

1-1-1996

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### Recommended Citation

Bockstaele, Jacques Van; Bockstaele, Maria Van; Schein, Pierrette; and Godard-Plasman, Martine (1996) "A Crucial Event in the Development of the Rules of Socioanalysis: The Printing Shop Intervention," *Clinical Sociology Review*: Vol. 14: Iss. 1, Article 5. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/csr/vol14/iss1/5>

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# **A Crucial Event in the Development of the Rules of Socioanalysis: The Printing Shop Intervention\***

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## **ABSTRACT**

According to the authors, clinical intervention cannot be properly conducted without an appropriate technical tool. Socioanalysis has been founded on the need for clinical intervention: the satisfactory integration of diagnosis, change and evaluation. The present article returns to an early case of intervention (1958), where the elements of this integration in socioanalysis were technically marked out for the first time. This occurred in two stages. A round of interviews, completed by a survey questionnaire, was conducted at a printing shop. The results were made available and discussed with the participants. A co-investigation was undertaken by the members of the shop and the intervention team, which involved use of a socioanalytic technique still in the process of development. During this work, the members of the shop gradually worked out their own diagnosis, which had the effect of modifying their perceptions of each other, of identifying the stakes of interdependence, and of imagining new ways of managing their shop. The recognition of this capacity of

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\*Part of this article was presented at the Symposium of the Research Committee of Clinical Sociology (RC46) of the International Sociological Association in Montreal (Van Bockstaele, Van Bockstaele, Schein, and Barrot 1993). The present text has been translated by Victor Lisacek.

self-diagnosis, taking into account the conditions of its emergence and efficacy, led the authors to focus their efforts on the construction of an integrated tool of investigation and intervention. The consequences of adopting this method are analyzed here. Some features of the subsequent development of the socioanalytic technique are also mentioned.

Socioanalysis is equally a theory, a technique, and an intervention designed for different institutions, organizations, companies, administrations, families, churches, etc. As such, it can be described in various ways, according to whether a theoretical, technical or practical standpoint is adopted.

From a *theoretical* point of view, socioanalysis serves to circumscribe an object, an entity as generator and medium of action (concept of praxiological entity†): individuals belong to institutions, but human action takes place within “social entities” which are a necessary condition for action. By definition, these entities manifest themselves and are observable only through action. They are the necessary medium through which the process of production emerges, develops and is perpetuated. This process forms the basis of their identity, and delimits their boundaries. Thus social entities bear within them the temporal dimension, the historicity of their actions, and in this way manifest an image of a larger reality to which they are specifically related. As such, they are the vector of symbolic shifts of representations (concept of *sociological transference*, Van Bockstaele and Van Bockstaele 1966; Van Bockstaele and Schein 1971). They link up actions and agents, power and rules, cognition and tools (Van Bockstaele 1994).

From a *technical* point of view, socioanalysis is based upon experience acquired of the reproducibility, in defined conditions, of the fundamental mechanisms which govern the actions of entities. The socioanalytic technique is characterized by the employment of rules—explicitly formulated and presented beforehand—which create an intergroup relation (entity under analysis  $\Leftrightarrow$  group of socioanalysts) and which bring about social simulation, leading to a symbolic shift onto the group of socioanalysts of the system of relations and production of the entity under analysis<sup>1</sup>. The observation and interpretation of these pro-

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†The adjective *praxiological* is formed from the noun *praxis*. Derived from Neo-Latin (13th century), the term *praxis* (from the Greek , action) was first used in English (16th century) and then in German (19th century). In French philosophical usage, it refers to an activity undertaken to produce a result, in contrast to knowledge, on the one hand, and existence, on the other (Robert, 1978).

cesses provide access to the genesis, structure and functioning of the particular entity in its own environment.

From a *practical* point of view, socioanalysis presupposes the existence of a collective analyst able to interpret an entity's processes of production. It is designed for institutions who wish to better manage their activities, or who request assistance in dealing with problems they are unable to solve alone. Such demanders must have an institutional basis suitable to entering into a contract with the socioanalysts, and flexible enough to allow their time and resources to be otherwise engaged over an appropriate period of time.

The development of socioanalysis has been strongly influenced by a chosen methodological priority, namely, the necessary availability in clinical sociology of specific tools of intervention<sup>2</sup>. A crucial stage in this development was a case of intervention undertaken at a printing shop in 1958-59<sup>3</sup>. The problem of a workable link between available diagnostic tools<sup>4</sup> and already tested tools of change<sup>5</sup> had resolved itself here, for empirical data on this integration showed that diagnostic procedures and processes of change need not be separated.

The object of this article is to analyze this case of clinical intervention, a case which has taken on *ex post facto* paradigmatic value in the development of socioanalysis (Van Bockstaele and Van Bockstaele 1959; Van Bockstaele, Van Bockstaele, Barrot, and Magny 1963; Van Bockstaele, Van Bockstaele, and Schein 1994). In the first part, we return to the surveys conducted before the implementation of the processes of change. In the second part, we make an assessment of the intervention. In the third part, we analyze the practical and technical (and theoretical) consequences for socioanalysis that we have drawn from this case.

## I. The Printing Shop

Due to the principles of "autonomy" underlying its production organization, economic functioning and human resource management (Friedmann 1946), this printing shop enjoyed a prestigious image both in its own company and in the social and industrial environment.

It was composed of 32 people, 18 women and 14 men, consisting of 1 foreman, 1 shop secretary, 2 technicians, and 28 machine operators—16 skilled workers and 12 unskilled workers. In practical terms, this autonomous shop "bought" its raw materials from shops upstream and "sold" the transformed product to shops downstream. This activity was

subject to two key constraints: 1) The fixing of inter-shop transfer fees; 2) Production standards. These constraints were enforced over a certain period, during which the shop assumed responsibility for its profit margin, transforming these gains into collective bonuses. At the end of this period, in accord with the management and the shop, the transfer fees and production standards were revised by the shop members collectively.

A loosened adherence to these principles, however, created an ever-widening gap between the prestigious image of the shop and the reality of its daily life. This diminished the shop's image of itself, though on the outside it remained unaffected.

A study was carried out by us with the aim of better understanding the genesis of the problem, which involved discussions with the personnel as well as the manager, the person who had designed and set up the shop.

## 1. Preliminary Investigation

With the agreement of the company manager and the technical departments associated with the shop, an initial round of personal interviews was decided upon after a three-day tour by a member of our team of the different work stations at the shop.

The purpose of these interviews was to achieve an understanding of the life of this autonomous group, through both the positions its members took on questions that arose during preliminary discussions with people—other than members of the shop—responsible for the design, setting up, and supervision of this group, and their reactions to words and through expressions of a more or less allusive nature that came up in the course of the three-day tour.

Four main issues emerged from these interviews: the history of the shop (changes in personnel, techniques, organization, managers); the gradual loss of autonomy; classifications; men-women relations.

### *a) Survey by Questionnaire*

These interviews took place in an atmosphere of uneasy tension: feelings of impotence, of irresponsibility-associated guilt, of mistrust and deception, "one must . . . one has to . . . one could have . . .", all this despite an evident desire for trust, action and independence.

Although the shop members felt somewhat relieved after the interviews, the problems remained unresolved. As such, we did not feel entitled to disclose the basic results of the data collected. To overcome this

situation, we decided to carry out a survey by questionnaire. This was based on the contents of the interviews, selected according to twelve criteria, each composed of 7 to 17 items, presented in random order and requiring clear-cut answers (*yes-no-abstention*).

The results were made public at a common meeting, and were discussed in the shop. They confirmed the outcome of the interviews; despite the difficulties they were facing, the shop members were unanimously committed to the shop and, as manifested by their willingness to continue participation, remained loyal to the original project.

In view of the "role model" status of the shop in the eyes of its members and the whole company, including the management, a disclosure of the results in all its factual aspects appeared as both an informational necessity and a means of putting the problems into perspective. Each year, 70 to 80 members of the company, from the manager down to factory hands, would gather together for an inter-factory day. The different establishments of the company would each send a delegation to this event. After discussions between the *Centre de socianalyse* (the contracting party) and the company president, the decision was taken to devote this inter-factory day to the problems of working in groups. Here a delegation from the shop was sent to share its own experiences as illustrated by the interviews and the survey. The outcome was as follows: request for training by company managerial staff<sup>6</sup>, revision of the shop contract, request for aid in shop transformation: the biggest problems, though amenable to discussion, had never found quick and easy solutions, where those in the shop could only ask, "What can be done?"

### *b) Issues in Negotiating for Socioanalysis*

It can hardly be said that even before the formulation of this request for help, there had been no intervention; the forms of investigation used, the contents explored and the procedures of their transmission, the organization of internal exchanges at the shop and the discussions at the inter-factory event, all these had multiple repercussions.

This work lasted nine months. Two female members of the *Centre de socianalyse*, one of whom took part in the initial meeting, were called upon to conduct the interviews. From the completion of the round of interviews, a socioanalyst had participated in negotiations with the general management and the technical departments concerned, particularly in relation to the organization of the inter-factory day and the request for training by the managerial staff.

This question posed by the shop, and in reply, our offer of socioanalysis, raised the issue of its real autonomy, of its legitimacy to decide of its own accord to engage intervention with third party assistance. Such a decision was not only the responsibility of the shop but that of the company hierarchy as a whole.

Further negotiations were opened at several levels: the shop, the general management, and the shop together with the management responsible for its direction. It was agreed upon by all parties concerned that the sought-after socioanalysis would be undertaken, and more specifically: that a 24 day schedule of sessions would be drawn up; that for the purposes of socioanalysis, the shop would be split up into two groups, each comprised of 16 members; that two socioanalysts who had not taken part in the preliminary investigations of the shop would carry out the socioanalysis; and finally, that a third of the costs (fees, and travel and accommodation expenses) would be paid by the shop, a fixed amount to be deducted from its collective bonuses, while the remaining two-thirds would be met by the management. We insisted on the necessity here for the shop to take at least partial charge of its own affairs, so that the responsibility of choice would have a "price" in its own eyes and so that the right to decide would not have to be granted.

## **2. Socioanalysis at the Shop Between Social Training and Collective Analysis**

Every member of the shop had the opportunity to say what he really thought and felt in the privacy of the interviews. But the question was to what extent they could go in revealing their own positions to each other in the shop environment. Although the members were at one in the way they felt about the situation, the expression of which helped to alleviate these feelings, mistrust still remained. To create an atmosphere of confidence was inseparable from sharing responsibility, and yet this sharing necessitated this confidence. The fact of feeling oneself changed does not bring about the conviction of change in others. The members were also affected by the entrenchment of their positions in routine, in the many existing categories (men-women, qualification differences, job specialization, etc.), in the modes of operation, in judgements made and attributed, etc.

The objective of socioanalysis then was to treat the problems created by this rigidity, where the feelings, beliefs and judgements expressed by individual members, and their relationships to each other, were spe-

cifically related to the functional and structural facts, such as the relations established with the objects, tasks, organization, shop management and the management in charge of its direction.

Socioanalysis at the shop began on the following basis:

**Description of the Socioanalytic Set-up Before Intervention**  
(Rule 5, November 1958)

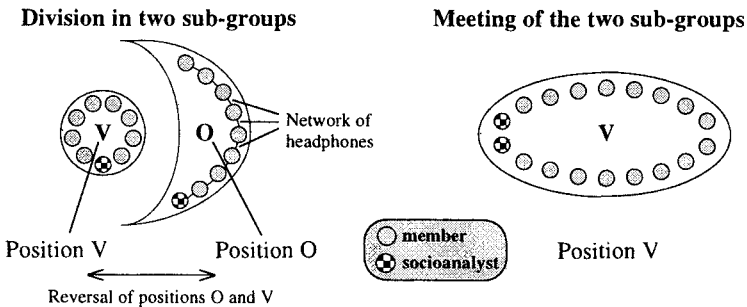
The schedule involves 12 two day meetings, spread over eight months (November 1958-June 1959). At the beginning of each 2 day meeting, the shop (32 people) is split up by lots into two groups. Each group is engaged on one of the two days according to the following timetable (5 periods of 100 mins, with 20 mins breaks):

- |                  |         |                   |          |                  |         |
|------------------|---------|-------------------|----------|------------------|---------|
| <b>1</b> 8:00 am | 9:40 am | <b>2</b> 10:00 am | 11:40 am | <b>3</b> 1:30 pm | 3:10 pm |
| <b>4</b> 3:30 pm | 5:10 pm | <b>5</b> 5:30 pm  | 7:10 pm  |                  |         |

During the first four periods, each group (16 people) is split up by lots into two sub-groups (2 x 8 people). Lots are drawn independently in the morning (periods 1 and 2) and in the afternoon (periods 3 and 4). Each sub-group successively occupies, for the duration of 100 mins, the positions of *verbalization* (V) and *observation* (O) (see diagram below).

Two socioanalysts are engaged. One accompanies the sub-group in the position of verbalization, and intervenes by expressing interpretations aimed at the two sub-groups. The other accompanies the sub-group in the position of observation, and intervenes, through a network of headphones, by expressing interpretations aimed at the sub-group in the position of observation.

During the last period of the day (period 5), the group is reconstituted and takes up the position of verbalization (V). The two socioanalysts intervene by expressing interpretations aimed at the whole.



The verbalization task is formulated as follows: *verbalize and analyze what is perceived and felt in the situation "here and now" and about the socioanalysts.*

Two rules are laid down: 1) restriction of verbalization to only that which concerns the "here and now," 2) obligation to verbalize only in relation to the socioanalysts.



The twenty-four day schedule, taking into account organization constraints, corresponded to twelve two-day periods, that is, twelve days for each half of the shop. At the start of each of these two-day periods, the drawing of lots served to re-split the members of the shop, thus ensuring a continual change in sub-group composition. Every member of the shop participated in 110 hours of socioanalysis, spread over 6 months, with only a few incidental absentees.

At the time socioanalysis at the shop commenced, the choice had still not been made between a training orientation and an analytic aim. The two objectives co-existed and were the expression of a double destination: on the one hand, those individuals who wished to live through this experience with others, but on an individual basis; and on the other hand, those who wished to do so as part of a group. Here we were faced with the second case, and so the analytic aim prevailed over the training orientation.

Three periods can be distinguished in the progress of this socioanalysis, each of which involved two dimensions of interpretation: the one concerning the shop, and the other, socioanalysis and the socioanalysts themselves.

#### *a) The First Ten Days: Analogic and Symbolic Transposition*

The *here and now* constraint gave the participants the impression of being in a vacuum without any reference. They undertook to describe the limits in concrete and graphic terms: 'The walls, people, the socioanalyst, the door'. What could and could not be achieved within these limits? To keep quiet, perhaps. But silence creates discomfort, even more so in presence of the socioanalysts. The fear of judgement accompanied the refusal to be analyzed publicly.

The issue of confidence emerged very quickly, of confidence in oneself, in others, in the authorities. And the situation was perceived as lacking direction: "The socioanalysts do not exist, since they are not directive," or in another form, "Since he does not say what to do, it's an eye for an eye, and I will ignore him." Was the value of this work commensurate with the difficulty of performing it? How could this effort be related with the objectives of the shop? "Are we going to get our money's worth?"

We observed an analogous transposition of the shop problems onto the difficulties met in the socioanalytic situation, particularly in relation to the comparative hierarchical structures of the shop and the team of socioanalysts. The shop members themselves sensed this development, welcoming it as a potential means of bringing about change, especially

with respect to confidence. Their expectations regarding the foreman of the shop and the difficulties of assuming responsibility found in their relationship with the socioanalysts a *here and now* support for shifting their judgements away from the administration of the shop. Consequently we modified the rule, reducing the task to *describe the relations between the two teams* (shop/socioanalysts).

*b) The Next Eight Days: Emergence of the Collective Analyst and its Role*

At this stage in the work of analysis, we expected a codified representation of the functioning and structure of the shop, where the difficulties lived-through together in the socioanalytic situation would be an analogue of the problems faced by the shop. But we anticipated neither the existence of the mechanism of the shift and the force of the symbolic transposition associated with it, nor the group's investment in our team as a lever of analysis. Formally, the conducting of sessions required the presence of two socioanalysts which, due to a previous choice, excluded the possibility of using either of the two female socioanalysts involved in the interviews. The two male socioanalysts who were actually part of the analytic team did not have any prior contact with the shop, though one of them did help in the organization of the inter-factory day. However, restrictions on availability made this choice impracticable, and furthermore, one and sometimes two female socioanalysts were in positions of external observation (without any other function, without contact with anyone from the shop, and without the right to speak).

We tried to assess the influence of this mute, yet informed, presence, and discovered that it served as a moral and emotional reference by noting that the shift not only operated on the working socioanalysts, but on all members present of the *Centre de socianalyse*. The function of analysis here was not person-specific, but the collective function of a group of different, related individuals.

On the first day of the second period, one of the working socioanalysts was absent and was replaced by one of the two socioanalysts in positions of observation. This decision did not dispense with the role attributed to this socioanalyst, but rather strengthened his symbolic presence, for evocation in effigy is often easier to deal with than a face-to-face presence. Men-women relations were approached by making use of the presence of the two observing socioanalysts. The person/structure dichotomy gave way to an outlook on inter-category

relations. The use of this shift for indirectly treating the problems of the shop appeared then to be a manifestation of the need for protection. The substitution of a socioanalyst led us to understand that the way in which the participants used the analytic team did not correspond to an official definition of roles. The phenomena of absence/presence, of reference and of symbolic connivance, changed our perception of the analytic role. A new rule was then formulated. This maintained the presence of two socioanalysts in sessions, chosen from a larger team of socioanalysts, defined by a list of socioanalysts associated with a given socioanalysis.

c) *The Last Six Days: Reintroduction of History, a Condition for Collective Analysis*

As the analysis progressed, the participants increasingly used this shift on us as a means of dealing with their own conflicts and differences. Against a background of shop power relations and men-women relations, decision-making powers and pay issues were transposed onto our team through a game of representations made by the shop members of our functioning--who has the power among the socioanalysts? The men or the women? Who decides on important matters? Are the men and women payed equally? How do discussions proceed? Who judges performance? According to what criteria? And so, the participants would imagine the possible conflicts between us, between the men and the women, and among the men and among the women.

We were struck by the frequency of this shift. Was it an escape, a refusal to directly confront the problems faced by the shop, a sign of irresponsibility, or perhaps a reluctance to address problems which were considered the responsibility rather of the shop, or even the company, hierarchy?

Although all these possibilities might have been explored, it was our strong impression that, as a collective, the members of the shop were tacitly working against the risk of subjecting themselves to another institutional authority. Once they realized they were in a situation devoid of protective controls, they stood in solidarity with one another in order to prevent exposing themselves to the potential threat of sanctions.

This had been one of the motives for restricting speech in sessions to the *here and now*, along with the obligation to express how the participants felt about and perceived their relations with the socioanalysts. Experience in conducting socioanalysis in other companies had alerted us to the necessity of enclosing the field of analysis by divorcing it from the functioning of day-to-day life.

These findings supported our growing conviction of a spontaneous protective mechanism at work in the analytic situation, of which the main significance for us was the impossibility, for a constituted, hierarchical structure with a real past, of tackling its problems head-on.

This is why socioanalysis during the two first days of this third period took place on the basis of a new rule: the *here and now* had been abandoned and the task stipulated concerned *only the team of socioanalysts and the relations between it and the shop*.

Reintroducing the temporal dimension had the effect of opening up a margin of freedom favoring multiple references between different activities and structures, between people and official roles, between reality and ideas. This margin was lacking in the daily lives of the shop members because of historical conflicts, accumulated impasses and other circumstances described previously.

This situation encouraged us to go further and define the socioanalytic task as simply *anything that enters your head* about the functioning of the socioanalytic team. While this initiative marked our intention to have the nature and the practice of the task coincide, the effect had not been what we expected. A general refusal arose which the participants justified by the impossibility of accomplishing such a task of imagination.

And yet, in the silence of refusal, through an open window, barrel organ music invaded the meeting room. The participants decided at that instant to imagine the situation of the musician and his possible accompanist. Was he young or old? Was he blind? Did he have a dog? Where did he come from? What was his background? etc.

The contrast between the group's mute opposition to the socioanalytic task and the subsequent ludic play was quite a surprise for the socioanalysts. How was this to be understood? What had been perceived as an implicit will to be protected from a system of power of which they were a part, to avoid the potential risk of rejection or sanctions, could also be interpreted as a poorly identified resistance. As such, we decided not to backtrack in the direction given to the socioanalytic task.

## Description of the Socioanalytic Set-up After Intervention (Rule 10, 30 May 1959)

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### **Aim**

The aim of the sessions is to help the group to treat its problems through socioanalysis by carrying out with the team of socioanalysts the work defined below.

### *Definition of the Task*

The members of the group undertaking socioanalysis have the task of explaining the functioning of the team of socioanalysts as it is perceived and felt in the situation and by respecting the following rules:

#### 1. *Rule of Verbalization*

The members of the group undertaking socioanalysis must express without omission or modification "anything that enters their head" in relation to what they feel "enters the heads" of the socioanalysts in their group functioning.

#### 2. *Rule of Abstention*

The group undertaking socioanalysis can speak only of the above, and only in sessions in the presence of the socioanalysts. Any other activity is forbidden.

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At the same time, we opted to confine socioanalysis to only historically constituted groups.

## **II. Assessment of the Intervention**

We took note of the transformations as they occurred during these 24 days. By exploring them in the analytic situation, the participants had modified their perceptions of each other, their relationships and their ability to handle their own multi-faceted interdependences. This led to changes in the way they worked together, the evaluation of which could be internal and continuous.

But the decision to undertake and finance socioanalysis at the shop had been taken jointly by the shop and the management. Though the results of analysis chiefly concerned the shop, they were also of interest to the management.

It was again necessary to objectify as much as possible the transformations that took place (Patton 1980; Kallen 1995)<sup>7</sup>. For ethical reasons, it was of course impossible to reveal the least amount of information on the contents of sessions. After the first round of interviews, a questionnaire had been used. The substance of the interviews had not been disclosed, only the percentage results of the answers obtained (yes,

*no, abstention*), which was both safer and easier to handle. We decided then to repeat the same choice after socioanalysis.

#### *a) Comparison of the Before/After Surveys*

The original questionnaire was used again, but with a change in the order of the questions. A comparison of the before/after results could serve as an indirect, general indicator of areas of stability and change:

1. Commitment to the shop and the perceived worth of shop meetings remained the same, and the foreman continued to be looked upon as a good foreman; interest in shop meetings grew:

**Table 1**

|   | Before |    |     | After |    |     |
|---|--------|----|-----|-------|----|-----|
|   | Yes    | No | Abs | Yes   | No | Abs |
| Do you have a good foreman?                 | 96     | 4  | 0   | 96    | 4  | 0   |
| Are you happy to be part of the shop?       | 100    | 0  | 0   | 100   | 0  | 0   |
| Do you consider shop meetings to be useful? | 100    | 0  | 0   | 100   | 0  | 0   |

Three stable items gave indications of sharing a common past. Two of them maintained their score of unanimity, contentment with being part of the printing shop and the usefulness of shop meetings (shop results meetings), the third showed 96% in favour of the foreman, 4% against.

2. The standards of production were better accepted, the value of the organization department was more appreciated, and there was a wish for greater involvement in fixing standards of production:

**Table 2**

|   | Before |    |     | After |    |     |
|---|--------|----|-----|-------|----|-----|
|   | Yes    | No | Abs | Yes   | No | Abs |
| Do you consider the standards acceptable? | 26     | 39 | 35  | 61    | 4  | 35  |
| Could they be raised?                     | 34     | 61 | 5   | 13    | 48 | 39  |

**Table 2 (con't.)**

|   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Do you consider the organization department to be useful?       | 52 | 13 | 35 | 78 | 9  | 13 |
| Would you like to fix the standards as a group?                 | 61 | 17 | 22 | 74 | 9  | 17 |
| Do you prefer the organization department to fix the standards? | 31 | 17 | 52 | 31 | 48 | 21 |

Agreement on the acceptability of standards had grown: a 35% difference in the *no* score occurred to the advantage of the *yes* score, which showed a 61% agreement on the acceptability of standards, as against 26% the first time. The question on the possibility of raising standards was designed to test their flexibility. The responses expressed less reservation: 48% replied *no*, though previously it was 61%. In contrast, the *abstention* score, initially very weak (5%), increased to 39%.

One of the functions of the organization department was to fix standards. This department was better accepted: the score relating to its usefulness rose from 52% to 72%, while the *no* score decreased slightly and the *abstention* score fell by 22%. The preference that the standards of production be fixed by the organization department remained unchanged at 31%. Opposition to the organization department increased from 17% to 48%. The desire to fix standards as a group rose from 61% to 74%, with only 9% in disagreement and the usefulness of shop meetings (shop results meetings), the third showed 96% in favour of the foreman, 4% against.

3. The heat was taken out of men-women relations, judgements on the mixing and parity of men and women in the shop were softened, resulting in a greater tolerance:

**Table 3**

|   | Before |    |     | After |    |     |
|---|--------|----|-----|-------|----|-----|
|   | Yes    | No | Abs | Yes   | No | Abs |
| Do you think there are more problems working in a mixed shop than in a shop of men?   | 61     | 17 | 22  | 40    | 43 | 17  |
| Do you think there are more problems working in a mixed shop than in a shop of women? | 48     | 22 | 30  | 13    | 61 | 26  |

Assessment of the problems of working in a mixed shop compared to a shop of men evolved: beforehand, 61% thought it was worse in a mixed shop in contrast to

**Table 3 (con't.)**

only 40% afterwards, while the idea of there being more problems was rejected by 43% of the shop members.

Regarding the second item, there was an even more distinct shift: 48% down to 13%, where 39% had changed their mind, affirming that there were not more problems involved in working in a shop of women than in a mixed shop.

4. Positions lost their unjust character and participation in decisions on such matters was strongly desired:

**Table 4**

|   | Before |    |     | After |    |     |
|---|--------|----|-----|-------|----|-----|
|   | Yes    | No | Abs | Yes   | No | Abs |
| Do you consider it normal that the foreman makes the classifications?   | 83     | 9  | 8   | 44    | 30 | 26  |
| Would you like them to be made by the foreman and the workers together? | 74     | 4  | 22  | 91    | 0  | 9   |

Differences in judgements on the role of the foreman, before and after socio-analysis, was expressed by a fall in the *yes* score of 39%: judged normal at first by 83% of the shop members, agreement then dropped to 44%. At the same time, the *abstention* score rose by 18%, from 8% to 26%, while the *no* score increased from 9% to 30%.

5. Position allocation, machine adjustments remained a delicate problem:

**Table 5**

|  | Before |    |     | After |    |     |
|--|--------|----|-----|-------|----|-----|
|  | Yes    | No | Abs | Yes   | No | Abs |
| Do you consider personnel/machine allocation fair? | 61     | 22 | 17  | 35    | 30 | 35  |
| Do you like making machine adjustments?            | 74     | 13 | 13  | 74    | 13 | 13  |
| Are you involved in technical work?                | 83     | 4  | 13  | 48    | 22 | 30  |



**Table 5 (con't.)**

|  |      |      |      |    |    |    |
|--|------|------|------|----|----|----|
| Do you think that making machine adjustments is a technician's job?                  | 65   | 17.5 | 17.5 | 43 | 39 | 18 |
| Do you think that breakdown diagnosis is the responsibility of only the technicians? | 17.5 | 65   | 17.5 | 0  | 87 | 13 |

There was a change on the question of the fairness of position allocation: considered as fair at first by 61%, it dropped down to only 35%. At the same time, the *abstention* score rose by 18%, from 17% to 35%. However, position allocation was less affected by favoritism, and based less on the capacities attributed to operators. Technician work took place in the context of a recent past, which related to the dispossession of part of the technical responsibility in production and the possibility of making machine adjustments. The "Do you like making machine adjustments?" question had a high, stable score of 74%. The status of the technicians and the recognition of their specificity could have been an indicator of the extent to which the function they perform was understood.

There was also a change on the question of the participation of workers in technical work. While 83% declared during the first survey that they were involved, this dropped afterwards down to 48%. Light was shed on this apparently paradoxical result by two items which aimed to explore the limits of the respective functions: regarding adjustments, 65% replied *yes* before socioanalysis as against 43% afterwards. In contrast, 17.5% replied *no* beforehand, and then after, 39%, with the *abstention* score stable. On the question of breakdown diagnosis, nobody replied *yes* after socioanalysis, and 87% instead of 65% replied *no*. In other words, the specificity of the function of technicians had been recognised which, and at the same time, expressed an increased willingness to share.

## 6. Team spirit continued to be perceived as important:

**Table 6**

|   | Before |    |     | After |    |     |
|---|--------|----|-----|-------|----|-----|
|   | Yes    | No | Abs | Yes   | No | Abs |
| Do you think it is better to keep machine quirks to yourself? | 4      | 92 | 4   | 13    | 78 | 9   |
| Do you share machine quirks with workmates?                   | 96     | 0  | 4   | 91    | 0  | 9   |
| Do you share machine quirks with team members?                | 96     | 0  | 4   | 87    | 0  | 13  |

**Table 6 (con't.)**

|  |    |    |    |    |   |    |
|--|----|----|----|----|---|----|
| When you experience difficulties at work, do your workmates help you?  | 65 | 22 | 13 | 78 | 9 | 13 |
| When your workmates experience difficulties at work, do you help them? | 87 | 9  | 4  | 91 | 0 | 9  |

Cooperation at the shop was shown by a more than 90% agreement on the communication, in the team and to the other team, of machine quirks. However, there was an increase in the number of those who thought it better to keep them to themselves: the *yes* score rose from 4% to 13% and there was a correlative decrease in the *no* score, from 92% to 78%. Reciprocal aid that shop members brought to each other increased in its perceived value: 91% instead of 87% for aid given and 78% instead of 65% for aid received. On these items, there was a gap between what was judged and what was done.

7. An atmosphere of confidence continued to be perceived as important:

**Table 7**

|   | Before |    |     | After |    |     |
|---|--------|----|-----|-------|----|-----|
|   | Yes    | No | Abs | Yes   | No | Abs |
| Do you have the impression of working in an atmosphere of confidence? | 57     | 26 | 17  | 70    | 22 | 8   |
| Do you have the impression of working in an atmosphere of suspicion?  | 26     | 65 | 9   | 18    | 74 | 8   |
| Do your workmates get upset if your work is not up to par?            | 17     | 74 | 9   | 0     | 65 | 35  |

The atmosphere was evaluated by three items. It was felt by 70% as an atmosphere of confidence and by 18% as an atmosphere of suspicion. The *abstention* score dropped from 17% down to 8% for confidence, and 9% to 8% for suspicion.

On the more pointed question of the relation between comradeship and production, some important trends were discernable: nobody replied *yes* after socioanalysis, while 17% did so beforehand. 74% replied *no* at first and then 65% afterwards, with an associated increase in the *abstention* score from 9% to 35%. Furthermore, the feeling of reciprocal tolerance in relation to performance in the shop had improved.

*b) Clinical Interpretation of Change*

This comparison was of course only an approximation and could hardly claim the status of scientific validity (Campbell 1974), for the specific circumstances in which each of these two surveys were conducted would have presumably affected the results. It was plausible to think that, on the first occasion, the gap between the reality and the image of the situation manifested itself in the answers given in the form of a gap between the situation lived-through and the situation described. On the second occasion, that is, after socioanalysis, the answers were given with a certain distance and a concern for proximity between the situation lived-through and the real situation, so that any *yes/no* answers the first time round could have turned into uncertainties, expressed as an increase in the *abstention* score.

Between these two hypotheses, a clinical interpretation bearing on socioanalytic work fell into place. Here we distinguish two levels of transformation:

- Interaction between areas of production: The problems of the shop were liberated from their historical context. The level of functioning of the shop had become perceptible in its different areas, mainly in the assignment of stations, positions and standards. These areas appeared as a necessary basis for the organization and structure of the shop, giving a rhythm to its functioning: the first in daily life (allocation of operators to machines), the second institutionally (positions and attribution of technical competence), the third, in the economic constraints of production (standards, productivity, collective bonuses). The value of external services was well recognized, as were the technicians of the shop. An awareness emerged of the interaction between these constraints, and the will to participate in setting and managing them grew and manifested itself explicitly.
- Strong symbolic interaction between areas: shop meetings, shop commitment, atmosphere, and the shop image had been dissociated from the sphere of production. The distance acquired to judge problems of the first level set in motion the symbolic level. Shop meetings, and the collective bonuses which provided the agenda, symbolized the autonomy and

specificity of the shop. They were inseparable from the group's commitment. The internal image of the shop prevailed now over its external image. Finally, atmosphere and team spirit improved, along with confidence and the status given to women.

The connection between these levels, productive and symbolic, favored the transformation of action in the shop, giving it the opportunity to take practical responsibility for its problems and the capacity to deal with its autonomy.

### **III. Subsequent Changes of the Rules of Socioanalysis**

Exposition of this case has revealed a certain number of factors at work in clinical intervention during this period<sup>8</sup>. The dynamics of transformation at the shop not only gave rise to technical problems which demanded resolution if analysis was to be brought to a successful conclusion, but also opened up a larger, better defined problem. To understand the mechanisms of transformation, it was necessary to identify the elements and processes at work in the analytic situation, and to look into the nature of the intervention which led to the mobilization of all the agents involved in the development, management and change at the shop.

The unification of the field of analysis represented a major turning point in socioanalysis, thanks to which it crossed its first threshold of no return. We will elaborate the different aspects which have characterized this turning point by distinguishing the practical/political aspects and then the technical aspects which have contributed to defining the scope of socioanalytic intervention.

#### **1. The Political and Practical Aspects**

Analysis of the shop case has shown that certain conditions must be obtained for the proper application of the tools of investigation and analysis. In our eyes, any instance of intervention gives rise to a global process of organized action, a process which is moreover political in nature.

In the reference case here of the shop, the choice of intervention stemmed from a demand expressed by a company executive in relation to a shop, based on a model which he had initially designed, and set up

with the explicit agreement of the general management and with the assistance of the technical departments of the company.

We could not be blind to the fact that the decision-making and negotiation powers of the shop were limited despite its autonomy. The fact that the rules which structured its activities were not systematically respected bore witness to a lack of autonomy and a position of weakness. The problems faced by the shop could not be imputed to it alone, but to the company hierarchy as a whole.

Declared or assumed limits of autonomy are never absolute, simple, or stable, and in any case of intervention, their careful exploration is a necessity. In fact, this necessity is a key element of intervention. The autonomy of the intervener cannot be any broader than that of the demander. The stakes for one as for the other is to prevent adopting the other's representation of itself. For the intervener, the goal is to assess the admissibility of the demand, but for the demander, it is to guarantee the dependability of the intervener. Socioanalytic intervention requires the autonomy and legitimacy of the demand as much as of the offer (Van Bockstaele, Van Bockstaele, and Godard-Plasman 1994b).

The strategy of both the intervener and the demander is to establish a common ground. The practical aspect of intervention requires the articulation of levels, contents, procedures and time periods. This articulation must be specific in each case and is therefore non-reproducible<sup>9</sup>. This is why the process of analysis progressed under many forms, and was capable in our eyes of maintaining harmony in the management of change. Due to the uniqueness of the field of socioanalysis, the intervener can explore it following an approach appropriate to the nature of each demand.

## 2. The Technical Aspects

The last day of socioanalysis was concluded with the task formulated as follows: *Describe the functioning of the socioanalytic team in the situation as perceived and felt by the group members.*

This choice was born directly from the varied use that the members made of our collective presence. During the six months following socioanalysis at the shop, we progressively modified the setup which had up to then defined the socioanalytic situation. We will now examine the different areas of modification involved:

- *From training for change to change through socioanalysis.*

The initial objective had been to produce a lived-through training experience of intra and intergroup relations. The new objective became the treatment of problems of group functioning by means of socioanalysis.

- *From voluntary individuals/groups to institutional groups.*

The decision to abandon the socioanalysis of groups composed of voluntary individuals was taken during this time at the shop. It no longer seemed possible that a group of individuals without an historical, pre-existing organizational structure, could produce in the course of analysis a significant shift on the group of socioanalysts.

- *From behavior to functioning.*

The abandonment of groups of voluntary individuals led to focusing analysis on group functioning rather than on individual behavior. This point has proven to be one of the biggest obstacles within the group of socioanalysts. The decentering of individual psychological observation for the purpose of better focusing on the system of intra/intergroup relations has demanded an effort of self-analysis internal to the team of socioanalysts, a control over its own relationships, a vigilant tolerance in the face of attributed images, and distance enough to properly interpret the contents of analysis.

- *From direct task to indirect task.*

At the beginning, the socioanalytic task was one of free discussion. The *here and now* rule served to limit the field of analysis in order to prevent any direct interference in sessions from conflicts and problems rooted in the institutional group's past. Otherwise, uttered words and expressed judgments would become unequally shared weapons. The protection of individuals and institutions was achieved, according to our experience, by the imposition of the task which obliged a shift of conflicts. When carried out, this task also gave access to information that open talk concealed.

- *From normative rules of accomplishing the task to referential rules.*

Early versions of the rules had a strong normative aspect of cooperation, and then of protection. The formulation in terms of non-omis-

sion and abstinence appeared in the course of socioanalysis at the shop, though it did not arise immediately from an integrated definition of the task. The *rule of verbalization* required from the group under socioanalysis *to speak without omission* or modification about “anything that enters their head” in relation to what they felt about “anything that enters the heads” of the socioanalysts in their group functioning. The *rule of abstinence* required from the group to speak only of what was stipulated, and to do so only in sessions and in the presence of the socioanalysts.

The distinct emergence of these two rules from the task itself would take a long time. They would acquire autonomy only when they had constituted a common reference for, on the one hand, socioanalysts as a basis for interpretations, and on the other hand, groups under socioanalysis for exploring the task without its limits being normatively defined. Non-omission and abstinence are still the rules used for accomplishing the socioanalytic task.

- *From explanation to interpretation.*

At the shop, active instruction had in fact been replaced by *here and now* analysis in touch with the reality of the shop. The necessity of analysis, that is, the preeminence of interpretation over explanation, led to a reorganization of the analytic situation and all that it entailed. In particular, the work of analysis undertaken by the socioanalysts subjected them to risks. Before this work was carried out completely, competence, with reference to a body of knowledge constituted externally, served to protect the instructor. In contrast, the function of interpretation exposes the analyst to judgement, and in the case of socioanalysis, doubly so: from the group under analysis as well as from the other socioanalysts.

- *From two monitors to a collective analyst.*

In retrospect, it is difficult to understand how we could not have perceived the effects of the mute presence of the two female socioanalysts in positions of observation in sessions, or how we could not have understood that the formal delegation, in the context of the technical setup, made up of the two male socioanalysts did not correspond to the reality of the potential shift on the socioanalysts. It needed the absence of one of the two working socioanalysts to restructure our perception of the

analytic relation between the shop and the group of socioanalysts present. The collective analyst was born, not through a technical decision, but through the real and symbolic existence which the group under socioanalysis had conferred on it.

- *From separation into sub-groups for pedagogical purposes to an intergroup analytic relation.*

Splitting up the shop members into two sub-groups made it possible to treat two different problems. On the one hand, it represented a pedagogical resource in the sense that it offered, for the observing group, insight into the problems of others—though this capacity vanished when the group changed roles and came to the table for the purpose of verbalization. On the other hand, this separation mobilized a source of energy through the number and quality of social interactions which it produced. The mixing acted as an additional means which amplified the dynamics of internal relations and modified the relations with the socioanalysts.

Recognition of the unity of the collective analyst brought about very quickly an awareness of the unity of the group under socioanalysis. The relation between the group and the team of socioanalysts became a lever of analysis. As a result, the splitting-up and mixing of groups was abolished, while, for a long time, the collective analyst specializing in a given socioanalysis was systematically composed of four analysts made up of both men and women.

- *From preliminary diagnosis to concomitant diagnosis.*

Before the case, we had been involved in carrying out preliminary diagnoses in a whole variety of forms, which then gave rise to discussions and the decision or otherwise to engage the services of socioanalysis. Some executive managers considered that diagnosis of the problems faced by their group was their own responsibility. Others agreed to ask for help in the diagnosis, but then took it upon themselves to define the areas requiring analysis. In this case, the professional autonomy and technical legitimacy of the intervener were put into question. And yet, without such questioning, the exercise of the analytic role would be impossible.

The shop had been the object of investigation in circumstances where the idea of socioanalysis was not even addressed. When the decision to undertake socioanalysis was taken, an awareness of the problems was widely shared.



While we were preoccupied about knowing if the members of the shop could reproduce together what they had expressed separately, we discovered a process of self-diagnosis coming to life before us. Far from repeating the messages given in the interviews, the members together transformed and refined them, producing through our intermediary their self-diagnosis, evolving and rich with potential solutions. Consequently, after socioanalysis at the shop, we abandoned preliminary diagnoses.

- *From multiple tools to a unique tool.*

The preliminary diagnosis mobilized numerous tools of investigation, though of two main categories: individual interviews with or without a set theme, and collective surveys with or without feed-back, whether to the interviewees or to the person who ordered the investigation.

In the case of the shop, this person felt responsible for the part he played in the genesis of the problems of the shop. The diagnosis involved him and so did the analysis. Others in charge of the shop also felt themselves involved. All of them participated in socioanalysis seminars just before socioanalysis was undertaken at the shop. The work of analysis went therefore beyond the shop. It made it possible to create a sort of connivance between the members of the shop and their managers, while the early round of interviews had isolated each in his confidence. The survey with clear-cut questions had only produced cooled down, limited responses. After socioanalysis at the shop, we dispensed with interviews or surveys of any form, whether before or after socioanalysis.

The issue of diagnosis is a confrontation of competences, and in the case of an intervener proposing socioanalysis, also a question of its capacity to properly implement the means of treatment and carry out analysis to a successful end. The recognition of this technical competence can only be proportional to the recognition of the political competence of the demander. This reciprocity of positions is one of the conditions of the possibility of engaging socioanalysis. The test of this possibility is not to be found with surveys or interviews of whatever variety.

- *From delayed evaluation to continuous evaluation.*

Any evaluation comes up against the triple difficulty of fixing the reference, defining the criteria and choosing the time period. These three points can only with difficulty be determined independently from the comprehension of the dynamics of action due to which change is produced.

But what change? In the case of the shop, did the change aim at the resolution of the current problems or at an improvement in the capacity to face up to them and conceive, as analysis advanced, of the means of their resolution? The choice of socioanalysis aimed more and more at the enhancement of the shop's own capacities. But how can such change be grasped and objectified?

The initial investigation, that is, the interviews and the survey, had not been designed to evaluate the effects of socioanalysis. However, we used the same tool for the preliminary investigation and the delayed evaluation. The interpretation of the results of this comparison, despite certain notable gaps, was difficult to find without the help of experience acquired in socioanalysis.

Our perception of the first survey changed in light of the second one. The two hypotheses formulated to interpret these two sets of results could not have arisen without a transformation in our global understanding of the problems. Socioanalysis had produced a flow of articulated micro-changes, and as analysis progressed, through an invisible transposition, this flow shifted from the analysis to daily life.

Evaluation in socioanalysis is part and parcel of the work of analysis. Judgement of its utility is a constant issue and a function of many factors (costs, returns, time, etc.). The relativity of viewpoints and the possibility of challenging some and accepting others makes it difficult to settle on a unique criterion of evaluation. Continuous confrontation provides a many-sided means of evaluation which is perhaps the only one conceivable and possible in regards to action.

Other modifications will now be introduced which, due to the use of a unique tool, do not affect the option of integrating investigation and intervention. This tool, designated by the expression "socioanalytic rule", gradually became a reference in all our interventions (*Centre de socioanalyse* 1990).

## Conclusion

Changes of the socioanalytic rule have always been the result of impasses met in the course of socioanalysis. Furthermore, the technical solution would stand out before we were able to clearly formulate the reasons for the impasse.

The technical reorientation arising from socioanalysis at the shop was the consequence of the analysis itself. In its turn, it opened up new

perspectives. On the basis of the use made by the members of the shop of our group structure, the introduction of the reversal in the task was only justifiable if it made it possible to reach a normally hidden mechanism. And yet, we observed that this reversal was not a simple shift. A subsequent formulation of the task, *imagine the life of the group of socioanalysts*, clashed with resistances related to a proscription constitutive of social relations, a collective and codified proscription which bears upon the freedom to express what one believes is thought, represented, believed or aroused by oneself in another. The reciprocity of observation, a general property of social relations, is rejected, ignored, censured, or denied due to the fact that social relations are asymmetrical and hierarchical. The structure of internal judgements is connected to the structure of social functioning. Socioanalysis is an operative tool of analysis only because it is founded on this property which is above all a genuine social property.

The question of the limits of a group has already been raised in relation to the official and true composition of the team of socioanalysts. But it poses itself reciprocally for the group under socioanalysis. How do the phenomena of presence/absence or active symbolic presence occur? How are they grasped? Ten years afterwards, we undertook the socioanalysis of an institution represented in sessions only by its director. The team of socioanalysts was composed of four persons, two men and two women. As the sessions progressed, and through the mediation of the task, the problems of the institution took shape, though after several months it became evident that the person concerned was obliged to introduce to this analysis other members of the institution.

This socioanalysis inaugurated the second stage in the development of the analytic tool. Subsequent transformations have involved in particular the conception of a group. Thus, contrary to the preliminary choice which consisted in fixing at once the limits of the demander group for the duration of socioanalysis, the delimitation produced by the participants in analysis could become itself the object of analysis. The imagination task turned into the *imagination/co-optation* task. As with imagination, co-optation became an imposed activity.<sup>10</sup>

The notion of a group was no longer appropriate, for it did not take into account changes in the composition of the participants. The internal life of the institution was apprehended through the dynamics of representation, in the sense of individuals representing their institution. Not only did presence/absence relations take on all their significance, but also active and symbolic relations and concealed power and referential relations.

The stabilization of the current rule has coincided with the conviction of the existence of a specific level of analysis which ensures the uniqueness of the field explored. But the theory, still rather limited in comparison to our experience, remains inseparable from the constant control of practical adjustments and the validity of technical choices.

## NOTES

1. The socioanalytic technique has taken twenty years to develop, its transformations arising from our clinical practice. Conducting socioanalysis requires the use of a technical setup referred to as the "rule of socioanalysis". From January 1957 to the present, we constructed and tested 32 successive forms of the rule (Van Bockstaele, Van Bockstaele, and Godard-Plasman 1994a). Thirty two successive rules of socioanalysis have been formulated between 1957 and 1972. Since 1976, the rule has been the following:

*Rule of Socioanalysis* (rule 32, 1976)

Socioanalytic task:

- *imagine* the life of the group of socioanalysts
- *co-opt* the relevant persons

Those present must:

- express *without omission* anything that concerns the imagination/co-optation task
- *abstain* from expressing anything that does not concern the imagination/co-optation task

2. Our conception of clinical sociology has been formed through an experimental approach (Van Bockstaele et al. 1954; Van Bockstaele, Van Bockstaele, Michelat, and Carron 1996). Two noteworthy consequences of this approach are, firstly, a strong interest in the technical conditions and methods for the simulated reproduction of societal phenomena, and secondly, a concern to maintain in clinical work a certain rigor in the choice of variables and in the formulation of hypotheses.

3. The clinic/intervention relationship constitutes a major pivot in any definition of clinical sociology. Thus H. Rebach, introducing his chapter in the *Handbook of Clinical Sociology*, claims: "The most basic attribute that sets the subdiscipline of Clinical Sociology apart is that of intervention, the clinical sociologist is an active change agent" (1991, p. 49). In the same work, J-M. Fritz introduces the historical chapter with the following definition: "Clinical Sociology is defined here as the creation of new systems as well as the intervention in existing systems for the purposes of assessment and/or change..." (*Ibid.*, p. 18). Before the publication in 1963 of an article entitled "Quelques conditions d'une intervention de type analytique en sociologie" (Some Conditions of Analytic Intervention in Sociology) in *L'Année Sociologique*, we suggested that it be included under a sub-section entitled "Travaux de sociologie clinique" (Works in Clinical Sociology).

4. We refer here to surveys by interview or by questionnaire, to observations on group discussions, etc. Our first implementation of such diagnostic tools was in 1956 in a small industrial company. We used with the workers a questionnaire based on "SRA Employee Inventory" (Baehr 1954), and interviewed the management, guided by a framework derived from Katz, Maccoby, and Morse (1951), and observed the interactions within functional sub-groups (Bales 1950).

5. Concerning tools of change, our field approach was shaped by the following: experimentation in group dynamics (Coch and French 1948), research-action programmes (Lewin 1947), sociometric reconstruction techniques (Moreno 1934), surveys with feedback (Mann and Baumgartel 1952; Mann and Dent 1954), T-Group practice (Bradford 1954; Faucheux 1959).

6. From the outset we distinguished between two main types of demand: the one arising from institutions requiring help in their daily functioning or looking to overcome some already identified problems; the other of an individual nature for which we have created institutional support. During the shop case, the decision to abandon the socioanalysis of groups composed of voluntary individuals had still not been taken. It is therefore in this context that we could satisfy the request for training.

7. At the end of socioanalysis at the shop, the question arose as to the relevance to the group of agents of concern about the feedback of the work in the absence of objective quantified data. This was a new situation at the time. Since then, the dominant paradigm in social research, based on quantitative measurement, experimental design and multivariate, parametric, and statistical analysis has been widely challenged by the qualitative argument, even on the part of "two leading scholars of measurement and experimental design, Campbell and Lee Cronbach" (House 1977). The question of objectivity and validity turned into a discussion on technical constraints and evaluation approaches where the relationship between the researcher and the demander is crucial. Thus Patton emphasises both that "Decision makers and information users share responsibility for the credibility of an evaluation and the identification of evaluation issues to be studied" and that "To the extent that participants in the study are unable to relate to the description and analyzes in a qualitative evaluation report, it is appropriate to question the credibility of the report" (Patton 1980, pp. 336-337). More recently, in referring to the "War on Poverty" program, Kallen stresses the fact that "Many of the evaluation studies were under some pressure to be 'success oriented' in order to ensure future funding for programs which people agreed were socially good, even if their effectiveness could not always be clearly demonstrated" (Kallen 1995).

8. Numerous "models of social research and development" have been elaborated since the beginning of the 80s in an attempt to develop cooperation between researchers and policy makers "because evaluation research most often is retrospective, it will always stay a drawback that much energy has been spent on implementary and other activities involved in the execution of policy measures and intervention programs before they are evaluated. [...] As a consequence, the already existing gap between scientists and practitioners may grow still deeper and wider» (Schultz 1994, p. 110).

9. "Any demand for intervention involves a specific problem. This demand may or may not lead to the engagement of socioanalysis. In the case where it does not, treatment of the demand requires specific technical adjustments. This adjustment work is carried out by degrees, in the course of which the technical components of the socioanalytic situation and the resources of the particular field of exploration are brought together and compared" (Centre de socialanalyse 1990).

10. The emergence of the *imagination/co-optation task* not only marks a crucial stage in the technical development of socioanalysis, but also represents a theoretical and practical resource of exploration of the relations between cognition and action (Van Bockstaele *et al.* 1994a). Intervention in socioanalysis has shown us that change in these relations can be brought about through the analysis and interpretation of the process activated by the dynamics of imagination and co-optation. We have designated this process of social change by the neologism : *diapoèse* (Van Bockstaele and Van Bockstaele 1971). The Greek etymology of this term combines two ideas : 1) the idea of separation, of division, of going beyond or through, including by means of violence, as expressed by the preposition *dia*; 2) the idea of making, of producing, of giving birth to, of creating, as expressed by the verbe *poiéo*. The creative nature of the imagination/co-optation task in socioanalysis is emphasized by its designation as *diapoetic task*.

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