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Transport Surveys
Raising the Standard

**Proceedings of an International Conference on
Transport Survey Quality and Innovation**

May 24-30, 1997

Grainau, Germany

TRANSPORT SURVEYS: RAISING THE STANDARD

**Proceedings of an International Conference on
Transport Survey Quality and Innovation
May 24-30, 1997**

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This proceedings is from the conference entitled “Transport Surveys: Raising the Standard,” which was held at Eibsee, Germany from May 24 through May 30, 1997. The conference was sponsored by the Transportation Research Board, SOCIALDATA, GmbH, München; the Directorate-General for Transport, DGVII of the European Commission, Brussels; the Transport Research Centre, Melbourne, Australia; and the Ministry of Transport, Transport Research Centre, Rotterdam, Netherlands. Socialdata undertook the local organization of the conference, including the hotel facilities, the local program, staff for registration, distribution of conference materials, and so forth. The Transportation Research Board provided sponsorship of the U.S. Steering Committee and its meetings in the U.S., and is also publishing the proceedings of the conference. The other sponsors assisted with some of the costs of the conference, including sponsorship of persons from eastern European countries by DGVII. The Conference Steering Committee would like to thank these sponsors for their contributions to the success of this conference.

All major transport policy and investment decisions are based on a careful evaluation of options, which in turn is underpinned by various data collection exercises; the validity of the final assessment is crucially dependent on the quality of these data inputs. In many countries, survey budgets are under increasing pressure while, at the same time, greater demands are being placed on the analyst to explain why as well as what people are doing. It is therefore crucial to identify which are the most appropriate survey instruments to meet the needs of the various data users, in a cost-effective way and to make the case for collecting data of high quality. There is much ignorance among transport professionals in all countries about how to specify and judge the quality of surveys of travelers, and increasing pressures to “cut corners” to save money. At the same time, advances in technology and methodology provide a range of new opportunities to collect important data in new and cost-effective ways, the potential value and quality of which need to be carefully assessed.

This conference was designed to provide an unique opportunity to examine these issues in depth with many leaders in the field of survey methodology, over a six-day period in a relaxed environment. Most of the working sessions were in small workshop sessions, using a set of commissioned resource papers to provide a basis of discussion. All those attending had the opportunity to make their input to what was designed to be a set of Guidelines, to be drawn to assist practitioners in selecting appropriate survey techniques and ensuring that the work is of high quality.

The conference had four main aims:

1. To share and disseminate knowledge about various aspects of surveys (sampling, instrument design, coding, etc.);
2. To recommend a set of basic procedures for designing, conducting, and analyzing surveys;
3. To derive a set of measures of data quality that can be applied in different contexts; and
4. To assess future research needs, taking into account both the requirements of analysts and policy makers, and the challenges posed by technological developments (e.g., Global Positioning Systems).

The contributors to the success of this conference are too many to name. However, a few should be mentioned specifically. We would especially like to thank Werner Brög for his inspiration to hold this conference, and for all of the work that he and his staff at SOCIALDATA contributed in the organization of a very successful conference, including Ursula Hüttner for her work in managing registrations, the paper flows, and keeping everything on track before, during, and after the conference. We would like to thank Alice Watland of the TRB for frequently riding herd on the North American members of the Steering Committee, and for all of her work in arranging meetings, and providing support to the Steering Committee. Finally, special mention should be made of Elaine Murakami of US DOT who took on herself the task of rounding up tardy reviews and stray resource papers. Without the help of these persons, and numerous others, this conference could not have been a success.

We hope that these Proceedings will provide a useful resource base for those with an interest in survey methods, whether as practitioners, researchers, or commissioners of surveys and survey research. We also hope that the effort that went into producing this document will help to raise the state of practice of transport surveys in the future.

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