instruments used in the United States.

As a result of the collegial support, in keeping with the Aim of the Research Group, the Halifax research team completed a Time - Space survey of 2041 randomly selected persons/days and over 60,000 activities all coded from street addresses or nearest intersecting streets on 1/10th of km grid for Halifax Canada. The specific locations were needed for the mixed land use component.

Growing - Group Meetings and Constitution

The early meetings of the group from 1970 to 1982 were all plenary sessions.

However, in 1984 our meeting hosted by the Central Statistical Office of Finland drew 59 persons representing 14 countries. Thus, for the first time it was necessary to hold concurrent sessions to fit in all worthy papers.

The 1984 business meeting was attended by over 40 persons representing more than 12 countries. A constitution, previously circulated, drafted by the co-chairs Dagfinn Aas and Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski and myself had been printed in the January 1984 issue of "It's About Time." Following a number of agreed changes, the Constitution of "the International Research Group on Time Budgets and Social Activities" was adopted and the election of a slate of officers unanimously adopted. The co-chairs were Iiris Niemi (Finland) and Rudolf Andorka (Hungary). Following that, Council members were identified to represent seven regions. They included South America, North America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, Middle East and North Africa and Asia and Australia.

1988 - IATUR

The most significant business in the 1988 Budapest meeting was the unanimous approval of the group's name change from the International "Research Group on Time Budgets and Social Activities" to "The International Association for Time Use Research (IATUR)".

In keeping with our aim to maintain high standards, creating guidelines for time use data collection was proposed at the 1986 meeting in New Delhi. Draft guidelines were developed for consideration in 1988. The guidelines were based on the shared experiences of the first multinational time budget project and of group members. Considerable discussion led to a first-round revision here in Budapest in 1988 and they were finally accepted in Montreal in 1990.

This begs the question have things changed?

I have been involved in time use research since my phone call to Alexander Szalai in 1969. I enjoyed nearly every minute of it. I enjoyed the challenges and the people. I especially enjoyed people attending conferences like this. In fact,

I met Ignace for the first time here in Budapest in 1988.

I offer the challenge to all members new and old to continue with the spirit as you progress in the ever-expanding enquiry of time use research.

New members ask for help. Less new members offer help.

Thank you all for listening.

Thank you, Ignace, for being my voice.