

## The organization and execution of cross-national survey research projects

Szalai, Alexander

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:  
GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Szalai, A. (1993). The organization and execution of cross-national survey research projects. *Historical Social Research*, 18(2), 139-171. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.18.1993.2.139-171>

### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

### Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more Information see:  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

## The Organization and Execution of Cross-National Survey Research Projects

*Alexander Szalai\**

**Abstract:** This paper (first published in 1977) is concerned with reviewing the organization and execution of five cross-national survey research projects. The projects had in common the following obvious characteristics: all were cross-national in the sense that the component surveys have been carried out in more than one country; all had a multi-national character in the sense that more than two countries were involved; all were initiated around the mid-sixties and have been more or less completed; in all of them a considerable effort has been made to achieve the participation of all project members in all stages of the work; all projects are based on the primary analysis of data specifically collected for purposes of the given project.

### *Motto:*

- '1. Nobody ever does research the way books and people who tell you how to do research tell you how to do it.
2. Everything takes more time.
3. Everything costs more money.'

*Sidney Verba* 'Universal Generalizations About Design' (Draft Project Report)

*'snafu* (sna-foo, snaf oo), *adj.*

[situation normal: all fouled (euphemism) *up*], in characteristic disorder or confusion; mixed up as usual (*Military Slang*)'

*Webster's New World Dictionary*

---

\* Originally published in: Alexander Szalai/Riccardo Petrella, eds., Cross-National Comparative Survey Research, Oxford: Pergamon-Press 1977, pp. 49-94. **We are grateful to the first editors for kindly permitting us to republish this article.**

## Introduction

Five projects have been chosen for closer consideration in our Round Table Conference on Cross-National Survey Research and the present paper is concerned with reviewing the organization and execution of these projects in the hope that some useful lessons might be drawn for the future conduct of similar undertakings in the field of cross-national survey research.

The five projects in question are the following:

- (1) *Multinational Comparative Time-Budget Research Project* (briefly: *Time-Budget Project*).
- (2) *European Comparative Research Project on Juvenile Delinquency and Economic Development* (briefly: *Delinquency Project*).
- (3) *Images of the World in the Year 2000* (briefly: *Year 2000 Project*).
- (4) *International Studies of Values in Politics* (briefly: *Values Project*).
- (5) *Cross-National Project on Political Participation and Social Change* (briefly: *Participation Project*).

Of course, I cannot be sure that I have referred to each of these projects by its correct title. At the time I am writing this paper, more than a month past the deadline set for its delivery and about 5 weeks before we meet for our Round Table Conference, I have received the 'Project Reports' of only three of the five mentioned cross-national survey research projects. The assorted 'historical' research documents, circulars, prospectuses, etc. of the projects in question which are at my disposal often refer to a given project by three or four different designations and vary in their description of the project organization to a considerable extent.<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, cross-national survey research projects tend to change their title and description from document to document depending on ideological, theoretical and methodological preferences of participating partners, of foundations approached for funds, or of academic institutions whose support is being sought; other changes are due to modifications of the initial research concept, to a succession of project directors, to difficulties and misunderstandings in multilingual translations, and so forth.

---

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph reflects the state of information available about the projects at the time when the original version of this paper was written, that is shortly before the Round Table Conference met. Since then, of course, all participants had plenty of opportunity to revise and complete the information material submitted with regard to the various projects and contributions to the present volume - including my own - are generally based on this updated and more complete information. Still, I thought it best to leave these few lines unchanged because they characterize somehow the practical conditions under which cross-national survey research projects of this kind are normally presented and discussed before becoming part of written - or rather printed - history.

Thus, a certain aura of uncertainty prevails which extends its beneficial effects also to the number and identity of participants as there are always 'drop-ins' and 'drop-outs' in such projects, not to speak of project members whose status remains in doubt because they do not reply to the project director's letters and cables for 1 or 2 years, sometimes more.

We shall see more of these uncertainties when we come to discuss in detail the organization and execution of our projects. Here it should suffice to say that all this is a perfectly normal situation as 'snafu' (situation normal: *all* /ouled wp) is the main and most universal characteristic of practical cross-national survey research. Why shouldn't this characteristic then apply to the kind of cross-(cross-national-survey)survey research - or briefly, double-cross-national survey research - we try to undertake for the purposes of our Round Table Conference?

Now, there are very good reasons why things become more or less regularly fouled up in the course of cross-national survey research projects as we know them today. Maybe we shall even be able to show that at least some of these reasons cannot be easily eliminated in the foreseeable future. So much for sure, anybody who undertakes to become a project director or a participant in such a project must count on all sorts of unexpected snafus and must be prepared 'to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them'. He must know that he is embarking on an adventure which may well last as long as the Odyssey - a period of 8 years is not even a bad time for the completion of a major cross-national survey research project! - and he must not become disheartened when he passes on his voyage the wreckage of many projects similar to his own. Far more ships are launched on these stormy seas than are destined to reach harbour.

## 1. Common characteristics of the projects considered

With regard to organization and execution, the five research projects figuring on the agenda of our Round Table Conference had the following obvious characteristics in common:

- (1) All were cross-national comparative survey research projects in the sense that the component surveys have been carried out in more than one country. (Comparative survey research can, of course, be done in a single country covering populations of different nationality, different language, different culture, etc. However, each of our five projects included surveys carried out in different nation-states.)
- (2) All had a *multinational* character in the sense that more than two countries were involved. (As we shall see, binational comparative surveys involving only two countries are, in general, much more frequent.)
- (3) All were *initiated around the mid-sixties* and have been more or less

*completed* (notwithstanding later extensions and replications which may be still in progress when these lines go into print).

- (4) In all of them a considerable effort has been made to achieve the *participation of all project members in all stages of the work*, that is beginning with the development of the research design and ending with the production of the final report.
- (5) All projects were based on the *primary* analysis of data specifically collected for purposes of the given project, that is all were 'T' projects in the sense of the Comparative Survey Analysis Bibliography of Rokkan-Viet-Verba-Almasy.<sup>2</sup>

Three of the five projects (*Time-Budget; Delinquency; Year 2000*) were coordinated by the European Coordination Centre for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences (briefly: Vienna Centre) and were directed by European scholars; the remaining two projects (*Values; Participation*) were initiated by American scholars (Philip and Betty Jacob and Sidney Verba, respectively) who also acted as chief coordinators and over-all or 'primus inter pares' directors of the studies in question.

### 1.1 Country participation

Let us now have a look at the sets of countries which participated in each of our five projects. A general overview is given by Table 1, which is based on the latest documentary evidence available at the writing of this paper.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Stein Rokkan, Sidney Verba, Jean Viet and Elina Almasy, *Comparative Survey Analysis*, Mouton, The Hague, Paris, 1969, pp. 119-308. The Bibliography distinguishes between the following types of comparative data analysis: 'P' = primary analysis of data specifically collected for purposes of cross-national or cross-language comparison; 'P:R' = primary analysis of data generated through a replication in one country of a technical device (a test, a scale, or battery of questions) first used in another country; 'P:S' = primary analysis of data from one national study with interspersed or appended comparisons with results for other countries; 'S' = secondary analysis of data from one (a cross-nationally organized study) or more (typically a number of organizationally independent national studies (sources)); 'S/C' = secondary analysis based on raw data from each country, whether on punched cards, magnetic tape or in other forms; 'S/T' = secondary analysis based on already published or otherwise available tables; 'S/T, C' = mixed cases; 'O' = comparisons of marginal distributions for opinion data, only very elementary cross-tabulations within each country.

<sup>3</sup> It is to be noted, however, that even at the time when this volume is being sent to the press, no 'final' number of country participations could be established for some of these projects. The reason for this is very simple: successful cross-national comparative survey research projects have a tendency to perpetuate themselves for quite a while after the formal conclusion of the project or the publication of a summary report of its results. Some former partners who dropped out in the course of the project (e.g. for lack of funds) may find it possible to revive their participation and to deliver a delayed contribution; replications of the survey may be undertaken in additional countries and the results may be integrated in expanded editions of the

What factors determined which countries and how many of them participated in these five projects? How were the countries selected?

These are difficult questions to answer on the basis of the available evidence, or on any other basis for that matter, but perhaps the following statements can be made with a certain measure of assuredness.

(a) *The person (or the small group of persons) who initiated the projects seem to have had a certain notion in mind regarding the kind of countries they would prefer to have for substantive reasons as participants in the project, e.g. East and West European (socialist and capitalist) countries which have attained different degrees of industrialization and urbanization (Time-Budget); or East and West European countries which have within their own national boundaries distinct highly developed and less developed regions in which differentials of juvenile delinquency can be well studied (Delinquency); or as wide an array of countries all around the world as possible (Year 2000); or a combination of countries having different political systems but systems which have enough in common to make the intended comparison scientifically realistic (as stated by Jacob with regard to the Values Project); or a set of countries that varied widely in terms of level of development and historical background (as stated by Verba with regard to the Participation Project).*

(b) *Personal acquaintances of the initiators and/or directors of the projects in the international community of scholars and especially also their opportunities to travel and to make personal contacts played a considerable role, e.g.:*

In 1962-63 Phil and Betty Jacob, on a world wide trip, located people who were interested in collaborative research described in a preliminary proposal concerning values and political responsibility. (*Values Project*)

The first initiatives for the research project took place during a trip by Professor Gabriel Almond to a variety of countries in 1963... Verba stayed on in Ibadan for another month working out final details on the research design with the Nigerian group and then travelled to India for an extended stay followed by a stay in Japan. He had been in Mexico before the Ibadan meeting... (*Participation Project*)

Contacts have already been taken in Japan and New Zealand. In the course of his mission for UNESCO in Asia, J. Gaining will visit the Japanese institute and will also make soundings in India. (*Year 2000 Project*)

*There is also a snowball-effect involved. Contacts of acquired project participants with scholars and institutions in other countries are often helpful in extending the circle of countries represented in the project.*

(c) *The presence of scholars interested in the same problem and having at their disposal (or being able to create) a local research organization which can carry out the survey work was, of course, a pre-condition for the participation*

---

original summary report, etc. Some of the five projects chosen for closer consideration in our Round Table Conference were conceived from the very beginning as such open-ended or continuous undertakings.

**Table 1: *Country participations in the five projects considered***

Country	Time-budget Project	Delinquency Project	Year 2000 Project	Values Project	Partici- pation Project	Total (+)
<i>Europe</i>						
1. Austria	-	-	-	-	+	1
2. Belgium	+	-	-	-	-	1
3. Bulgaria	+	-	-	-	-	1
4. Czechoslovakia	+	-	+	-	-	2
5. Finland	-	-	+	-	-	1
6. France	+	+	-	-	-	2
7. F.R.G.	+	-	-	-	-	1
8. G.D.R.	+	-	-	-	-	1
9. Great Britain	-	-	+	-	-	1
10. Hungary	+	+	-	-	-	2
11. Netherlands	-	-	+	-	+	2
12. Norway	-	-	+	-	-	1
13. Poland	+	+	+	+	-	4
14. Spain	-	-	+	-	-	1
15. Sweden	-	-	+	-	-	1
16. U.S.S.R.	+	-	-	-	-	1
17. Yugoslavia	+	+	+	+	+	5
<i>Asia</i>						
18. India	-	-	+	+	+	3
19. Japan	-	-	+	-	+	2
<i>North America</i>						
20. U.S.A.	+	-	-	+	+	3
<i>South America</i>						
21. Peru	+	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Africa</i>						
22. Nigeria	-	-	-	-	+	1
<i>Oceania</i>						
23. New Zealand	-	-	+	-	-	1
Total number of country participations	12	4	12	4	7	39

*of any country.* In some cases, especially in the case of some developing countries, the presence of visiting professors, temporarily resident foreign scholars, etc. made it possible to include a country in which the survey in question could not otherwise have been carried out.

(d) *In each and every one of the five projects the question of whether local funding could be found for the survey to be carried out in a particular country, or whether the research to be done there could be financed from other sources accessible to the project, proved to be of paramount importance.* In many cases the participation of a country foundered because of a lack of adequate funding and maybe in some cases the ready availability of funds for research to be done in a country played a role in its participation even if it did not figure in the 'first choice'.

(e) *The political feasibility of doing survey research of a particular kind (or simply survey research of any kind within the framework of a 'foreign' or 'international' project) was obviously a strong determinant factor in the composition of the 'nation-sample', especially in the negative sense by excluding a priori some countries or by leading to 'drop-out' under the pressure of political circumstances.*

(f) *The participation of countries in earlier projects of similar character, the experience of countries (or rather of their scholars and of their research organizations) in the given substantive field of research and also in survey research in general, the general development of social science in the different countries had an influence on the composition of the 'nation-sample'.* Nevertheless, out of a general interest in widening the circle of international research collaboration in the social sciences and to pave the way for future research, or for substantive reasons connected with the aims of the project in question, considerable efforts were made in a number of cases to secure the participation of countries where rather adverse conditions had to be met.

(g) In the case of the three projects coordinated by the Vienna Centre (*Time-Budget, Delinquency, Year 2000*) it was self-evident that East and West European (socialist and capitalist) countries should be included in the project as it is a declared policy of the Vienna Centre to undertake only the coordination of projects of this kind. In the case of the two other projects initiated and coordinated by American scholars (*Values, Participation*) it was self-evident that the United States should be among the countries where surveys were carried out.

We may best close this brief review of the most conspicuous factors involved in the 'selection' of countries in our five projects by quoting from Sidney Verba's Draft Project Report the following statement:

These characteristics, though they violate more abstract principles of purposive scientific sampling of nations, cannot be ignored, nor ought they be denigrated. The problem of achieving adequate collaboration on research is such a complex and difficult one that one cannot choose sites for such collaboration the way one can choose a respondent to a questionnaire on the basis of random procedures. Too much is at stake.

With regard to the number of countries participating in the five research projects under consideration, the available documentation seems to indicate that in most of these projects an effort has been made to extend the research to as



many countries as conditions (substantive requirements of the research design, availability of suitable partners, resources, etc.) would permit. This in spite of the fact that the involvement of a greater number of countries tends to increase the difficulties of project management and introduces all sorts of complexities in the handling and evaluation of data without always offering commensurate advantages in respect to a wider generalization of findings and a broader basis for theory-building, though these are some of the things one would hope for.

Understandably, it seems to be easier to achieve a large number of country participations in projects where relatively simple and more or less standard survey instruments (sampling and interviewing techniques, questionnaires, codes, etc.) are being applied, the survey work is not too labour-intensive, not too great requirements are made on the expertise of interviewers and coders (e.g. not too many open-ended questions are posed, no depth-interviews are needed), etc.

There is nothing in our evidence that would suggest that in any of the five projects an offered or available country participation would have been rejected if conditions were met. On the contrary, much in our evidence indicates that efforts were made to establish offered or available country participations even if conditions were not quite met. This reminds one of Sir Edmund Hillary who was once asked why he undertook to climb Mount Everest in spite of all the dangers and torments he could foresee. 'Because it was there...' - was Sir Edmund's famous answer.

In brief, to initiate and conduct major projects under the prevailing conditions of contemporary cross-national comparative survey research is not only a rational scientific activity - it is also a passion, an addiction, maybe a form of madness. Successful project directors are seemingly able to incorporate in their persons all the virtues and vices of stoic philosophers and of maniacs running amuck. Humility and megalomania, cruelty to oneself and to others, and above all, a lot of endurance is involved. Still, the role of good scholarship, disciplined thinking, organizational and improvisatory talent should not be underestimated, nor the role of luck and serendipity in achieving even a moderate success.

## 1.2 Patterns of country participation in 'P'-type cross-national survey research projects

It is perhaps of some interest to compare the pattern of country participation in our five projects, initiated around the mid-1960s, with the 'historical' patterns emerging from the statistics of cross-national comparative survey research reported in the pertinent literature up to 1965. This literature and the projects reported in it have been duly registered in Rokkan-Viet-Verba-Almasy's Bibliography to which reference has been made above.

In order to establish the needed statistical overview, I have culled from the Bibliography all entries referring to 'P' projects, that is to comparative survey

research projects based on the *primary analysis of data specifically collected for purposes of cross-national or cross-language comparison*. As the Introductory Note to the Bibliography states:

The typical 'P' has these characteristics: (a) the data for the countries covered were gathered for *explicit purposes* of comparison; (b) the publication reports on a *first set of basic analyses* of the data thus collected; (c) there was *some continuity in the intellectual organization of the study* from the planning of the data-gathering operation to the presentation of the full report.<sup>4</sup>

From the complete set of 'P' projects referred to I excluded all those which compared only different linguistic and cultural regions or people of different nationality within a *single* country. Furthermore I excluded also a handful of doubtful or incompletely reported 'P' projects (e.g. projects listed without an enumeration of participating countries, projects based merely on 'letters and brief questionnaires' sent out without further control to individuals in various countries, etc.).

It took quite an amount of trouble to identify all the genuine 'P'-type projects without omission or duplication as some of them figured repeatedly in the Bibliography under different names and titles, and cross-references between the various bibliographic entries were sometimes lacking. Still, I hope to have accomplished this laborious task without committing too many mistakes.

As a result I am now able to present a statistical review of country participation in all the genuine 'P'-type cross-national survey research projects registered in Rokkan-Viet-Verba-Almasy's Bibliography, which covers the pertinent literature up to the end of 1965 and to a certain extent even into 1966. (Three of our five projects - *Time-Budget*, *Values* and *Participation* - met this deadline with early publications and are therefore included in the 'up to 1965/66' data to be presented.)

Thanks to the courtesy of Elina Almasy, who is now working on an extension of the above-mentioned Bibliography to the years beyond 1965/6, I am also in the position to confront the statistics of 'P'-type cross-national survey research projects up to 1965/6 with somewhat similar though as yet fragmentary statistics characterizing the 1967-72 period. In effect, these latter statistics are based on a comprehensive collection of relevant bibliographical entries for the years 1968-9 which Elina Almasy prepared on the same principles as the original Rokkan-Viet-Verba-Almasy Bibliography of the years up to 1965/6 and to which she was able to add a certain modest number of entries from her unfinished collection for the years 1967 and 1970-2. Although statistics established on such a fairly accidental 'composite sample' of cross-national survey research activities in the 1967-72 period cannot serve as a basis for any far-reaching and fully validated inferences, the lack of any *other* quantitative data about this recent period prompted us to include them here. In con-

---

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 124.

frontation with our much better founded 'up to 1965/6 statistics', these statistical data provide at least some clues with regard to recent changes in the patterns of country-participation in 'P'-type cross-national survey research projects. (Two of our five projects - *Delinquency* and *Year 2000* - are included in the statistics of the 1967-72 period because the first meritorious publications covering the research work were published after the deadline of the original Rokkan-Viet-Verba-Almasy Bibliography.)

For the sake of brevity let us introduce here the two terms *numerical scope of country participation* and *geographical scope of country participation*. We shall regard a country as 'participating' in a 'P'-type cross-national survey research project if at least one of the component surveys is carried out there. (Whether the survey work is being done by a national research team, by foreign scholars, or by an international organization is irrelevant at this point.) By the numerical scope of country participation we simply mean the number of countries participating in the project. By the geographical scope of country participation we mean the geographical area or areas to which the countries participating in the project belong.

As a matter of convenience, we shall use here the following brief terms for designating specific areas:

*Western Europe* (Europe excluding Scandinavia and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe)

*Scandinavia* (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden)

*Eastern Europe* (socialist countries of Eastern Europe including the whole U.S.S.R.)

*Middle East* (Arab countries, Iran, Israel and Turkey)

*Africa* (excluding Middle East)

*Asia* (excluding Middle East and Japan)

*Latin America* (including all the Caribbean region)

*USA*

*Canada*

*Japan*

Thus, if we say that the geographical scope of a project is 'Western Europe', this means that all the participating countries belong to the West European area. If we say that the geographical scope of a project is 'Western Europe and Eastern Europe', this means that at least one West European and at least one East European country is participating and no country outside Western and Eastern Europe is to be found among the participants.

Let us first look at the *numerical scope* of country participation in 'P'-type projects up to 1965/6 and in the 1967/72 period.

As we see from Table 2, somewhat more than half of all registered 'P'-type projects - up to 1965/6: 52 per cent; in 1967-72: 59 per cent - were *binational*, i.e. involving only a pair of countries. The bulk of the *multinational* projects (involving three or more countries) were in the 3-country to 7-country range.

The 'record' in numerical scope - 16 countries - belongs to H. W. Gardiner's project involving a cross-cultural comparison of hostility in children's drawings (entry no. 217 in Almasy's supplementary bibliographical list). Hadley Cantril's Pattern of Human Concerns Project (entry no. 530 in the Rokkan-Viet-Verba-Almasy Bibliography) occupies the second place with 14 countries participating in it. The five projects under consideration in our Round Table Conference fit with regard to their numerical scope quite well into the 'historical' range of multinational 'P'-type projects; their numerical scope is fairly big but in no way unusual (cf. Table 1).

**Table 2:** *Numerical scope of country participation in 'P'-type cross-national survey research projects up to 1965/6 and in 1967-72*

Numerical scope	Number of projects	
	up to 1965/6	1967-72
16 countries	—	1
15 "	—	—
14 "	1	—
13 "	—	—
12 "	2	1
11 "	1	—
10 "	2	1
9 "	4	—
8 "	2	1
7 "	7	—
6 "	9	2
5 "	5	2
4 "	14	7
3 "	24	17
2 "	77	47
Total:	148	79

Lately some information became available about current 'P'-type projects involving a much greater number of countries. References have been made in literature to a survey research project on African national integration in which 31 countries (all countries of Africa?) would participate, to a multinational student survey involving 18 countries, etc. Due to the lack of more detailed information (list of principal investigators, list of participating countries, etc.) these projects could not be included in our statistics.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The United Nations Institute for Training and Research carried out in 1968 a Survey of Public information in the World Press, Radio and Television which covered the output of a huge sample of mass media organs in 50 countries on five continents during several pre-established observation periods. (Cf. A. Szalai *et al.*, *The United Nations and the News Media*, UNITAR, New York, 1972.) However, it would probably mean an extension of the current notion of multinational T'-type survey re-

At any rate, Table 2 indicates that - in spite of all difficulties - 'P'-type projects of rather big numerical scope are still being undertaken but binational projects continue to dominate. With the increase of the numerical scope, projects of the corresponding size become less and less frequent.

From the beginnings of modern cross-national comparative survey research in the early fifties up to 1965/6 a total of 148 'P'-type projects could be registered on the basis of the fairly complete coverage of this period by the Rokkan-Viet-Verba-Almasy Bibliography. A similarly thorough coverage of the years 1968-9 produced evidence of 57 new projects in this 2-year period alone. This gives evidence of a very considerable upswing in cross-national comparative survey research activities based on primary data collection during these years. (The provisory total of 79 projects for the period 1967-72 in Table 2 was reached by adding 22 projects from Almasy's as yet quite fragmentary review of the 1967 and 1970-2 literature but even this obviously quite incomplete total would yield a considerably higher yearly average for the last 5 to 6 years than that which could be derived from the fairly complete total figure for the preceding 13 to 14 years.)

We may turn our attention now to the reviewing of the *geographical scope* of the projects. For practical reasons we shall separate in the tabulation multinational projects from binational ones.

Some rather interesting observations can be made on the basis of Table 3.

(a) Up to 1965/6 no less than 30 per cent of all multinational projects had exclusively countries of the North Atlantic region (Western Europe, Scandinavia and U.S.A.) among their participants. After 1966 the share of such exclusively North Atlantic projects dropped to 19 per cent. Synchronously, the share of so-called East-West projects, i.e. of projects including countries of Eastern Europe *and* of the North Atlantic region among their participants grew from 4 per cent to 12 per cent.

(b) One of the most remarkable developments in the field of multinational projects was the huge increase in the share of '*mixed*' multinational projects from 27.5 per cent to 53 per cent. As it can be easily seen from Table 3, these '*mixed*' multinational projects are those which have *at least one participant outside Europe and the U.S.A.*; furthermore, if the geographical scope of such projects lies entirely outside Europe and the U.S.A. then countries of *at least two* other continents must be involved in the project. This means in practice

---

search projects if we included among them surveys of this kind which involve the work of intergovernmental administrations (various agencies and organs of the United Nations system), the cooperation of professional clipping and monitoring services, etc. It may well be, however, that in the future a special subclass of multinational \* P'-type survey research projects will have to be established encompassing projects of this kind which are getting more numerous. The value of comparative survey methods is now much better known to international administrations than 5 or 10 years ago and there is a growing interest for the use of these methods in order to increase the effectiveness of international operations.

**Table 3: Geographical scope of country participation in 'P'-type cross-national survey research projects up to 1965/6 and in 1967-72**

Geographical scope	Number of projects			
	up to 1965/6		1967--72	
(a) <i>Multinational projects</i>				
Western Europe	13		3	
Scandinavia	2		0	
Western Europe and Scandinavia	4	(39%)	0	(19%)
Western Europe and USA	5		1	
Western Europe, Scandinavia and USA	4		2	
Eastern and Western Europe	1		1	
Eastern Europe and USA	2	(4%)	2	(12%)
Eastern and Western Europe and USA	0		1	
Africa (excluding Middle East)	1		0	
Middle East and USA	2		0	
Asia (excluding Middle East and Japan)	7	(27.5%)	1	(16%)
Latin America	7		0	
Latin America and USA (and possibly Great Britain)	3		4	
Mixed - with Japan among participants	12	(27.5%)	13	(53%)
Other mixed projects	8		14	
Together:	71	(100%)	32	(100%)
(b) <i>Binational projects</i>				
USA and Western Europe	25		7	
USA and Scandinavia	61	(53%)	21	(32%)
USA and Canada	1		1	
USA and Japan	9		5	
USA and Eastern Europe	1	(1%)	1	(2%)
USA and Africa (excluding Middle East)	—		1	
USA and Middle East	5	(25%)	1	(21%)
USA and Asia (excluding Middle East and Japan)	9		6	
USA and Latin America	5		2	
Western Europe	5	(9%)	3	(6%)
Western Europe and Scandinavia	2		0	
Africa (excluding Middle East)	3		6	
Middle East	—	(8%)	1	(19%)
Asia (excluding Middle East and Japan)	—		—	
Latin America	3		2	
Mixed	3	(4%)	9	(19%)
Together:	77	(100%)	47	(100%)
Grand total:	148		79	

that the jump from 27.5 per cent to 53 per cent is mainly due to the *rapid growth of the participation of Third World countries in multinational comparative survey research projects involving various regions* and to the evident *tendency to include countries from other world regions in multinational projects initiated by scholars in Europe and the U.S.A.* Interestingly enough, the share of multinational projects involving only countries of a *single Third World region* has actually decreased. This may be, of course, a vacuous finding due to the small size and the incompleteness of our 1967-72 sample. But it could also be explained by the fact that most multinational survey research projects restricted to a single Third World region have been organized earlier by European or U.S.A. scholars who had their temporary residence there. More recently domestic teams tended to take up similar tasks but for obvious reasons they had to overcome considerable difficulties in launching their own regional projects and found it often much easier to join some European or USA project which could be expanded to their country and maybe other countries of the same region. Wars and political tensions may have contributed to the fact that multinational projects involving only Asian or only Middle East or only Latin American countries have become very infrequent or even non-existent lately.

(c) Table 3 suggests also that there are '*most-favoured-nations*' in the kind of cross-national comparative research we are discussing, that is countries which find it easier to participate in 'P'-type cross-national comparative survey research projects or have more opportunity, maybe more motivation, to do so.

In Table 4 we list the ten '*most-favoured-nations*' emerging from our statistical analysis. However, in contrast to the previous two tables, we were unable to include in Table 4 separate data columns referring to the 1967-72 period. The still fragmentary data collection does not make it possible to produce a reliable ranking of countries with regard to this latest period.

Table 4 demonstrates the predominant role of United States, participation in 'P'-type cross-national surveys, especially in binational projects up to 1965/6. The United States was a participant country in 100 out of a total of 148 registered projects (66 per cent); it was one of the two partners involved in 62 out of the 77 binational projects included in this set (81 per cent). Runners-up - but at a considerable distance - are Great Britain, France and Germany, followed by Italy, Japan, Mexico, Norway, India and Israel.

These 10 '*most-favoured-countries*' divided between them roughly two-thirds of all individual country participations in all the 148 registered projects (304 out of a total of 532 participations). About 70 other countries shared the rest.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> About 80 (in my own count exactly 79) different countries are to be found among the participants of the 148 genuine 'P'-type cross-national survey research projects registered in the Bibliography. The precise figure depends on how one wishes to count partitioned countries, formerly dependent territories, and the like.

Table 4: *Ten countries ranking highest with regard to the number of 'P'-type cross-national survey research projects in which they participated up to 1965/6*

Country	Binational with U.S.A. as one partner	Binational without U.S.A. partnership	Multinational	Total number of participations
1. United States	62	—	38	100
2. Great Britain	11	3	28	42
3. France	3	3	27	33
4. FRG (up to 1948: Germany)	3	2	27	32
5-6. Italy	2	3	16	21
5-6. Japan	9		12	21
7-8. Mexico	3	1	13	17
7-8. Norway	4	1	12	17
9. India	3		9	12
10. Israel	3	—	6	9
Ten countries together				304

None of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe figured among the 10 front-runners of the period up to 1965/6. We may state here, however, that Poland participated in 7, Yugoslavia in 3, the USSR in 2, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR and Hungary each in 1 of the 148 projects. (Eastern Europe's total of 16 participations amounts to something like 3 per cent of the world-wide total of 532 participations.)

Eighty countries are a lot of countries and it shows the considerable spread of the total geographical scope of cross-national survey research up to 1965/6 that so many countries were included at least once in 'P'-type cross-national projects. It would take too much place to list here all these countries. However, it might be interesting to list some of the more conspicuous 'absentees' - countries which were *not* included even once in 'P'-type cross-national projects up to 1965/6 according to the evidence at our disposal and for all that I know may have remained to the greater part outside the sphere of cross-national survey research even up to the present.

Here are a few prominent examples:

In Europe: Ireland (why?) and Iceland in the West; Romania and Albania in the East; for the rest only mini-states such as Monaco, San Marino, etc.

In Asia: Indonesia and Ceylon (both rather surprising!), also Afghanistan, Thailand and some others.



- In the Middle East: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and many other Arab countries.
- In Africa: Ethiopia, Zaire (Congo) and the great majority of other countries south of the Sahara, especially in the francophone region, including Senegal, in spite of the long-established important university complex in Dakar.
- In Latin America: Honduras and Nicaragua.

It remains to be said that many of the 25 'other and mixed' multinational projects which show up in Table 3 were obviously intent to include a wide variety of politically, socially and culturally very different countries. On the other hand, in the single-area projects we often notice recurrent combinations of countries having an obvious 'common denominator', such as, for instance, Belgium-France-FRG-Italy-Luxembourg-Netherlands, all of them united in the European Common Market.

If we compare this whole picture of 'P'-type cross-national survey research projects registered up to 1965/6 with that of the five projects under consideration in our Round Table Conference, which belong in the main to the second half of the sixties and the early seventies, then the most conspicuous change is, of course, the much increased participation of the East European socialist countries. These countries figure with a total of 15 participations in the five projects while they achieved only 16 participations in all the 148 projects registered up to 1965/6.

True, we have no reason to regard the five projects considered in our Round Table Conference as 'representative' of the late sixties and early seventies. They would form a rather biased sample, if for no other reason than because three of them were coordinated by the Vienna Centre which accepts only projects with assured East and West European participation. But that is just the point. The Vienna Centre, which was created in the mid-sixties, achieved great merit in promoting cooperation in cross-national comparative research between the East European socialist countries and the Western world: it became in a short time an important meeting point between social scientists of the 'East' and the 'West'. Besides, the three projects coordinated by the Vienna Centre which we consider at our Round Table Conference are only a part of the much greater number of 'East'-'West' projects carried out under the aegis of the Vienna Centre.

Interestingly, the two other projects under consideration, namely those initiated and coordinated by American scholars both also have socialist countries among their participants. A glance at Table 1 suffices to convince us that within the framework of our five projects Yugoslavia happens to be the 'most-favoured-nation' with a participation in each and every one of the projects; it is closely followed by Poland which participates in four out of five projects.

This information available to us does not suffice to speak of a definite trend towards a full-fledged 'East'-West' partnership in cross-national survey research but the evidence provided by our five projects might justify speaking of favourable symptoms indicative of a development in this direction.

India, which we found among the ten 'most-favoured countries' in the period up to 1965/6, figures as a participant in three out of five projects considered by us. The only two other developing countries participating in the five projects (each of them only in a single project) are Nigeria and Peru; in both cases the temporary residence of scholars from developed countries played a decisive role in getting the participation assured. Only in a very small number of developing countries, all of them in the upper range of the Third World's development scale such as India, Mexico, Brazil, the Philippines and Israel (a special case in many respects), can one count at present on a fair chance for the inclusion of the country in a 'P'-type cross-national survey project without the necessity of having resident foreign scholars or travelling teams taking over important functions in the local organization and execution of the survey. But why should it be otherwise? It is surely not to be expected that the 'take-off' of survey research, will precede the 'take-off' of domestic socio-development anywhere in the world.

But some progress, maybe slow progress, is being made. And the increasing inclusion of developing countries in multinational and also in binational projects, even if *not* all conditions of full domestic partnership in all phases of the research work can be met, is surely helpful. Cross-national comparative social research is among other things also a *school* for social scientists - an educational institution, so to say, for sophomores and postgraduates of social science alike.

The enrichment of the patterns of country participation by the active inclusion of an ever-growing number of countries all over the globe within the sphere of cross-national comparative social research may open up new vistas for the development of social science. But quite apart from that it may lead also to important practical contributions to the mutual understanding of nations and hence to international peace. This should not be overlooked either.

## 2. From 'Safari' to multinational cooperation

It is not easy to tell when and where major cross-national survey research projects such as the five under consideration at our Round Table Conference begin, nor is it easy to tell, for that matter, when and where they *end*.

In fact, at least three of the five projects in question (*Time-Budget*, *Values*, *Participation*) seem to be *intended* as 'open-ended' studies providing detailed documentation and information on research design, sampling methods, questionnaires, codes, etc. to latecomers or successors who may wish to make

additional surveys on new sites or to replicate the study in some other form; in some cases organizational provisions have been made to ensure full access to primary data for the purpose of secondary analysis, and so forth.

As far as the beginning is concerned, we may probably say that in projects like these it seems to be located somewhere in the mind of people, i.e. in the place where the much-criticized Preamble to the Charter of UNESCO happens to locate the beginning of wars.

In our five projects it seems to have been mostly a small *group* of researchers, close colleagues and friends, who conceived the basic idea of the study in informal discussions between themselves or when they met for a conference on a related subject, and then decided somehow to make a try at its realization in the form of a cross-national survey research project. In some cases perhaps one of the persons involved could be regarded as the main initiator of the project. He may have previously carried out some research in one or more countries that gave rise to a few theoretical propositions or to a methodological device which then provided the starting point for discussions about the development of the new study. With or without such preliminaries, interaction between scholars seems to have been there right '*at the creation*' of our five projects.

I am stressing the role of interaction and collectivity in this context not only because I think it is an important characteristic of the five projects under consideration and also of a whole trend in more recent cross-national comparative research, but also for personal reasons. As it happens, my good and trusted friend, Pierre Feldheim, went so far in the original version of his report on the Time-Budget Project submitted to our Round Table Conference as to state - in spite of my remonstrations - that this project has been 'primarily... the work of one man, Prof. Szalai' who was 'from start to end, the mainspring of the project'.

I am not contesting this statement out of false modesty. I do not underrate the important and indeed very central role of devoted inventive and energetic project directors in the kind of undertakings we are discussing here. I am fully aware of the most essential functions which, say, Jacob, Verba, Galtung, Malewska and Peyre performed in bringing to life and nurturing their respective project - and I also take some pride in my own role in the initiation and rising of the Time-Budget project.

However, I think it is a significant characteristic of such cooperative projects as we are dealing with that whatever important functions single forceful scholarly personalities may have in the initiation and implementation of the studies in question, their involvement is only a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for all that has to happen before a project becomes a 'going concern'.

The Time-Budget project is a good example.

When I was invited, as the sole participant from an East European country, to the International Conference on the Use of Quantitative Political, Social and Cultural Data in Cross-National Comparison organized by the International

Social Science Council and the Yale Data Program in September 1963, I had not had an opportunity to travel abroad or even to engage in much correspondence with colleagues in the West for the preceding nearly 15 years. Hadley Cantril, Gordon Allport and some others may have had a recollection of the work I did together with them in the late forties. As Allport acknowledged in his preface to *Youth's Outlook on the Future*, the method of projective autobiographies ('looking back at my life from the year 2000') applied cross-nationally in the Allport-Gillespie project was first developed in a piece of research done by me in Hungary which was never published but about which Allport learned from me while we both cooperated in the *Tensions That Cause Wars Project* which Cantril directed at UNESCO. This and some other contingent factors may have contributed to my invitation to the Yale Conference.

However, when I went to Yale and presented my paper on 'Differential Evaluation of Time Budgets for Comparative Purposes' in which I reported about some concepts, methods, and results of studies comparing the use of time by various social groups in Hungary, it was perhaps not even much more than sort of a compliment to my hosts who so generously invited me from the other end of the world that I added as a last sentence to my paper (based entirely on research done in *one* country) the following lines:

Adequately evaluated daily, weekly, yearly and life-time budgets of the population should supply suitable criteria for intercultural comparisons and other serious tasks facing social research.

Only after Karl Deutsch, Harold Lasswell, Daniel Lerner, Stein Rokkan and some other participants of the conference took up the matter in the plenum and in the private discussions with me, showing - to my delighted surprise - an interest in the implications of my paper for cross-national research work, and the late Karl Szczerba-Likiernik and Clemens Heller told me about the preparations for the creation of the Vienna Centre and opened up the prospect that I should be asked to submit a suitable cross-national project proposal to this new organization, and - last but not least - Erwin Scheuch approached me with some theoretical and methodological suggestions of his own and proposed to help me in getting partners for a multinational comparative survey, only then did I begin seriously to spin the yarn which conducted me - and others who spun it together with me - into the labyrinth of the Time-Budget project and after 8 years out of it. Apart from Erwin Scheuch there was another of the participants in the Yale Conference, Philip Stone, with whom I became involved on the spot in a substantive exchange of ideas about problems relevant to this research; although he joined the Time-Budget Project only at a relatively late stage as an active partner, his role in the planning and implementation of the 'analysis phase' of the project became a very important one.

<sup>7</sup> *Comparing Nations. The Use of Quantitative Data in Cross-National Research*. Edited by R. L. Merritt and S. Rokkan, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1966 (pp. 239-58).

Thus it was from the very beginning *interaction* - not 'one man' - that brought about this project. It 'began' in the minds of quite a group of people. Needless to say, *the development of its design*, its implementation and its completion (as far as it is 'complete'), was due to the common effort of a still much larger group of people, quite a number of whom had a share in it comparable to anybody's, including mine. Some of them happen to be also among the participants in this Round Table Conference.

It looks as though something of this kind went on in the conception and gestation period of at least two of the other projects we are discussing here: in the exchanges that took place before the first formal meeting for the planning of the Delinquency Project was called in Warsaw in October 1964, and before Galtung and Osipov met in May 1966 to prepare the first draft of the questionnaire for the Year 2000 Project. Even where there was, right at the inception, something available 'to start with' such as in the case of the Participation Project the precedent of Almond and Verba's 'The Civic Culture' which Verba wanted originally to get 'replicated in somewhat modified form', or in the case of the Values Project a preliminary elaboration on values and political responsibility which the Jacobs took along on a world-wide trip to locate 'people who were interested in collaborative research' - it was interaction between researchers belonging to different countries and cultures which shaped the plans for the project from the early beginnings. Verba specifically acknowledges that even during the planning stage his original intention of a modified replication of his earlier project faded away in order to take into account a number of themes not dealt with previously which came up in discussion, and so forth. Also Philip Jacob tells us of having 'watched' the many-sided participation in the struggle for integration of concepts and methodology in the Values Project.

It is by no means necessary that cross-national comparative survey work bears, right from the beginning, such marks of interaction and many-sided cooperative effort. As a matter of fact, some already classic pieces of cross-national survey research were conceived, developed and even carried to the end by single researchers or a tiny group of scholars belonging to a single research organization who prepared the research design and the whole armoury of survey tools themselves, chose the countries where they wanted to do the surveys, went on travel and carried out all the work on the spot with only a minimum of assistance of local helpers recruited for technical and administrative tasks, took the data home or had them mailed to their home address and did all the analysis and evaluation up to the writing of the final research report by themselves.

In a paper published in the mid-sixties<sup>1</sup> I termed this kind of cross-national survey research as being of the 'safari-type' and characterized it in its most extreme form somewhat sarcastically as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Szalai: Introduction to the special issue on multinational comparative social research of the *American Behavioral Scientist*, *ABS*, Vol. 10, No. 4, December 1966, p. 2.

Some researcher has a big idea and is able to secure for its realization an important sum of money - possibly in the range of several hundred thousand dollars... In possession of this big idea, and such an important sum of money, the researcher in question may now equip himself with a methodological armoury of well prepared forms, questionnaires, sampling and interviewing instructions (all duly translated into the pertinent languages), and then set or jet himself on the way to countries listed on his programme. Having descended on one of the countries he can assure himself of the help of the best native guides and Sherpas, train them within a few weeks in the use of his superior equipment, and then with their help hunt down all the needed data. The raw hides (filled out questionnaires or perhaps punched cards) are then sent back, following precise instructions for packaging and addressing, to the home country of the researcher while he himself proceeds to the next country on his programme. Having arrived home from his world tour, he can proceed - with the best computers available, and with the assistance of his own home-based, highly qualified research team - to analyse all these findings: thus becoming much wiser and better informed about some aspects of social life in a number of far-away countries than those who have had to spend their life there as natives.

Having said that much in an ironical tone, I felt compelled immediately to add the following:

Now, it has to be admitted that this is indeed an extremist description of the 'Safari-type' of research, motivated most probably by an unmitigated envy of the splendid facilities which ample funding may provide for the realization of highly sophisticated comparative cross-national research projects - an envy fully shared by the author of this paper. Indeed, by disposing of funds which permit the direction *and* financing of field work in a number of countries under the personal supervision of an expert researcher who is in full command of all spiritual and material resources for the project and who can pay for the work done strictly according to his prescription, a level of sophistication, control and standardization can be achieved over the entire cross-national research operation which can be hardly matched in any other way as long as present conditions prevail.

I conclude by stating - much in conformity with the position I still hold - that great and important contributions have been made to comparative social research in the past by the relatively small number of successful projects of this kind. Most of the enterprises in question were also headed by very high-minded and devoted scholars as the efficient direction of cross-national comparative research projects involves a considerable amount of self-sacrifice and inner motivation even under the most favourable conditions. In spite of this, and in spite of being convinced that *some* tasks of cross-national comparative survey research may be currently insoluble without recourse to a certain amount of 'Safari', I expressed my belief 'that the future belongs to another type of *truly multinational* comparative research'.

What I had in mind when writing this were just the kind of projects which were chosen for close consideration in our Round Table Conference and in all of which a considerable effort has been made to achieve the participation of all project members in all stages of the work.

The *effort* in question is clearly documented by the history of all five projects. This does not mean, however, that the goal has been fully reached - and this couldn't even have been expected under the prevailing circumstances.

On the whole, it seems to me, the relatively fullest and most general collaboration of the representatives of all national research teams involved in the respective projects was achieved (a) in that phase of the design work which was concerned with the adaptation of the basic concepts and methods of the survey to the varying political, cultural and social conditions and interests in each of the participating countries, (b) in the field work and the coding and shifting of domestically collected data, (c) in the production of country-by-country reports (wherever this was part of the research design).

Due to the different amount of sophistication and experience of the national research teams in methods and techniques of comparative analysis, lack of access to computers, lack of funds for travel, language difficulties, and many other factors, multinational collaboration was mostly less many-sided and less on an equal footing in the project phases devoted to comparative data processing and data analysis and the final drafting of the overall 'write-up' of the project. Nevertheless, remarkable progress towards fully-fledged overall cooperation has been achieved in some of the projects even in these respects, for instance in the *Values Project*.

As a matter of fact, I think the theoretical and methodological arsenal of comparative social research has been considerably *enriched* by the many highly inventive solutions to complex analytical, technical and organizational problems which simply *had* to be produced within the framework of these multinational projects to overcome the obstacles posed by factors such as those mentioned above.

But quite apart from this 'spin-off, the hard struggle involved in getting a working degree of agreement on intricate details of sample composition, questionnaire formulation, coding and all the other paraphernalia of survey work, with partners operating in a completely different climate of research and having an entirely different cultural and educational background, provides such deep insights into the core of the *substantive* problems the whole cross-national project is about and teaches one such important lesson for the subsequent *interpretation* of the cross-national data, that this in itself counterbalances - at least in my judgement - to a considerable extent advantages the Safari-type of cross-national research may as yet offer in some respects.

All in all, I am convinced that the trend towards achieving as much and as far-reaching multinational cooperation as possible in all phases of cross-national comparative survey research projects and to get away as far as possible from the 'Safari'-pattern of project organization is well-motivated on theoretical and practical grounds alike.

True, great differences between the various countries in the availability of suitably trained and experienced partners provide a formidable obstacle. But how can we hope for a change in this respect without including, in spite of such difficulties, countries on a lower level of 'preparedness' in comparative projects? Even political suspicions against international ventures of this kind,

against illegitimate disclosure (or distortion) of information - another important obstacle - can best be overcome by trying and trying again to achieve *bona fide* cooperation and setting counter-examples against the suspicions.

But quite apart from that, we do not even have much of a choice left. More and more countries, especially developing countries but not only those, are simply unwilling to permit data collection for the purposes of survey research on their territory without having a national research organization involved in carrying out the work and also participating in the design, execution and evaluation of the whole project. There are countries which have recently made this a law.

Personally I tend to regard cross-national comparative survey research not only as an important scholarly endeavour within the realm of social science, but also as a world-wide 'movement' of some sort which has among its aims the development of social research and of scientific knowledge about the human condition all over the globe, the achievement of closer cooperation and better understanding of social scientists and people in general. In such respects, even the most modest and unassuming project in which an effort is being made to achieve true multinational collaboration in as great a part of the work as possible has more promise in it for the future of social science than the most sophisticated project of the Safari-type.

I think Sidney Verba is quite right when he stresses in the concluding paragraph of his Draft Project Report that we should keep in mind the (hopefully) scientific purposes of our work and should avoid raising overexpectations as to the practical import of our work as we sometimes do before funding agencies and also before our students. However, I do not share Verba's view that 'maybe we would be better off if international social science were a little less social and a little more scientific'. Firstly I don't think that overdoing or overstressing practicality is particularly 'social'. Secondly, I do think that in a deeper sense international social science must become much more social in order to become more scientific.

Having thus explained my position concerning the scientific *and* social import of cross-national comparative survey research, this is probably the right place to express my thorough disagreement with some recommendations on research policy in the field of cross-national comparative studies put forward by Adam Przeworski and Henri Teune in their otherwise interesting and valuable book, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (New York - London, etc., 1970, Wiley Interscience).

We believe that the Primary implication is the shift of emphasis from data to theory. This will mean a concern for the development of theories through the exchange of findings on common theoretical problems rather than a concern for exchanging data. .. We think the reason for so much absorption of money, time, and research facilities in the technicalities of exchanging data is the view that comparative research means to examine centrally identical data from different systems rather than build and test general theories... International comparative research could proceed without the



difficulties of transporting data, translating documents, recoding data into a single format ... could become more of a joint intellectual venture and less of an entrepreneurial task. The organization of research could be directed to a process of inquiry in which the topic of discourse would be theories and the goal would be the increased generality of knowledge about the social world.

If the advice by Przeworski and Teune became somewhat generally accepted, we would be right back where we were *before* contemporary cross-national comparative survey research started. Social scientists belonging to different countries and different cultures would exchange 'findings' on theoretical problems without ever being able to know or to ascertain how their partner arrived at his 'findings', whether he has some factual evidence to support them, whether he means something similar or something entirely different by the terms and categories used in the description of his findings, whether indeed the theoretical problems to which his findings relate are really 'common'.

Briefly, we would be back at the stage where, for instance, social scientists could exchange views about 'national character' and the like without ever knowing what the other man was talking about.

It is nearly incomprehensible to me how somebody who has seriously engaged in cross-national comparative survey research could have missed the exciting intellectual venture in working out sample designs, questionnaires, codes, procedures for data handling and data processing, etc. together with partners from different countries and cultures in an integrated cross-national comparative research project. Is that to be characterized as an 'entrepreneurial task'?

I would also seriously doubt whether 'increased *generality* of knowledge about the social world' is - or should be - the main goal, still less the *only* goal of cross-national comparative research which can have and does have many other theoretical and practical goals to achieve.

As to the 'shift of emphasis from data to theory', I think that in *every* part of social science - including comparative social enquiry - we have still far too little reliable relevant and usable data (though a lot that is unreliable, irrelevant and unusable). On the other hand we have theories galore which cannot be tested, confirmed and established because suitable empirical evidence is lacking. Anybody sincerely interested in the progress of social theory should be warned at the primitive stage where we find ourselves *not* to shift the emphasis away from data.

Teune went so far in his bias as to include definitely *slanted* questions in his 'Draft Queries on Analysis and Interpretation' addressed to the participants of our Round Table Conference. Let us quote here one of his paragraphs (with underlining and comments added):

What are the likely payoffs of continuing to gather data within countries for cross-national comparison? (A legitimate question. However, Teune immediately suggests the 'right' answer to his respondents:) All of these studies are data rich and perhaps it could be argued theoretically impoverished. (As if theoretical impoverishment would

*follow* from data richness... As if we did not have around in social science enough studies 'rich' in theories but extremely poor in evidence supporting them...) If these kind of studies are extended to more countries and to more substantive areas, such as alienation, youth, etc., will we still be better off knowing that these observations were made in Poland, India and Belgium than knowing about relationships among variables without regard to specific countries? (As if cross-national comparative survey research were concerned mainly or only with national differences and did not offer one of the most important methodological approaches to the establishment of cross-nationally valid relationships among variables - nota bene: a going concern in all five projects considered in our Round Table Conference.) What is the prognosis of studies such as these not only for increasing the scale of knowledge but also its generality?

Well, the answer to Teune's last question is that probably the increase of the generality of knowledge is not so independent from the increase of the scale of knowledge as he suggests....

May I add at this point that Teune's position is particularly distressing to me because I appreciate so much the contributions he has made to the methodology of cross-national comparative survey research and I am distressed by the ideology he developed from a questionable epistemology of comparative social enquiry.

### 3. Assorted nightmares

Having said many nice things about cross-national comparative survey research projects in which an effort is being made to achieve true multinational cooperation: it is about time to say a few less nice things about them.

For instance, it can be maintained that the organization and execution of such projects can become a prolonged nightmare in which quite surrealistic things may happen.

Some anecdotal evidence from the history of the Time-Budget Project to support this thesis:

(1) On one of the sites two national research teams shared in the survey work, each doing about 1000 interviews on the same site. One of the household characteristics which had to be noted and later coded was whether there is a water closet (toilet) within the living quarters. The project director gets the first deck of cards, runs it routinely for marginals, then he gets the second deck and does the same with it. Glancing over the results, he notes: there are water closets in 78 per cent of the first thousand households but the same are to be found in only 11 per cent of the second thousand households. An investigation of the matter leads to the following results: (a) when the term 'water closet' is translated into the language of the site, the word 'water' gets lost; (b) due to lack of canalization very many households on the site have a 'peat closet', i.e. a toilet without water but with peat as an absorbent and deodorant; (c) the two teams forgot to agree on the important semantic question whether a 'peat closet' should or should not count as a 'real' closet in the sense of the survey - hence the difference.

NB. Obviously, the same thing could have happened - and probably has happened without being noticed - in respect to many other code categories. In spite of innumerable meetings for the discussion and establishment of codes, supervised training courses for interviewers and coders, etc., linguistic and cultural factors intervene to produce a 'snafu' in the most unexpected places. In at least one of the five projects under consideration an extensive recoding of the whole contribution of a partner had to be undertaken when already everything else fell into place.

(2) When already everything was settled about the exchange and transfer of card decks and the processing of the material from several countries on the computer of a relatively affluent participant, the customs office of the country where that computer was located came up with the Hegelian question whether a freshly punched card is a *new punched card* or a *used one*? (Different customs regulations would apply in each of the cases.) After a long and extensive correspondence with the project director the customs office finally decided that only a 'virgin' punched card ('une carte vierge' - *sic!*) would qualify as new. Data processing became enriched by a new technical term for expressing 'un-perforatedness' - but it meant more than 2 months of delay in the processing operation.

NB. There is an international agreement about the handling of printed information (books, journals, etc.) by customs but none whatsoever about the handling of punched card decks, data tapes and the like. This latter is a complex problem and of course not only the interests of social science are involved. But something ought to be done about it and perhaps UNESCO should consider what could be done.

(3) The project director receives a long-distance call from the computer centre at 2.30 a.m. (Night shifts of academic computers available at a reduced rate and sometimes even gratis played an important role in the poorly financed Time-Budget Project.) The question: 'Why are illegal codes used throughout the card deck of site K when it comes to the question *with whom people slept?*' Good gracious, what's that? - the project director thinks. Then he recalls sleepily: (a) every daily activity of respondents was coded together with a special code for the location and another one for the 'company', i.e. the people in the accompaniment of whom it has been executed; (b) there was a special instruction that in the case of *sleep* the code for 'alone' would have to be used in the 'company'-columns because otherwise the 7 or 8 hours people may spend sleeping in the company of their wife and possibly of their children would completely distort the data about the time spent with wife, with children, with the nuclear family, etc. Yes, but why did the participants in charge of site K use an illegal code instead of the code for 'alone'? The project director goes to the file and finds that the typist of the coding instruction has used 'x's to divide the various paragraphs of the instruction from each other. He used

x x x

as a dividing sign after the paragraph referring to the correct coding of 'company' with reference to 'sleep'. The colleagues at site K understood this as an instruction to use the otherwise illegal 'x' (=11) code with reference to sleep in all three 'company' columns. And so on, and so forth.

However, such incredible and bothersome troubles by no means pop up only in the phase of data processing. What about funding? What if - as is reported in one of our five projects - the central funding agency suddenly advises the project director who is right in the middle of organizing an all-important meeting of the participants that not a penny of the funds can be used for covering the travelling costs of participants from two countries involved? Or when a participant suddenly withdraws leaving a big hole in the carefully balanced cross-national design because he became aware of the fact that the research is 'not enough relevant' for an idea he cherishes?

As it happens, the 12-country Time-Budget Project had a thirteenth participating country, namely Cuba. The survey work was carried out quite expertly (in Sta. Clara and Matanzas) by a team organized at the University of Havana. The material was coded and the team began to transfer it to punched tape on an old Burroughs machine, the only one available. After a while the machine broke down - some fixture got worn out. For 2 years efforts were made to replace the worn-out fixture; this proved to be impossible due to the blockade. Then efforts continued to get out the coded sheets from Cuba for processing elsewhere: this proved to be impossible due to governmental regulations. We lost the Cuban data. For quite different but equally accidental reasons, losses of project partnership were incurred also in the course of the *Delinquency, Year 2000* and *Participation* Projects.

Or what about the nightmare of having to work on computers in different countries under the prevailing conditions? What about finding in some place an oldish 'cyrillonumeric' computer in the printout of which no difference could be made between the number '3' and the Cyrillic character for 'z' so that a whole re-run had to be made with a modified program in order to take account of this little problem of 'semantics'.

I think every participant of the five projects under discussion could add his share to the evidence supporting the newest version of Murphy's law as applied to cross-national comparative survey research on a multinational cooperative basis: 'Anything untoward that could possibly happen will happen. Anything untoward that couldn't possibly happen will happen too.'

The worst nightmare of all - and the father of many - is, of course, money. Able and willing partners withdraw from the project because of the lack of funds. Matters which could be settled in 5 minutes by making a long-distance call take weeks of laborious correspondence. Sample sizes have to be cut, schedules of interviewers have to be crowded and repeated calls omitted, checking procedures eliminated, and so forth, because some sources of funding have dried up. Participants stay away from meetings or cannot be met for

discussing essential aspects of the project with them because no travelling funds are available. After having been able to carry out within 2 years the field work, the coding, the data processing up to the marginals and even the production of a preliminary project report in eight countries participating in the Time-Budget Project, it took us more than a year till we could scrape together enough money and enough charitably donated computer time so that we could even think of entering the phase of comprehensive cross-national analysis. An even greater delay was involved in achieving the necessary financial arrangements for the publication of the voluminous final report. It took a considerable effort to ensure that the printed volume containing the findings becomes available to the public around the eighth anniversary of the first meeting of the participants in Budapest where the basic design of the project was developed.

Somewhat contrary to expectations, political and ideological differences between the participants seem to produce much less trouble. Of course, where the research topic is of a *directly* political character - as in the *Year 2000* or the *Values Projects* - *ceteris paribus* more controversies of this kind are likely to occur than elsewhere.

I can speak out of personal experience only about the Time-Budget Project. There we succeeded, even in January 1966, when few if any signs of the present détente were available, to get observers from the German Democratic Republic to our meeting of participants in Cologne. To the best of our knowledge it was the first time that social scientists from both German states met around a conference table and the discussion ended up by getting full partnership for the project on the east of the Elbe river. Moreover, my experience was that whenever one of the partners from the twelve different countries began to ramble on about the advantages of the political and ideological system to which he adhered, about differences this should make in the design of the study, in the establishment of coding categories or the evaluation of results, or whenever one of the partners thought it fit to inject political or ideological arguments in methodological debates, it proved to have a healthy cooling effect to be able to ask: 'O.K., so what? What concrete changes do you propose to make in the questionnaire? What alternative sampling methods, coding procedures, weightings, etc. do you want to introduce? What additional tables should we run to take care of your point?' At this point it either appeared that the political or ideological judgement or difference in question was more or less irrelevant for the research design, or else it became a strictly professional technical question of what measure should be taken in order to take care of the matter - what question should be reformulated or added, what columns should be reserved for mandatory or voluntary additional coding, what alternative weightings should be tried out and the like. Beyond the tables agreed upon, any participant was entitled to ask for runs made according to his own prescriptions, and naturally every participant was free to contribute any interpretation of his national data or of the whole array of multinational data to the final project report; indeed a

huge special section has been devoted to such individual contributions in the final report. Thus political and ideological differences among the participants proved to be - at least in the case of the Time-Budget Project - only moderately bothersome, and insofar as they were relevant to substantive questions they could be dealt with adequately and sometimes even enriched the project. Only in a very few cases had sacrifices or compromises to be made in order to keep the peace, mostly with regard to minor matters which for some reason or other became a bone of contention. Even then it was rather more a question of the personalities involved, politics or ideologies served only as a 'rationalization'. Where politics or ideologies have to do with the *subject matter* of a comparative study, one should be able to cope with them as with any other substantive variable which must be taken into account. This had nothing to do with nightmares but is to be regarded as part and parcel of the usual business of cross-national comparative research which is admittedly not easy.

#### 4. The acceptance of cross-national survey research

Many of the main practical difficulties encountered in the organization and execution of cross-national survey research projects seem to be related in some way to the fact that *this type of research has not yet achieved general acceptance as an essential and legitimate branch of social science studies.*

Let us dwell a little on this point.

In the field of the physical and life sciences there are quite a number of internationally recognized and rather prestigious transnational, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations whose approval or backing given to a project involving data-gathering in various countries is widely regarded as a guarantee of the seriousness, trustworthiness and *bona fide* scholarly character of the project in question. This proves to be of great help in the acquisition of partners and also of funds for carrying out the necessary research operations in various countries, especially in countries where research initiatives from abroad are regarded with some mistrust and misgiving, often not without justification due to bad experiences in the past.

In the field of the social sciences and especially in the field of comparative social studies we know at present of no transnational organization which would enjoy such universal acceptance and moral prestige as, for instance, the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) whose approval and backing of the International Geophysical Year (and of many other 'cross-national' science projects) was an enormously important factor in making it possible to collect and exchange data on a world-wide basis even in such strategically sensitive areas as weather formation, local values of geophysical variables, etc.

Frankly speaking, the parallel institution to ICSU in the field of social sciences, the International Social Science Council (ISSC) is not currently recognized

to any great extent as a body whose approval or moral support given to a cross-national survey research project would mean much in the way of a recommendation or a guarantee in most parts of the world. As a matter of fact, it is not even very well known among scholars, or among governmental authorities, national research councils and similar agencies in many parts of the world. Even where ISSC is known, it is often regarded, perhaps wrongly, as being a relatively closed club which is, in effect, controlled by a fairly restricted group of scholars and representatives of national scientific establishments from a limited number of countries. All this in spite of the fact that ISSC has doubtlessly achieved very considerable merit by sponsoring over the years a whole series of international meetings, symposia, training courses, etc., concerned with problems of cross-national survey research and has given also its backing to some very meritorious projects such as, for instance, the *Values Project* which had ISSC as its moral sponsor.

In the inter-governmental sector UNESCO enjoys, of course, considerable world-wide recognition and authority but after some promising beginnings it has not done too much for the development of cross-national comparative research. Although we have witnessed more recently some favourable signs of a change in this respect, UNESCO, by its very character as a specialized agency within the United Nations system, can hardly function as a forum for the 'accreditation' of individual scholarly projects in the field of cross-national survey research.

On the other hand, the Vienna Centre has proved to be a very valuable aegis for the organization and execution of cross-national comparative projects, but essentially only within Europe. Its greatest asset is that the acceptance of a project proposal by its Board of Directors facilitates to a considerable extent the establishment of 'East-West' partnerships in projects of this kind. In many East European socialist countries a project having the support of the Vienna Centre is regarded *ipso facto* as one in which active participation could and should be seriously considered. Nothing comparable to the Vienna Project in this respect exists to the best of my knowledge with regard to most other regions, especially to those of the Third World.

On the other hand, the Vienna Centre is at present hardly able to give much more than an 'accreditation' to projects. With respect to tasks of project coordination and project management its functions are in the main restricted to the facilitation of exchanges, organization of meetings, assistance in evaluation and write-up, and the like. Its contacts in many countries are, of course, very useful in the search for suitable project partners. However, it has as yet little funds, little manpower, little facilities to give effective *operational* support to the project directors in the coordination and the day-by-day management of multinational research projects. Least of all can it give any help in the handling and processing of the data. True, the Vienna Centre has a few very good young scholars as scientific secretaries who have considerable background and ex-

perience in cross-national comparative studies. However, most of them have to care for more than one project and they are also overburdened with administrative responsibilities, their involvement in the core of the research work in any single project is therefore often rather limited.

The factual situation is that - apart from a few exceptional cases - the director of a cross-national survey research has to rely on the institute or the other scholarly institution to which he belongs for the effective organizational, administrative and secretarial support he needs in the coordination and day-by-day management of his multinational project. Only rarely will special funds be available for such central tasks of project coordination and management. Mostly the project director will have to 'steal' his own working time, the organizational, administrative and secretarial manpower needed, often even the whole overhead of his directorial activities from the research institute or other scholarly institution to which he belongs - in many cases on the good pretext that the organization in question happens to be anyway a 'partner' to the multinational project as it carries out the survey in the home country of the project director.

Now, quite obviously, such a solution has its drawbacks. Although the project director's 'own' institute may be quite willing to join the project as a participant, this does not mean that its management and its supervisory authorities will tolerate to an unlimited extent the diversion of the institute's manpower, funds and facilities for the purposes of multinational project coordination and management. Also, the choice of the person to be entrusted with the direction of the project will be biased by the consideration of how affluent or well-equipped is the institute where he happens to be employed. Whatever scholarly qualifications and aptitudes somebody may have for directing a major cross-national survey research project, he will have a much reduced chance to get into such a position or to launch a project under his own direction if he does not have an important institute as an 'operational base'. And, with very rare exceptions, the operational base of the project director will be a *national* institute, not an international one, simply because there are so few international institutes in the field of social science. As it happens, somewhat affluent and well-equipped social science research institutes will be found only in a very limited number of countries, the great majority of them will be concentrated in a few. All this has fairly evident implications for the present situation of cross-national survey research and all this contributes to the difficulties.

*There is a very great need for international, possibly regional, social science centres which are constituted in such a way that the backing they can give to bona fide scholarly cross-national comparative research projects promotes the multinational acceptance of such projects and that are equipped to serve as an operational base for the coordination and management of such projects.*

Also, problems of funding have something to do with the acceptance of cross-national survey research. In at least somewhat affluent countries, but also



in a number of rather poor countries, partners who are strongly motivated to participate in a cross-national project mostly somehow find the funds needed to carry out the local fieldwork or make personal sacrifices and succeed in mobilizing so much voluntary labour that domestic expenses are reduced to a minimum. However, expenses for fieldwork, and even all sorts of country-by-country domestic expenses taken together, account for only a part, and very often the smaller part, of the total costs of a cross-national survey research project.

The *transnational* expenses connected with such a project constitute the *real* problem of funding, especially as they nearly always have to be paid in convertible currencies which are scarce in most parts of the world. To name only a few of the more important transnational costs involved: travels abroad of the project director to organize, coordinate and supervise the research work; travels abroad of the project partners to project meetings or for the purpose of participating in working groups concerned with the elaboration of the project design, with comparative analysis and with the write-up of the project; central data processing for purposes of cross-national comparative data analysis, and/or computer time for participants who do not have access to computers even for the purpose of processing their own national data; multilingual translation of project documents (sampling instructions, questionnaires, codes, etc.); international airmailing of punched card decks, data tapes, computer printouts; international long distance phones and cables.

The fact is that most of these costs, especially costs of extensive travel abroad for many persons, possibly including a number of transoceanic flights, expenses for massive international air-mailings, costly international cables and phone calls, simply do not occur in 'normal' social science research carried out within a single country, and play a relatively minor role in most other research projects which national funding agencies are wont to finance. But almost all funding agencies for research, especially social science research, are of a national character and many of them have statutes or legal obligations which specifically forbid them to spend money on anything but 'national research', i.e. research done by their own nationals and possibly even only within the limits of their own country. True, there are a few international organizations and internationally-minded foundations or other sponsors who are willing to give some financial support to international research or to research teams working in countries where funds for research purposes are hard to come by. However, all these funding agencies are notoriously wary in approving applications for research grants in which 'foreign travel', 'meetings', 'long-distance calls and cables' and the like figure as important items in the budget. As a matter of fact, these are the budget items to which the first and most radical cuts will be applied. They are regarded as 'luxury items' or 'accessory items' at best - not as essential parts of the research work.

It may be true that in some or even in many kinds of research, foreign travel and costly meetings with participants brought in from far-away countries play

only an accessory role and can even be totally avoided. However, in cross-national survey projects transnational contacts maintained by travel, by meetings of the participants, by long-distance phones and cables are part and parcel of the research operation and represent the heartbeat, nay, the functions of the central nerve system within the organization of the project.

But here again we stumble into the problem that cross-national survey research is not yet a generally accepted way of doing social research. Its peculiar, and in some way even unique, requirements are not yet sufficiently realized by those who should support it. Nor are its benefits sufficiently appreciated by most.

Perhaps the needs of the international community, the ever-growing global socio-economic problems with which the United Nations has to cope within the framework of its Development Programme and more recently also in the field of population policies, environmental policies, and so forth, will lead to a better realization and to a better international institutional acceptance of the scholarly *and* practical - even practical-political - value of cross-national survey research.

It is an encouraging sign in this respect that in recent years the United Nations system has found it necessary to create within its own realm a number of research centres - some of them with widely international tasks, like the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), others of a regional character - which form, at least potentially, a new type of basis for international social science.

It is beginning to be felt in the United Nations that cross-national survey research can become an important factor in the process of securing a more solid basis for international policy-making than sole reliance on the views and judgements of government representatives. It is not that the United Nations has suddenly become research-prone or research-minded that has led to such developments. It will take quite a while until the United Nations (an inter-governmental organization, let us not forget!) realizes that research is worth supporting even if no direct contribution to the wisdom of policy-makers can be expected from it. Still, the fact that the United Nations feels the need for more comparative social research and lets its own research organs engage in fairly far-reaching cross-national survey research projects gives some ground for hope that the time may come when cross-national survey research will receive all the acceptance and all the support from inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental agencies that it needs and deserves, in order to fulfil its functions in the realm of social science and of human knowledge and endeavour in general.