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### Klaus Mäkelä and international collaborative research

From early in his research career, Klaus was involved in collaborative international research, in a variety of different capacities. As a leader and manager in Finnish alcohol studies, he played an important role in making and facilitating arrangements for study visits to and from Finland, and for Finnish participation in cross-national collaborative studies. He was an active and productive participant in the “purple book” (Alcohol Control Policies in Public Health Perspective) and a project on Alcohol in Developing Societies. And he organised and led two important international collaborative and comparative projects, the study of Alcohol Control Experiences (ISACE) and the international Alcoholic Anonymous study (ICSAA), which were not only collaborative but also comparative.

In these projects, Klaus took a tradition of collaborative alcohol research – often cross-disciplinary, often cross-national -- which had been pioneered by Kettil Bruun, and made something new of it. The projects were not centrally financed – each national team had to be recruited to the project, and had to find their own national resources for their participation. Such a model of organisation turns out to have some special requirements for leadership. For a start, the prospective leader should have a broad network of international contacts, and be seen as a productive and generous collaborator. The study needs to be framed in terms of a prospectus which is forward-thinking and compelling for potential participants and institutions. And a promise of substantial output at the national level, alongside the international aspect, is needed for national study teams to be able to attract funding and support for their participation. It was in meeting this last need that the studies which Klaus led broke new ground. Not only was there a collaboratively-authored book as the study’s joint output, there was also a dense underbrush of working papers, theses, and journal articles stimulated by and growing out of the study; and there were collections of loosely comparable “national reports”, compiled into books or thematic journal issues. For many of the younger researchers involved in ISACE and ICSAA, the study was a formative experience, both in terms of setting them on a productive research path, and in terms of their immersion during the project’s course in thinking, experience and connections across national and disciplinary lines. While such projects are a collective enterprise, a wise and flexible leader is required, and Klaus was the best, showing us all what could be done.

Klaus has left us with his own reflections on what such projects require. In his interview in *Addiction* he emphasises both the need to let the national research groups “own their own national project” and the importance of a “jointly authored collective report using the material authored by many people”. In a paper for a 1999 book on drug policy studies in Europe, he describes some of the concrete guidelines and decisions in the ISACE project, and suggests lessons and principles for international collaborative studies. He stresses the need to develop a common frame of reference in the study, a frame which needs to be jointly arrived at and agreed on among what is usually a “mixed bunch” of participants. As Klaus tells it, the meetings and joint work of the participants have

a dual aim: apart from leading to tangible analyses and drafting, they are also a necessary means for collectively constructing a shared frame of reference for the project's material and results.

In my experience on projects with him, Klaus was an inspiring and flexible leader. His instincts were opportunistic: if a good idea came up, even from someone quite new to the project, he would seize on it and encourage it to be developed. There was generally goodwill at the meetings, but there were also often substantial tensions, both in terms of what should be done and of who should do which piece. Scholars have healthy egos and sometimes conflicting ambitions. It turned out that Klaus had substantial diplomatic skills, often negotiating an agreed path forward in side-conversations.

In ISACE and ICSAA, there was a general line of development of the project, laid out originally in a prospectus, developed in agreed-on guidelines, and regularly revisited and amended. At annual plenary meetings of the project, specific tasks and plans were decided on, with a timetable leading up to the next meeting. The tone Klaus encouraged for the meetings and for the project was collegial, combining high intellectual ambitions with a focus on the concrete: how things are constructed, connected and work out in the daily life of people and institutions. There was also a lot of fun around the edges, with card games and group excursions. Architecture was often on Klaus' excursion agenda. He had an eye especially for the details: strolling together down the Mall in Washington, DC, what he noted were what he termed the "official graffiti" incised on the facades of the buildings.

Klaus was a child of his generation. Both the style and the substance of his work in international collaborative research seemed to me in some ways to reflect this. A newcomer from a country not previously involved came to the follow-up meeting the year after the ISACE books came out. At the end of the week she said to me that she had been wondering all week why she felt so much at home in the meeting, and had finally realised what it was: while we came from over a dozen countries, we were all of the same generation. Early in our friendship, I compared notes with Klaus about our political history. He and I, about the same age, had both been in small social movements which were forerunners of what we now call "the '60s", starting a few years before the '60s burst on the world. It seemed to me that Klaus carried the experiences of those times into ways of thinking and acting in his work life. Others of his generation recognised this, and responded warmly to it. And in my observation, scholars from younger generations also found appealing and inspiring Klaus's style of leadership and collegiality, as it was manifested in international collaborative research.

-- Robin Room

The sentences for the end of the book:

I first corresponded with Klaus around 1970 about a statistical issue: the "bus-stop problem" of whether the time since the last event (most recent drinking occasion, in our case) would on average be half the time between events. (Not in Finland, as it turned out, since at that time a common drinking pattern was two occasions on a weekend.) I met him for the first time at the 1972 ICAA meeting in Amsterdam, and at his invitation I came to Helsinki, to Pitkäsillanranta, for the first time

a few days later. We brought Klaus to a meeting in Berkeley, California in 1974; he was as captivated by San Francisco as I had been by Helsinki. We were close colleagues and warm friends ever after. In the spirit of the '60s, he organised an international protest (a storm of faxes) when I was fired in Toronto. No trip to Helsinki was complete for me without meeting up and talking over the world's business.