

This week we are profiling Tim Paul who joined TASA in August this year. Tim has worked as a consultant for over thirty years, the last ten of which as CEO of Org Change, a boutique management consultancy, of which he is the founder. Tim's career has been varied having worked in senior management positions in technology, fashion and finance before taking on roles in consulting. His work has taken him around the world. One of the benefits of consulting as Tim sees it has been the opportunity to live and work in Europe, the UK, the USA and Hong Kong in addition to doing assignments in many other locations.

Originally consulting in IT, Tim's work expanded into broader areas of management due to the realisation that many aspects of organisational change are catalysed through technology implementations. Through many projects, patterns emerged as to the strengths and weaknesses of project change, stimulating what Tim describes as a process of lifetime learning. At the tender age of forty three, Tim returned to academia to pursue a Masters at Curtin University and a Grad Cert at AGSM. On completion, he took on part-time lecturing at Curtin for a few years while continuing his consulting work in Australia.

His consulting continued to evolve, increasingly taking him into the boardrooms of Australian organisations to advise on strategy, mergers and acquisitions, technology, change, leadership and management. Finding that management theory did not always provide the insights necessary to deal with some of the pernicious issues these organisations faced, Tim expanded his purview, increasingly drawing from anthropology and sociology as questions of culture, in particular, arose.

This engagement with sociology eventually led Tim to the work of Jeffrey Alexander and the team at Yale's Centre for Cultural Sociology. It was as a consequence of exploring the work of academics associated with cultural sociology that Tim discovered several Australian fellows of the CCS program that in turn led him to TASA.

It was the potential for collegial conversations, establishing 'give and take' relationships, and building bridges between academic and professional worlds that were most attractive. More specifically it was the prospect of "lively debate regarding conceptions of culture and approaches to cultural analysis" and "communication and collaboration between ... members" that Tim noted on the Cultural Sociology Thematic Group's page that helped sell the idea of joining to him. It didn't stop there, though.

These sentiments were echoed in Dan Woodman's welcome video that can be found on the 'About TASA' page. Tim says it was Dan's welcoming of those, "... working in sociology, not just in academia but in government and the private sector, to come together to talk about the cutting edge in sociological research, and the big challenges for the discipline" that resonated. He particularly liked Dan's challenge "what are the big things facing Australian society" and to "advocate for sociology in the Australian community."

It seemed TASA was offering access to the tribe Tim was looking for. So, how has his experience with TASA been to date?

The ice-breaking 'Tea Time' sessions have, indeed, been warm and collegial. These have been a good way to meet and get to know some of the other TASA members and exchange points of view. Tim is of the view that he needs to be a bit more patient with Thematic Groups, though, as there has not yet been the take-up of available online forum mechanisms that would be ideal for facilitating the "lively debate" he was looking for. There are other mechanisms available, though, such as the forthcoming 'Cultures of Wellbeing' workshop in November which he is looking forward to attending online.

Although it is early days, Tim has another concern - is TASA oriented towards academics exclusively, or academics and the wider audience Dan Woodman described in his welcome video? Again, time will tell but Tim remains optimistic.

Of course, member-based organisations thrive on the active participation of their members. Tim is also hopeful that he may be able to offer the benefit of his experience to any member embarking on or furthering a career in consulting as well as lending a hand as other opportunities arise.