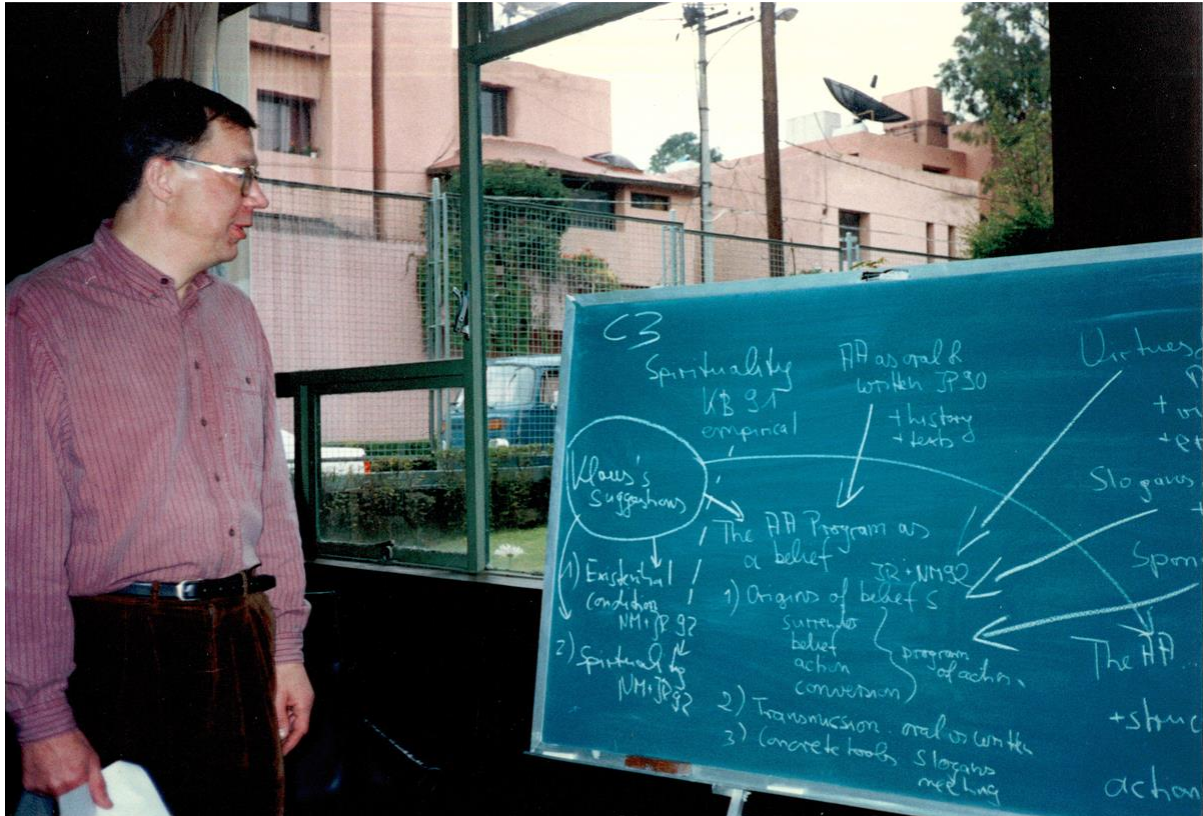


Published as: Room, R. (2014) Klaus Mäkelä, 1939-2013: A socially committed scholar, an inspiring research leader. *Addiction* 109(9):1564-1565.

Klaus Mäkelä – a socially committed scholar, an inspiring research leader



Klaus organizing the tasks for the jointly-authored book of the International Collaborative Study of Alcoholics Anonymous, Mexico City, early 1990s

Klaus Mäkelä died in December 2013, at the age of 74. Recruited to alcohol studies by Kjetil Bruun in 1964, he retired officially in 2000, although continuing with his intellectual interests, including for instance a line of work arguing that medically-oriented ethics requirements often gravely constrict social science research without substantial benefit to subjects [1], and a critique of cost-of-alcohol studies as a research program [2].

Klaus' contributions to the field are wide-ranging and lasting. At a conceptual level, his co-authored paper on the diverse and conflicting roles of the state with respect to alcohol [3] has been widely used as a guiding frame. His paper on "The uses of alcohol and their cultural regulation" [4] is a landmark consideration of the wide range of use-values for alcohol in human societies. He made a number of contributions to our understanding of cultural variations in drinking patterns and their relation to rates of alcohol problems (e.g., [5]), and gave the field clear and thoughtful advice on "how to describe the domains of drinking and consequences" [6].

Such advice drew on Klaus' long experience with general-population alcohol surveys. He played a key role in conceptualising and developing the questionnaire for the 1968-1969 study [7] of the effects of the Finnish alcohol control liberalisation at that time – a study which became the foundation of a major tradition of measurement of amount and pattern of drinking, in terms of the most recent concrete drinking occasions. He contributed many empirical survey analyses to the literature, including for instance an early cross-national comparison of attitudes to drinking and drunkenness [8]. Klaus also took a deep interest in the societal handling of alcohol problems, whether in health, social or criminal justice services, contributing to policy debates on who should handle what, both in conceptual terms [9] and also empirically – for instance, in a unique study mapping the distributions between different Finnish authorities of “alcohol-related overnight stays” [10]. While leading the international study of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), discussed below, Klaus analysed across societies the conditions for the particular response to alcohol problems which AA represents [11].

Klaus worked in a context where alcohol research was long funded and organised as a part of the state alcohol control system, but operated with de-facto intellectual independence. In this context, he was able to make important contributions to alcohol policy studies, for instance contributing alongside colleagues to studies of the effects on alcohol problem rates of temporary restrictions in the alcohol supply [12], and analysing the changing responsibilities of the Nordic alcohol monopolies as Finland moved towards joining the European Union [13].

All these contributions were primarily made in Klaus' role as a working alcohol sociologist. Outside the world of alcohol studies, he was recognised in Finland for his political contributions in the reform movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and for his later contributions to general sociology [14], and in the Nordic world for such roles as a term as editor of the general social science journal, *Acta Sociologica*. As director of the Social Research Institute of Alcohol Studies and then as Secretary of the Finnish Foundation for Alcohol Studies, he was an effective team-builder, mentor and coach for two generations of Finnish social alcohol and drug researchers.

Picking up on a tradition established by Kjetil Bruun, Klaus was a collaborative and productive participant in a number of international and interdisciplinary research projects, and led two of them: the International Study of Alcohol Control Experiences (ISACE) [15], and the International Collaborative Study of Alcoholics Anonymous [16]. In these projects, he broke new ground by developing a multiple-track model, in a situation where each participating national team had to find national resources for their participation. Besides the joint international report of the study, there were one or more compilations of loosely comparable national reports (e.g., [17],[18]), and a dense undergrowth of articles, theses and working papers stimulated by and growing out of the study. Under Klaus' leadership, with an emphasis on collective decision-making and leadership by example [19], both ISACE and the international AA study were extraordinarily fertile projects, launching the careers of young scholars, and opening up new lines of research.

Klaus played a key role in the intellectual flowering which has made Finland a world leader in social alcohol research. Klaus' contributions to alcohol research internationally were recognised in his election as the first President of the main international alcohol social science society, the Kjetil

Bruun Society for Social and Epidemiological Research on Alcohol, and with his receipt, relatively early in his career, of the premier international alcohol research award, the Jellinek Award.

Such formal recognitions are just and proper, but for those who have known and worked with Klaus do not capture his unique qualities and abilities. Klaus was a lively and imaginative thinker, whose contributions to the discussion were always stimulating and to the point. As a research leader, he inspired scholars with diverse backgrounds and interests to plan and work together, welcoming a variety of side-analyses along the way but maintaining a focus on the project's central tasks. His research was informed by commitments both to social justice and to a clear-eyed analysis of social realities. His presence is sorely missed. But his legacy will sustain us.

ROBIN ROOM

Centre for Alcohol Policy Research, Turning Point, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia
Melbourne School of Population & Global Health, University of Melbourne
Centre for Social Research on Alcohol & Drugs, Stockholm University
e-mail: robinr@turningpoint.org.au

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