

# “The Voyage of the Dawn Treader”: The World at the Dawn of 2006-2011. Understanding societal themes

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## Abstract

This article offers a snapshot of the societal dynamics of individual countries around the world, integrated into a global view to provide the tourism and hospitality industry insight into potential customer needs and perceptions. The OPUS Reports on the *Global Dynamics at the Dawn of 20...* are published annually since 2006 in the Journal of Organisational and Social Dynamics in London. The researchers were interested in a metaphoric *tour* of the world's social dynamics over time as perceived from both the Systems psychodynamics and Positive psychology theoretical paradigms. The research methodology was qualitative using a case study approach where each of the six (2006-2011) years' integrated hypotheses was studied as a separate case study. The six cases were integrated into new hypotheses reflecting how global social dynamics changed over the years. The findings were presented as hypotheses per individual country followed by an integrated global hypothesis. The three main emerging themes were framed as **Identity**, **Hope** and **Love**. **Identity** contains the sub-theme of *Facelessness*, described as the fragmentation of cultures, a loss of cultural identity and a search for shared social meaning. **Hope** embodies the theme *Knight/s in shining armour* which describes youth as saviours and Obama as saviour. The loss of **Hope** is illustrated by the sub-themes of the impotence of the older generation, pessimism, fear and the death of a way of life. **Love** consists of human connection described as affiliation, support and trust. The lack of **Love** consists of human alienation described as loneliness, aggression and violence.

The findings of the study identify societal themes that can be operationalized in the tourism and hospitality industry through targeted offerings to provide in the unmet needs of society. In addition, training interventions to improve customer service and return on investment can be based on the findings of this research.

**Key words:** culture; customer service; market trends, social dynamics; qualitative research

## Background to the study

This study focussed on the OPUS on-going research project entitled *Global*

*Dynamics at the Dawn of 20...* The OPUS (Organisation for Psychoanalytic

Understanding of Society) findings provide a year on year snapshot of the societal dynamics of the world, published annually in the journal Organisational and Social Dynamics. Hypotheses are formulated per individual country followed by an integrated global hypothesis.

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Although some attention has been focussed on the 'unconscious mind' of the different countries and the world as a whole, the hypotheses have not been studied in terms of changes, trends or developments over time. The purpose of the research was to study the integrated (global) hypotheses in the OPUS reports of 2006-2011, towards formulating new hypotheses on the developmental trends over six years. Listening Posts are done in January of each year across the world and the title of the paper *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* describes the study as "treading the dawn" of each year, starting the voyage in 2006.

This metaphoric *tour* does not report on the findings of a clinical intervention but describe the unconscious mind of different countries, reflecting the unconscious mind of the world as a whole. Identity, Hope and Love as psychological concepts are analysed from a System psychodynamic theoretical perspective to describe the psychological wellness of the world. The Organisation for Psychoanalytic Understanding of Society aims to describe individual and social identities, cultural diversity and the social dynamics that manifests in groups and organisations.

### Research methodology

A qualitative and descriptive research approach was chosen (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delpont, 2002) within the hermeneutic paradigm (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2010). Each of the six (2006-2011) years' findings was seen as an individual case study (Chamberlayne, Bornat & Apitzsch, 2004) and the six case studies as a whole was seen as a collective narrative event (Breverton & Millward, 2004) in order to formulate new hypotheses reflecting how global social dynamics changed over the years.

### Sampling

Convenient (Breverton & Millward, 2004) and opportunistic sampling (Terre

Blanche, Painter & Durrheim, 2006) was used, consisting of the existing OPUS Listening Post data from 2006 to 2011.

### Data collection

The OPUS annual Listening Post findings were used (Stapley, 1996; 2006; Stapley & Rickman, 2010). The rationale of the Listening Post is to explore the unconscious processes of participants as they develop an understanding of the topic under scrutiny (Stapley, 2006). The Listening Post as a whole functions as an open system where participants co-create knowledge and insight. The method assumes an underlying interdependency between participants and the collective unconscious mind that emerges from the group processes as it happens in the 'here and now'. A Listening Post comprises 2 one hour sessions with a 30 minute break in between. A convenor facilitates the event, participates on an equal footing with others and holds the time boundaries firmly (Dartington, 2000).

The design is mostly unstructured, allowing space for one hour to experientially explore participants' experiences through thinking and free-associating (Stapley & Collie, 2005). Participants were asked "*What is it like to be a citizen of ... (the specific country) at the dawn of ... (the year)?*" In the next hour, the conscious and unconscious aspects of the matter are processed into working hypotheses by the participants.

### Data analysis

Multi-level content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was the method of choice to study each of the six (2006-2011) years' integrated hypotheses as separate case studies. This method constituted progressively more abstract levels of analysis. The first, second and third level themes all interacted interdependently to describe the psychological wellness of the world in a specific case or year.

During the **first level analysis** shared experiences and meanings were labelled

into categories. First level analyses are explorative in nature and address the question of *what*. The hypotheses of the integrated annual OPUS reports served as the first level themes.

The **second level analysis** was more abstract and described shared pattern categories. This level of analysis was descriptive and addressed the question of *how*. The second level themes gave metaphorical descriptions to align with the title of the paper '*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*', taken from the Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis (1953). The OPUS study was perceived as a *Dawn Treader* firstly because the field work is conducted at the 'dawn' of each year in January and secondly, it is a 'voyage' since it is repeatedly done year on year, making it possible to 'map' its progression over time. For the purpose of this paper, the researchers decided to focus on the data of 6 years, starting the voyage in January 2006 and ending it in January 2011.

The **third level analysis** constituted the most abstract themes, explaining the pattern categories. A conceptual discussion of the interdependencies addressed the question *why*. Bateson (1979) emphasised that the 'map is not the territory' implying that any description is not the thing in itself. The description of pattern categories therefore lies with the researchers and objective systems do not exist in themselves. To map the wellness of the world in this study, the System Psychodynamic (SPD) Triangle (Henning, 2009), a model of psychological wellness, provided the framework for the third level analysis.

### **Systems psychodynamics**

Systems psychodynamics refer to the study of systemic behaviour above and below the surface of consciousness (Huffington, Armstrong, Halton, Hoyle & Pooley, 2004).

### **Psychological wellness**

Psychological wellness falls within a broad field of study that examines quality of life issues. Any investigator who is curious about the parameters of psychological wellness will find a confusing array of theoretical perspectives, conclusions and methodologies that all claim some authority in the literature. Within the system psychodynamic paradigm, different scholars defined the concept. Freud (1964) was of the opinion that unconscious material must be made conscious before a person will experience wellness: "Where Id is there Ego shall be". For Klein (1975) and the object relation theorists, wellness was a relational concept and they postulated that the times of loving care must exceed the times of frustration and deprivation during childhood. If all goes relatively well and the child experiences a budding faith in primary caretakers, the child eventually develops the ability and courage to integrate opposing feelings of love and hate.

Janov (1991, p.316) stated that the hallmark of psychological wellness is an individual's ability to be satisfied with life: "The neurotic is often dissatisfied with almost everything. Such an individual is missing something, so there is never enough money, security, love, sex, power, prestige or fame. Just feeling satisfied with one's life is an enormous achievement". Czander (1997, p.74) defined a psychological well-adjusted person as someone "with a firm or secure self-system ... and an ability to tap basic skills that are consistent and capable of forming an arc between the person's ambitions and ideals". Antonovsky (1987), the founder of the 'salutogenesis' paradigm, described wellness in terms of an 'ease-disease' continuum. Any living system, at a given time can oscillate between the two extremes on the continuum. It is only possible to speak of behaviour that is closer to either one of the two polarities because behaviour (or wellness) is never static and moves like a pendulum from side to side on the continuum.

## Systems thinking

The researchers approached the study with sensitivity for fundamental systemic principles. The universe is understood as a hierarchy of systems, where each higher level of a system is composed of systems at lower levels. A system being a whole in one context is simultaneously a part of another system. That means a subsystem of a greater system is also a whole system on its own within another system within another system, ad infinitum. Individuals as members of society are subsystems of a greater society, representing a particular country. Different countries form subsystems of bigger continents, which constitute planet earth. Theoretically system levels can be identified from the smallest subatomic particles to the interaction of galaxies. Components of a system can be distinguished from each other, such as the different countries, although functionally they cannot be separated. An integrated view of the wellness of the world is dependent on perceptions of each country, which again is dependent on the perceptions of each individual.

## Positive psychology

Positive psychology (Snyder & Lopez, 2005) can be defined as the study of optimal human functioning with the aim of changing the focus of theory and practices in some fields of psychology from preoccupation with disease and healing to well-being and the enhancement or fostering of strengths and virtues (Snyder & Lopez, 2005). In the integrated global OPUS reports society members mentioned a yearning for such as **love, hope**, creativity, values, meaning, personal growth, self-actualisation and the building of character strengths to cope with constant societal changes.

Frankl (1959) stated that the primary force in life is an individual's striving to find 'meaning' and 'purpose in life'. Buffering strengths in positive psychology include courage, putting troubles into perspective,

interpersonal skill, finding purpose, curiosity, the capacity of pleasure, future-mindedness, perseverance, competence and from psychoanalytic theory, a mature identity. The majority of the members of societies from the individual countries expressed the need to find meaning and purpose in their lives but struggle to as they are overwhelmed by the monster of globalisation and its dehumanising effect on them.

Seligman (2002) a contemporary leader in the field of positive psychology, defined 'pleasure' (closely akin to instant gratification), 'engagement' (involvement with one's work, life partners, friends, family and interests) and 'meaning' (living out one's purpose or using one's personal strengths to serve some larger end) as the three building blocks of happiness.

## Findings

The findings of the multi-level content analysis are presented as separate year on year case studies that was conducted during January of each year from 2006 to 2011.

### January 2006

Three distinct sub-themes were identified in 2006 and were grouped together as they share the same basic foundation of the continuing revolutionary changes that are occurring across the world.

#### First level analysis themes:

Hypothesis 1: Coping with continuing social change

Sub-theme a: Loss of identity

Sub-theme b: Failing paternalistic leadership

Sub-theme c: Splitting, displacement and scapegoating of the "Other"

Members of societies experienced societal changes as dramatic and destructive and the nature of the change, which was referred to as 'the death of a way of life' in 2004, was still influential at both a social and a psychological level in all societies.

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### **Second level analysis:**

The first level themes of 2006 can be collapsed into a new category describing the patterns of the emerging themes relating to the loss of identity, loss of direction and values and the confusion it causes.

#### **Theme 1: Faceless Passengers on a Ship with no Captain or Compass**

A global identity crisis was evident in members of society at the dawn of 2006. Society members saw 'others' as a source of danger and were looking for 'sameness' in terms of race, colour and nationality. Society members reported that it became difficult to discern between the 'Me' and the 'Not Me', that they are leaderless and without direction in life:

*"Where are we headed as a society; where do I fit in; what direction do I advise my children to take or which behaviour must they adopt in this society?"*

- Holland

*"There are many roads, but no signposts and it's hard to predict"*

- Finland

*"People are moving fast and away from their native places, the original community is replaced by a virtual one with no link to any land..."*

- Italy

*"There is a lack of empathy towards other people due to the growing narcissism in the society"*

- Norway

Social and community fabrics are broken forever due to the speed of living that does not allow for space and time to share and build strong attachments with others. A flight into 'sameness' seem to be an unconscious defence against anxiety.

### **January 2007**

Three hypotheses were identified in 2007 and were grouped together as 'The Cause', 'The Response' and 'The Effect'.

### **First level analysis**

Hypotheses 1: "The Cause":  
Fragmentation, Loss of identity and Death as a way of life

Hypotheses 2: "The Response":  
Defences against anxiety

Sub-theme a: Politicians and Governments

Sub-theme b: Religious, institutional and societal systems

Sub-theme c: The Media

Sub-theme d: Young people

Sub-theme e: Women

Sub-theme f: Consumerism

Sub-theme g: Climate changes

Sub-theme h: Aggression and violence

Hypotheses 3: "The Effect": Coping with reality, shame and guilt

### **Second level analysis:**

The first level themes of 2007 can be collapsed into a 3 second level categories to describe what is hidden below the surface of the conscious mind of societies.

#### **Theme 1: Icebergs below the Surface**

The fragmentation of cultures, broken societies and fast pace of living where moral values, family ties and friendships missing lie unseen below the surface like icebergs, threatening to destroy humanity:

*"Our sense of humanity is challenged and we seek new containers for both survival and meaning. Past political and religious truths are no longer holding. - Australia*

*"We are unable to read the world with the confidence that we had in the past. Our response to this is to strengthen personal boundaries, revealing little about our true selves and denying our curiosity and interest in each other". - Ireland*

#### **Theme 2: Defending against Pirates**

This theme describes the diverse forms of defences that society members employed against enemies such as inner conflicts, anxieties and fears.

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The defences employed are the same in all countries; such as splitting off and displacing their unbearable thoughts and feelings into various 'external objects' and individual retreats and withdrawal into solitude. Scapegoating and blaming others such as the media, politicians and governments for the discomfort seems to bring relief for members of societies globally:

*"The media concentrate too much on emotional responses rather than the rational analysis. It is difficult to fight against this ..."* - Finland

*"We are presented by the media and governments with multiple views but what and who do we trust?"* - UK

### **Theme 3: Riding the Waves...**

This theme describes the discovery of members of societies that despite their experiences of a "death of a way of life" the unbearable reality still exists and they are left to contemplate their actions. A dependency on consumerism for example, is therapeutic but does not bring long-term relief.

### **January 2008**

Four hypotheses were identified in 2008 and were grouped into 2 second level themes.

#### **First level analysis**

Hypotheses 1: Broken societies

Hypotheses 2: Lack of trust in politicians and beginnings of non-party political activism

Hypotheses 3: From Paranoid-Schizoid to Depressive position

Hypotheses 4: Privilege an expression of guilt and shame

#### **Second level analysis**

The second level theme 'Paradise Lost' combined Hypotheses 1 and 2 and the second level theme 'Paradise Found' combined hypotheses 3 and 4.

### **Theme 1: Paradise Lost**

Hypotheses 1: Broken societies

Hypotheses 2: Lack of trust in politicians and beginnings of non-party political activism

'Paradise Lost' describes experiences of broken relationships on individual and societal levels. It is as if the 'narcissistic bubble' of societies burst and they suddenly feel worthless, unimportant and unattached and disconnected:

*"There is great difficulty in naming one single source for our anxieties. Members talked of a widespread feeling of hopelessness. There are no societal institutions or ideals that seem incapable of holding the fragmentation we are experiencing."* - Italy

### **Theme 2: Paradise Found**

Hypotheses 3: From Paranoid-Schizoid to Depressive position

Hypotheses 4: Privilege an expression of guilt and shame

The second level themes 'Paradise Found' describe experiences of introspection towards a deeper understanding. The reported experiences show that members of societies are beginning to think about their own part in the processes and that the way forward lies in their own actions. Examples of this thinking are the potential to resolve present day problems, meaningful work that can make things better; freedom of expression and pro-active actions:

*"Today there is more openness for being different, we are allowed to get to know different cultures and ways of life"* - Chile

*"On the other hand, there are voices which show that it is possible to find a safe arena by limiting expectations and by empowering and contributing to others"* - Chile

### **January 2009**

Four hypotheses were identified in 2009 and were grouped into 2 second level themes. "The death of a way of life" as a recurring theme 2004 reached a breaking point in 2009 and is seen as part of a continuing process. Since 2004 this

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“psychological death” was gradually spreading through all societies and in 2009 it is almost an accepted norm and part of the expectations for the year ahead.

### First level analysis

Hypotheses 1: Psychological and structural violence

Hypotheses 2: Dependency and violent rebellion

Hypotheses 3: Concerns for the future and the youth as saviours

Hypotheses 4: Hope and fear

### Second level analysis

The second level theme ‘The Perfect Storm’ describes the Hypotheses 1 and 2 as identified in 2009.

#### Theme 1: The Perfect Storm

Hypotheses 1: Psychological and structural violence

Hypotheses 2: Dependency and violent rebellion

The combination of psychological and structural violence with dependencies and violent rebellion provides the makings of a perfect storm. In 2008 there was a distinct warning that violence was present beneath the surface in societies throughout the world and that there was a danger that this could be acted out:

*“The world is spinning out of control”*  
- Australia

In the deepest thoughts there is the belief that societies nest primitive and uncontrollable evil forces that do not measure the damage they can provoke:

*“There seems to be many signs of the displacement of control. People are treading water”.* – Faroe Islands

#### Theme 2: Lighthouse Spotting

The second level theme ‘Lighthouse Spotting’ describes Hypotheses 3 and 4 identified in 2009.

Hypotheses 3: Concerns for the future and the youth as saviours

Hypotheses 4: Hope and Fear

Although Hope is juxtaposed to Fear for the future and concerns of violence, there is hope that there will be light somewhere in the near future. The youth is perceived as competent and is seen as saviours to a desperate world:

*“Neither the discontent nor the hope has yet taken shape. People are awaiting. But something new is in the making”.*  
– Faroe Islands

#### January 2010

Three hypotheses were identified in 2010 and were grouped into 2 second level themes.

### First level analysis

Hypotheses 1: Dependency and survival

Hypotheses 2: Impotence of older generation and Youth as hope and saviours

Hypotheses 3: The search for social and shared meaning

### Second level analysis

‘Knights in Shining Armour’ describes Hypotheses 1 and 2 while the theme ‘Treasure Hunting’ describes Hypotheses 3.

#### Theme 1: Knights in Shining Armour

The youth & Obama are perceived as saviours (shining) and will protect and save (armour) the world and enable new possibilities.

#### Theme 2: Treasure Hunting

Hypotheses 3: The search for social and shared meaning

Experiences that described deep longings for the meaning of life and the need for purpose in life are categorised within this second level theme.

*“The meaningless of certain events can push some people into a state of deep confusion and anxiety. Faced with*

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*incomprehension, surrounded with destruction and destructiveness, desperation some people take refuge in the familiar..."*

- France

### January 2011

This is the last year included in the data analysis, the journey ends on a Dark Island, the second level theme for 2011.

#### First level analysis

Hypotheses 1: Loss of society

Hypotheses 2: Fragmentation and disconnectedness

Hypotheses 3: Defending against isolation

#### Second level analysis

Three hypotheses were identified in 2011 and were collapsed into one second level theme.

#### Theme 1: Dark Island

The theme "Dark Island" describes the perceptions of total loss of connection between society members, the disconnection between cultures and the isolation that society members experience.

*"A group member observed that his children who are adults now, barely have any values or a world view to guide them, it seems like a ship adrift..." - Belgium*

*"This uncertainty increases the sensation of the unknown and crisis". - Portugal*

#### Third order analysis:

##### A wellness perspective of the world

The wellness of the world, from a Gestalt ('whole') approach can be described as 'the sum of the whole is greater than the parts'. The integrated hypotheses of the individual countries over a period of 6 years offer a different global understanding of the wellness of the world than a single view of a country or specific year.

The manifesting themes that describe the wellness of the world from 2006–2011 were framed as **Identity**, **Hope** and **Love**. The three third level themes are closely interrelated and mutually influence one another. Without a strong sense of identity positive human attachments are not possible as Lewis (1954) stated: "How can we build good personal relationships if we do not have personalities? Furthermore, without positive human attachments, social meaning and purpose and therefore also **Hope** is fading.

According to Neumann, Keller and Dawson-Shepherd (1997) it would be necessary for societies to become comfortable with contradiction and paradox, and to reward society members for 'believing six impossible things before breakfast' as the Red Queen said in 'Alice in Wonderland'. Members of societies and societies are challenged to develop a tolerance for ambiguity where they have to integrate good and bad results coming from the same source, that is, the choices they make:

*"Life has become both surprising and frightening, as the choices that we make have serious consequences that shake the balance of the nature and people's lives. – Finland*

The three third level themes will be described in terms of a wellness continuum, where the extreme polarities represent negative (un-wellness) and positive (wellness) descriptions relating to the main theme.

#### Discussion

##### Identity

The Identity continuum illustrates global experiences regarding a sense of identity. The negative extreme pole depicts experiences of a weak sense of identity and the opposite polar contains descriptions of a strong sense of identity.

#### Table 1: Identity continuum



| WEAK SENSE OF IDENTITY      | STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Fragmentation of cultures   | Individualism            |
| Technological change        | Flight into solitude     |
| Feelings of in-authenticity | Integration of Europe    |
| Consumerism                 | New world order          |
| Failing morality and values |                          |

The boundaries that create consistency, continuity and confirmation of identities are diffused as these distinctions are not drawn clear enough:

*“As citizens we have become alienated from our feeling selves. The fragmentation of boundaries is felt as a threat, not the promise of freedom it initially was thought to be.”*  
- Australia

On the **Weak Sense of Identity** side of the continuum, members of societies, societies and the world seem to be in a state of Explosive instability where system boundaries are too flexible and permeable. Such a system loses its integrity and its core identity is threatened, causing confusion, anxiety and fear amongst society members.

The positive pole **Strong sense of Identity** describes experiences that illustrate how societies respond to the collapse of cultural and national identities. Unconscious needs to build stronger identities and firmer boundary management is acted out in flights into solitude and individualism, which creates a sense of hope. In this sense, hope is strongly related to fear as a ‘flight away from fear and desperation’.

Globalisation and ineffective boundary management on different levels seem to be the root of the total collapse of personal and cultural identities. The second order theme *Facelessness*, describes the perceived global weak sense of identity. This is ironic when one considers the popularity of Facebook (as

a social networking site) which seems to act as society’s illusion of interpersonal connection.

The collapse of social and psychological boundaries is a trend year on year and mentions of weakening identities increased year on year.

### Hope

The Hope continuum describes experiences of Hopelessness as opposed to Hopefulness. The Hopefulness side of the continuum illustrates dependencies on a Messiah figure to save the world from failing leadership and destabilised social structures. Second level themes such as *Knight/s in shining armour* described the youth as saviours and Obama as saviour. This theme is interpreted in terms of dependency for a Messiah figure to save the world from failing leadership:

*“.....and invest their hope onto another individual and a phantasy of a new Messiah who will save us from our overwhelming anxieties about the unknown future”.*

Hopelessness is illustrated by the sub-themes of the impotence of the older generation, pessimism, fear and the death of a way of life.

**Table 2: Hope continuum**

| HOPELESSNESS                       | HOPEFULNESS          |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Failing paternalistic leadership   | Obama as a ‘saviour’ |
| Impotence of the older generations | Youth as ‘saviours’  |
| Death of a way of life             |                      |
| Pessimism and fear                 |                      |

The Hope continuum contains elements of the past, present and future. The mourning the past is evident in descriptions such as ‘the death of a way of life’, the fear and pessimism of the present reality and the hope that the future will give birth to new possibilities. However, amongst the majority of society

members, hope and fear are two sides of the same coin:

*“Here we are, in the midst of the worst times that I’ve seen in my life, and yet I have a sense of abiding hope or possibility. At the same time, I can’t run as far or as fast or think as straight”.*

The world as a global system is stuck in a state of stable equilibrium, where the boundaries are rigid and inflexible. Passivity, predictable and habitual behaviour and thoughts are evident in society members across the world:

*“Today people are concerned by individuality, virtual realities and immediate enjoyment. They cannot dream together...it is as if there was both no past and no future for this generation, stuck in an unpleasant and disillusioned present reality”.*  
- France

Switzerland as a society stood out as containing both elements of Hopefulness and Hopelessness more than any of the other countries. On the one side there were perceptions of wealth describing Switzerland as a little ‘Paradise’ as opposed to concerns regarding burglaries, difficulties of seeking employment, health concerns and feelings of guilt and shame due to the privilege of being a Swiss citizen.

### Love

The **Love** continuum describes global experiences of human attachment. Human Connection includes all experiences of positive attachment while the lack of attachment describes Human Alienation such as experiences of loneliness, aggression, violence and terrorism.

**Table 3: Love continuum**

| <b>HUMAN ALIENATION</b>   | <b>HUMAN CONNECTION</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Longing for affiliation   | Societal systems        |
| Search for social meaning | Religion                |
| Loss of social cohesion   |                         |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Lack of trust           |  |
| Aggression and violence |  |

As described by the second level theme ‘Treasure hunting’ society members are looking for stronger human attachments that will give them a sense of purpose and meaning in life:

*“Individuals feel isolation, they don’t know how to make progress to achieve a society more human, open, respectful and with common bindings”.*

- Chile

*“Personal relationships are unstable and fragile, which makes it difficult to understand what is happening around and to know how to behave in a confusing and contradictory reality”.*

- Chile

### Conclusions

During the 2006-2011 period, the citizens and societies in all participating countries and in the world, reported negative experiences as a result of the continuing societal changes; a gradual increase from massive dependency towards an expression of violent rebellion, and getting increasingly stuck in a state of explosive instability. It seems that societies and the world are caught-up in the paranoid-schizoid position.

This study tried to highlight the depressive position through its focus on positive psychology. Von Bertalanffy (1973, p.203) mentioned that “the secret of health and happiness lies in successful adaptation to the ever-changing conditions of the globe; the penalties for failure in this great process of adaptation are disease and unhappiness”. Bateson (1979) used the phrase ‘an uncommitted potentiality for change’ to define flexibility. In systems thinking, wellness or illness is the result of the loss of flexibility in a system. Flexibility or the ‘uncommitted potentiality for change’ ensures that the system has the freedom to cope and adapt to unpredictable changes in the

environment. According to Keeney (1983, p.18) "the most basic act of knowing is the creation of a difference; it is only by distinguishing one pattern from another that we are able to know our world". From this it can be said that boundary management can foster wellness of a system through "knowing the difference". Society members seem unable to 'know the difference' as they struggle to 'draw a distinction' (Keeney, 1983) causing anxiety and fear. This seems to be the challenge for citizens and the world in the following few years in order to socially survive.

It seems as if globalisation is contributing to a sense of 'dehumanisation' amongst members of societies worldwide. With the majority of societies there is no evidence of an 'uncommitted budget of flexibility' (Bateson, 1979) to successfully adapt to the continuous and relentless changes. The loss of flexibility that members of societies seem to experience causes rigidity and stagnation in the expression of their thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

### Recommendations

The main theme *Facelessness* and perceptions of dehumanisation due to rapid technological changes directs the focus of the tourism and hospitality industry towards a more personalised customer service experience. Front line staff needs to be trained to provide excellent service by making the customer feel valued. To counter feelings of human alienation the word *hospitality* promises warmth and a sense of belonging. Words and catchphrases that address this need can be used in advertising and marketing campaigns.

Furthermore, a sense of belonging can be restored through friends and family orientated touring packages and offerings to re-establish relational connectedness amongst society members. The capacity for pleasure and a new sense of meaning and purpose in life can be strengthened in customers.

In conclusion, the feelings of *Paradise Lost* that the majority of society members reported in their daily lives can become *Paradise Found* through targeted and customised offerings in the tourism and hospitality industry based on the findings of this research.

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