

PRESENT AND FUTURE SOCIAL NEEDS AND THE
MECHANISMS REQUIRED TO MONITOR THEM

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This presentation focuses on the present and future social needs of the public, and tracking these needs by surveys. It is divided into two parts. First, the writer gives some history of the tracking systems. Then, he speaks about the future and his forecasts for the new tracking systems.

BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

First of all, let's speak about the history.

By 1939, some researchers working for CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) alluded to the importance of easily identifying, from the accounts of radio listening, the audience profiles with the help of socio-cultural variables rather than limiting the profiles to socio-demographic variables such as age, sex, occupation and so on. It was not until the early 70's that this methodological concern became a reality in the United States, and then only for certain marketing and applied social research studies. A few years later, around '73-'74, this tendency spread to a number of European countries, such as France and England. South Africa followed, along with Japan, Germany, Scandinavian countries such as Finland, Sweden and Norway. Recently, Italy and other countries joined. Soon we will add Brazil and Argentina to the list. While this new research tradition may supply information related to radio and television listening, along with consumption of other mass media, the continuous and systematic use of a group of socio-cultural variables to map out the public, still exists nowhere on earth.

HOW CAN WE EXPLAIN THIS PHENOMENON? CAN THESE EXPLANATIONS HELP US TO PREDICT THE EVOLUTION OF OUR TRACKING INSTRUMENTS IN THE 80's AND INTO THE 90's?

The example of what is happening, with the systematic reports of audience ratings will permit me to make an initial comment. It was always very costly - that goes without saying - to report the ratings. Furthermore, these costs are annual.

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These findings have meaning for the users to the extent that they allow comparisons from year to year, or at different times within the same year. These comparisons are only possible if no major changes are made in the scientific method of data collection from one time to the next. I'm thinking, for example, about the monthly reports on manpower in Canada, or the audience reports from B.B.M. (Bureau of Broadcast Measurement) or Neilsen. Advertising salesmen and data buyers, various users became accustomed, from one year to the next, to the same measures, and, regardless of the good will of those who wished to change, the economics of the system and the daily work habits continued to perpetuate the past. We have only to think in Canada of what it is taking to go from the British to the metric system. This change requires a deep transformation in outlook and depends on future generations of users. The same goes, in our profession, for use of a methodology based on the systematic accounts of psycho-socio-cultural needs. Must I add that we are practising a profession which is less than 50 years old and that I'm speaking about a tradition within this profession which is less than 10 years old, while the practice of census-taking - accounting for the number of houses, of animals, of people, their ages, etc. goes back thousands of years. There were censuses done, as we all know, in Roman times and even earlier. The young age of our profession, you will tell me, should, in comparison to the census tradition, facilitate change and acceptance of new methods. I believe this, in effect, and I think that the development of new methods has shown it. On the other hand, the type of facts gathered in a census or in surveys practised up until now are more familiar and acceptable to 'us'. These facts better account for themselves, if one follows a certain acquired notion of the rationality and understanding of a 'fact', that is, following an approach of knowledge that is 'more' familiar to most of us. This tradition, in my opinion, contributes to slowing down the turn to new methods which do not yet appear sufficiently tangible to be judged acceptable. I will return to this point later on. It is a basic part of my presentation today.

WHY TURN TO SOCIO-CULTURAL TRACKING SYSTEMS IN SURVEY PRACTICE TODAY?

There are several reasons. I'll mention some that seem to me to be the most important. First, in the U.S. nearly 40% of the population has a college education. In Canada, it's nearly 30%. Furthermore, in the two countries,

and more and more in Europe, household and individual incomes are high among a greater number of people. Differences among the population are appearing to a greater extent through choice of lifestyle and quality of life, and not solely through simple socio-demographic characteristics such as age, level of education, etc... Even among families of modest means, the lifestyles they choose often characterize them better than the socio-demographic variables to which we have traditionally turned. As some of our monitors' results have shown us, even age differences are not as pertinent or discriminating as before. Young people and those who are not so young are aligned with one another because they share the same values and the same type of lifestyle, and they have the same needs. If a user or a researcher wants to focus on homogeneous groups and these are more and more numerous, and directly communicate with, understand (or be understood by) them, he will have to seek a more refined methodology than before. Another reason which encourages the use of socio-cultural trend monitors is based on the observation that this new methodology itself corresponds, by its composition, to the new socio-cultural trends or to the new needs, the tracking of which is its purpose. A trend, for example, like the lessening differences between the sexes, already tells us that the sole reliance on the sex variable is not subtle enough to analyze present needs. We have all witnessed the birth of unisex stores and clothing. We all experiment in our various domains, advertising and other, with changes regarding the way we treat the sexes.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT SOCIAL TRACKING SYSTEMS TO ADDRESS THIS REALITY OR ARE ALL THESE SYSTEMS ALIKE? ARE THERE MANY SYSTEMS IN EACH COUNTRY?

I have spoken up until now about socio-cultural tracking. There are, however, other social tracking instruments, such as the example of the system of Gallup polls published in the press. In regrouping them, we find the greatest number in the United States. I came up with six. Each has its own characteristics. They all have some similarities and many differences. I decided to classify them in two groups and call one the social monitors and the other, socio-cultural monitors. Among the social monitors are the Roper Report, the Harris Monitor, the Cambridge Monitor and the system of Gallup polls which is surely the oldest of the social monitors. Among the socio-cultural monitors, there is the Yankelovich Monitor. It is the first of the socio-cultural monitors. Established

in 1970, it was almost exclusively, with the exception of the COFREMCA tracking system in France, which influences Italy, South Africa and other countries, the model of all socio-cultural monitors in Europe, Asia and Africa. The most recent of the type is the Values and Lifestyles (VALS) of S.R.I. Inc. (1978), formerly called the Stanford Research Institute. Clients have access to these monitors through subscription. All these monitors are based on information gathered on a periodic basis, either annually or more often, by in-home questionnaires among samples varying from 1,000 to 2,500 people. These monitors present their data in the form of indicators constructed from one or more questions. The tracking of these questions through time provides the trends in changing mentalities, attitudes or behaviour found among the public. None of these monitors, however, has been developed to describe the trends following the psycho-socio-cultural needs or characteristics of the public. The Gallup poll system, like the ROPER, Harris or Cambridge surveys, are more inclined to base their analyses on the socio-demographic characteristics of their public. The psycho-socio-cultural monitors, such as Yankelovich or S.R.I., describe their public, furthermore, with psycho-socio-cultural variables. For the past four years, within an organization called RISC, the International Research Institute on Social Change*, the directors of most of the socio-cultural monitors, which exist in over thirteen industrial countries, get together annually and share their work experiences. The synergy resulting from such exchanges helps each member to be more sensitive to the psycho-social needs of today and of the future. Thus they will be able to improve the instruments to track and detect these needs.

WHAT ARE THESE SOCIAL NEEDS? WHAT WILL THESE SOCIAL NEEDS BE IN THE 80's? WHAT IMPLICATIONS WILL THEY HAVE ON RESEARCHERS AND THEIR METHODOLOGIES? WHAT CHANGES WILL PRESENT MONITORS UNDERGO?

I am not God. I am a social scientist. I work always being aware that there are margins of error in the results we obtain. Since I myself have changed considerably in the past twenty years, I would like to warn you that what I foresee as social needs and as tracking instruments for the 80's reflects to some extent my own vivid imagery as well as my empirical observations. I would like, on the one hand, to not take myself too seriously, while on the other hand,

* L'Institut de Recherches Internationales sur le Changement socio-culturel, in French.

I would like to bring out a certain continuity in my observations. Nor will I be able to cover the whole foreseeable range of social needs. Our systems do not allow it. Since I am first and foremost empirical, my reflections will be drawn from that with which I am more familiar; my experiences with RISC, my knowledge of survey results from here and elsewhere, my professional readings and personal growth, particularly in the past eight years.

Since the establishment of socio-cultural monitors, the different monitors have followed the evolution of about forty trends. Monitors which are members of RISC, following about thirty trends, provide comparisons between countries; the remaining trends apply to the country of origin alone. Here is a list of some trends which are presently being monitored:

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| 1. Decline of "social standing" | 14. Sexual liberalism |
| 2. Marginal differentiation | 15. Resistance to manipulation |
| 3. Personality expression | 16. Anti-social constraints |
| 4. Personal creativity | 17. Simplification of life |
| 5. Self-manipulation | 18. Sensitivity to nature |
| 6. Career growth and fulfillment | 19. Sensitivity to position in life |
| 7. Openness to change | 20. Need for roots |
| 8. Anti-authority | 21. Polysensuality |
| 9. Less attachment to order | 22. Intraception |
| 10. Openness to others | 23. Less differentiation of the sexes |
| 11. Anti-accumulation | 24. Care for personal appearance |
| 12. Hedonism | 25. Concern for health for fitness |
| 13. Decline of need for "achievement" | |

The list of these trends already brings forth an image of the public needs which are followed systematically by RISC members.

Evidently, this, like any system, has its limits. I hope it gives an idea of what is being done presently to monitor the evolution of certain fundamental needs within the public.

I have just covered a sketchy history of two generations of social monitors. Next, I will speak about a monitor of a different or at least complementary

nature. It has not yet been established. It includes what I call personal experience, or subjective awareness. The identification of many socio-cultural trends currently tracked by the monitors build upon the work of Abraham Maslow. The identification of new needs, of which I will speak, had been in Maslow's mind but developed from the work of many scholars and from an increasing number of individuals who are not in touch but who underwent, without knowing it, one another's influence as if there were, in the world, an "Aquarian Conspiracy", to use the title of Marilyn Ferguson's book.

THE FUTURE: A NEW SENSITIVITY, A NEW TYPE OF KNOWLEDGE

To observe the new needs, we will require new social scientists. WHAT WILL BE THEIR CHARACTERISTICS? They will rely to a greater extent on their intuition. They will be attentive to what they feel in their bodies at the time of making their traditional observations. They will not consider science as an "objective" process which occurs outside of them. Their working hypotheses will consciously be, to a greater extent, part of their psychological experience. What they feel and will themselves influence will be used as information to be integrated into their manner of understanding and capturing what they are studying. The method of investigation will not only be rational. These men will have the abilities within themselves to listen to the non-rational. They will act and live differently from the engineer/statistician colleague to whom I recently spoke regarding the subject of this presentation. This colleague admitted to me that he had observed that, frequently, when he acted rationally but wished to act differently, things went poorly. Incapable of following his impulses or feelings, he only followed part of his interior dialogue - the rational - which told him that, as a reasonable man, he should act in a certain way. It's as though this manner of action was convenient and better conformed to what he knew, or what he knows. This conflict or this incapacity for the engineer to rely on the arational signals which his body sends him gives you an idea of the type of scientists that many of us are today. We have acquired so few traditions of this type that we do not know how to identify the signals within us of which the engineer spoke, and know less how to hear them. He was able to speak to me about these signals and to extend an open ear to my proposals. But, it must be confessed, such a process can be very baffling for a scientist. For example, in 1974 at the International

Conference on Sociology and Public Opinion Research, I had an "awareness" experience with a group of colleagues to identify these signals. Through this experience, I intended to emphasize that there existed other approaches to scientific knowledge than that which I started to learn some twenty years before at university. Furthermore, I wanted to suggest that this type of approach could nurture and stimulate our scientific creativity. Before relating some comments received during this experience, I would like to present to you two pictures. Look at them carefully and take a moment to exchange with your neighbour what you see and what he or she sees.¹ Following my experience in 1974, I received the following comments from two eminent researchers, both of the same generation and both working in the same research firm. One told me: "Yvan, we will never build a science with exercises of that type"; the other told me: "Yvan, I would like to participate in your experiences". During this experience, I learned many other things. As some confided to me, in the cocktail hour which followed, they had participated in my experience but they had not dared say what they had felt in the presence of other colleagues, not being too sure whether they were having the right or mistaken feelings - or simply from embarrassment. Professor Guttman, quite well known for the scale which bears his name, thanked me for newly raising his awareness to an approach which he kept at a distance through certain personal prejudices.

That was in 1974, and I felt very vulnerable to have it publicly known that I was participating, through the way I lived, in a new way of pursuing a scientific career. In the past several years, I have felt less alone. However, this does not prevent me from having some apprehension to speak to you today in the terms I'm using. Towards the end of the 1950's, and up until recently, there was only one science for me, that which we call "objective" science. It was the science in which the observer must place himself outside of his observations and report, without subjective contamination, the result of his observations. Since we were in the social sciences and not the hard sciences such as physics, chemistry, etc., this behaviour and these abstract efforts were necessary if we did not wish to be passed off as social philosophers but as scientists. On the other hand, we were well aware that we could not totally detach ourselves from our value systems. We had read Merton and many other authors from the sociology schools in Chicago, Columbia, etc... We were also very aware of anthropological works. We also knew that by our choice of

¹The audience was invited to react to two pictures which lend themselves to different interpretations depending on the way in which each person lives.

subjects to be studied and the limits we brought to them, we were biasing or personalizing, in a way, the work we were undertaking. We were aware of this. We were then doubly, scientists in that we were aware of the bias we introduced into our work, and kept it in mind, one might say. We knew that we were participating in value systems and were undergoing the influence but we trained ourselves as good behaviouralists to remain, as we said, very objective. So you may say to me, what is the difference between what you are today as a scientist and what you were when you were taking into account your personal biases. I will try to answer that by speaking about John C. Lilly and his works. I could also talk about Brugh Joy, or about the mathematician-economist and, at the same time, physicist Hadi Madjid who I recently met. These scientists participate in the same research procedures as I do. They link their rational method of observation of reality to their arational method. This approach, which some authors call subjective or intuitive science, not only takes into account the values of the researcher, as I did in the 60's, but all the ways of reacting to the observed reality. There is no longer a division between the feeling and the rational method of observation for the researcher; he now uses his whole being. You've heard about the properties of the right side of the brain, associated in the West mostly with fantasy functions and the left side of the brain, associated mostly with rational functions. Intuitive science, of which we are speaking here, tends to make a more "integrated" use of these functions. John Lilly, who is known for his work with men and dolphins, abandoned the practice of his scientific works during a ten year "sabbatical" to develop and better integrate for himself the methods of research associated with the right side of the brain. He has just returned, in the past three or four years, to his initial research studies. For Lilly, for example, what the human being in the scientist feels in contact with dolphins or whales at the time of communication between one or the other is part of the domaine of his observations and enters in his sphere of reference for the formulation of his research hypotheses. We have often heard of great discoveries made by scientists by accident, as if the rational method had suddenly stopped and made way for another way of operating. It was probably a case of the "intuitive" method, of which you will hear more and more in the practice of science in the future.

BUT WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN THIS AND THE PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF POPULATIONS, AND WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OR THE EFFECTS OF THIS OBSERVATION ON THE SOCIAL MONITORS, THEIR METHODOLOGY AND THE RESEARCHERS THAT WE ARE?

This conscious move toward the intuitive method for scientists can be observed among the population. Many of the trends, which I presented a moment ago, already reflect a visceral way of reacting. Scientists live in their own time and are marked by their era. Many resist or are incapable of change. All passed through schools where the rational domain was strongly encouraged and other types of knowledge either ignored or simply regarded with contempt. New generations, and other people whom the new trends touch, open themselves more and more to the contradictions of a world built by science and reason. They open other important ways of life and knowledge. We have only to look at the way jogging took hold in America and in Europe in recent years, and the marathons which followed, to recognize the importance which the body has assumed in everyday life. Also note the popularity of transcendental meditation and esoteric sciences as other lifestyles and types of knowledge. Either one is practised by rest or temporary distancing of the rational life which is familiar to us. You have all heard about the benefits and well-being which are achieved through these two types of sensitivities by those who practice them. Perhaps you practice them yourselves. Then you probably have a picture of what may be obtained from the meeting of these different lifestyles at the same time within the same individual.

Here I would like to recall a story which comes to us from the oral tradition of the Suffis of Central Asia. A man was trying to sell a very good quality rug in the streets of a city. He cried: "Who will give me 100 pieces of gold for this rug?" When he sold his rug, a friend came up to him and asked him, "Why didn't you ask more for such an extraordinary carpet?" The man answered: "But is there a number greater than 100?" The same may happen to scientists who will not develop the new ways of experience and awareness. They will not see and will not capture what the public feels. They will not discover (like our rug salesman who did not suppose that there were other numbers beyond 100) the new needs of the public. Accustomed as they are to practice only rational scientific methods, they will not build the appropriate instruments. They will

unduly limit their advice to clients, thereby depriving them. They will not see that there is a number greater than 100. In the 1980's, the intuitive mode and the means to nurture it will be much sought after, in my opinion. We will form, as Louis Harris says, inspired by findings from his recent surveys, unions of a new kind in the 21st century*. Consumers will join in solidarity in search of support to fight for their interests among local retail merchants. They will thus align within themselves, almost knowingly, both the types of rational and arational experience. These ways of functioning already exist. We can see and identify them now that we possess a new lens. We can speak about groups of consumers, neighbourhoods of renters, etc. Unfortunately, this lens only perfects itself to the extent that it is used, that its development is encouraged and supported. John Lilly, like Joy, had to abandon his traditional way of doing things for several years in order to open himself to new ways of capturing reality. Joy did not, even after five years of separation, return to the practice of medicine along official and familiar lines. He works in a system that is parallel to traditional medicine. WHAT THEN IS IN STORE FOR PROFESSIONALS IN OUR FIELD? I cannot say. I ask the question today very candidly. One thing is sure; with the help of the crude instruments we now possess, we can track the many and rapid changes in the needs of the public. It will continue thus. It will be necessary to adapt to this scientifically. If I have just underlined the importance of having new scientists to read new needs or realities, what will their instruments be? There will be changes there as well. Already in Germany, interviewers are concerned with body language, that is, the positions of respondents' bodies at the moment they answer questions asked in political surveys. Thus I can imagine the day, for example, when interviewers, with different qualities than we now require, will work among a probability sample of respondents and will note their own/inner reactions, "emotional" or otherwise, which would be in response to the respondents' answers to our traditional questionnaires. These reactions will supply a reservoir of information of a new type which will be added to already existing information. For a given country, at a given time, we will thus have emotional reactions or the experience of a group of people (our interviewers) in relation to a stimulus (the respondents) which will have been scientifically chosen. This image, which at first sight may surprise many, is only an extended

* Louis Harris: *Our changing Structure of Values, Working in the Twenty First Century*, John Wiley and Sons Inc. 1980.

use of interviewers, of whom we already ask to supply a subjective evaluation of the type of home that they have just visited. If I may continue to imagine a step further, we may be able to ask respondents as well as interviewers, for example, to center themselves and to meditate a bit before asking or answering our questions. This may not take more time than the administration of some of our usual questionnaires, yet may result in an unsuspected wealth of information. From the point of view of analysis or choice of questions, we will likely learn to take liberties by reflex; our discursive method of treating knowledge and justifying our own actions, prevents us from doing so. In place, for example, of treating the geographic variable to simply classify our data and to try to capture the differences from one region to another, we might naively take off from the assumption that it is perhaps easier to see the stars or to be touched by nature in the country rather than in the city, and may ask more pertinent questions to capture the needs of the people in cities and in the country. I admit that I have never done this exercise but I take the risk of stating it, even if I can not at this stage rationally justify its pertinence.

In ending, I would like to say that unlike John Lilly and Brugh Joy, I never left my traditional field of practice for very long, although I have taken time, here and there outside of CROP in the past eight years, to allow myself to explore my arational universe and to discover some of its dimensions. I must confess that, until recently, I have felt very much torn between my rational polarity and my intuitive polarity, and often continue to feel so. It seems to me that I become more at ease the more I trust my intuitive side.

As for my experience with monitors, we have one at CROP which is entering its fifth year: The CROP Report. This monitor allows us to track trends on a variety of indicators for the Canadian public by province, region and key metropolitan areas such as Montreal and Toronto. This is a first generation monitor. We are about to launch our second generation monitor, the socio-cultural monitor. A third generation monitor, the humanistic monitor which will employ variables reflecting the realm of personal experience and imagination, remains to be built. We are working on it!