

Summaries

W. F. Wertheim, The impact of law upon society. p. 255.

Before and shortly after the war, the author had attempted to analyse in a series of publications the impact of legislation upon society, by stressing its indirect psychological influence on the bulk of the population. At that time his views were largely ignored, both by lawyers and students of the sociology of law. A recent doctoral dissertation by H. J. Pot who, in a critical analysis, drew attention to his views and to those, defended in the past by Jeremy Bentham and more recently by Anders V. Lundstedt, induced the author to develop again the concept of social impact of law, in the light of modern sociological theory. He attempts to reveal the reasons, why lawyers are, in general, opposed to his concept of law as an instrument for social engineering, and forwards a few suggestions for sociological research by combined teams of lawyers and sociologists.

H. M. Jolles, Legalizing the sociology of law. p. 270.

The development of a sociology of law has, in some respects, been hindered by too much discussion on theoretical programs, which were never translated into concrete research. In fact, however, some research on topics, which might be called juridical-sociological but happened not to be called so, has already been done. Mentioned are studies by E. C. Snyder, Jessie Bernard, S. A. Stouffer, K. Lindemann, H. A. Brasz, F. Fürstenberg, a.o. It might be useful to further a survey of what has been done so far and to systematize topics for further research. Therefore a more intensified collaboration between jurists and sociologists would be quite welcome.

P. J. A. ter Hoeven, Sociological approach to the Stevedore's Act. p. 280.

The annual reports of the government service which executes the Dutch Stevedore's Act, are analysed as a case-study in the sociology of law. It is found that the protections of the dockworkers, such as regulations of the labour market, the working hours and weekend-work, are stimulated by the Act. This is however done with reference to the difficulties in labour supply, competition with foreign ports and the like. Thus, the execution of the Act is clearly adapted to the peculiarities of the industry concerned. The same conclusion can be reached with reference to the working situation on the docks, where general shortages of workers and shortages of skilled labourers force the government service to a lenient attitude. Indirectly also a certain pressure on extension of the training facilities can be observed. In general the service concerned seems to prefer an indirect pressure in order to reach the objectives of the Act. Often this is done by manipulating the existing means of social control and not by using the relatively unimportant financial sanctions of the Act itself. In general it can be said that over a period of 15 years the policies of the government service are dialectically alternating between orientation towards employer values and orientation towards employee values. In this process pressures from trade unions and employers associations seem to play a certain role, although further forces may also be at work, but these are not mentioned in the reports analysed.

G. W. Locher, Oecumene as a secular sociological concept. p. 335.

The word oecumene has its origin in the Greek word „oikoumene“. Both words show a variety of meaning. The present usage of the word oecumene is not confined at all to the meaning of „christian world“ and „the church throughout the world“. In human geography oecumene is still common for the oecological concept of the inhabited and inhabitable surface of the earth. In anthropology and sociology the word was used e.g. by Kroeber to indicate an historic culture aggregate of higher civilization and by Redfield to classify the types of cities as before and after the industrial revolution and Western expansion (before and after the „universal oecumene“). Historians talk about the buddhist and moslem oecumenes. The word may also be used to refer to the communist world.

Because of its variety of meaning the word oecumene may become a very useful concept in a cultural sociological study of world development. It implies a general historical perspective of cultural

growth as well as a perception of the tremendous conflicts in the present situation of the „universal ocumene“. Its use as a secular concept may stimulate „oecumenical movements“ to recognize world-wide problems of human existence as urgent matters for joint action.

J. E. Ellemers, Sociology and the study of acculturation. p. 344.

This paper tries to show in which ways sociology can contribute to the study of acculturation. In the first section acculturation is briefly compared with other forms of social change. Two definitions of acculturation are distinguished, a limited and a more comprehensive one. Then some sociological concepts are discussed, which may be useful as analytical tools for the study of acculturation. Most prominent among them are Parsons' „pattern variables“, and the concept of function, anomie, social role, and reference group. In the third section some results of empirical studies notably on communication and the introduction of new farm methods, are summarized and their relevance for the study of acculturation is demonstrated.

Finally, an attempt is made to integrate some of the sociological concepts discussed in section II with some of the research findings of section III.

F. L. van Holthoorn: In Memoriam Alfred Louis Kroeber. p. 367.

The essay is an evaluation of the scientific work of Prof. Kroeber who died last year. Its aim is to show how his studies of the theory of culture are related with the practical aspects of historic approach. The importance of his essay on the „Super-organic“ is stressed, which introduced his postulate of the autonomic reality of all cultural phenomena and his definition of the historic approach which „preserves“ its phenomena in their context by „descriptive integration“.

In his empiric study of cultural phenomena his two-sided concern with world-wide reconstruction of the history of cultures and with the morphology of culture-patterns is sketched. It is contended that both in his spatial-static and his diachronic-dynamic reconstruction of cultural phenomena his method is similar. He built culture-traits and historic facts into complexes and patterns which he used to prove either a historic relationship between cultures or the profile of a culture pattern. And even where he made use of historic personalities he was not concerned with the accidents and individuals in history as such. The author sees a relation between Kroeber's characteristic use of the concept of culture in the „Super-organic“ and his interest in culture patterns and large-scale historical relationship between cultures.

Kroeber avoided the manifest dangers of his approach to history by the modesty with which he used his method. He enriched the study of mankind by the broad perspectives which he offered to its history.

Dr. J. Prins, Role of the „district-commissioners“ of Surinam. p. 375.

This essay is a description of the important position Surinam „districtscommissarissen“ (i.e. district-commissioners) have got in Surinam society, in particular outside the Surinam capital, Paramaribo. The author deals with the competencies and responsibilities these local administrators have in accordance with statutory law and governmental instructions, especially in the agrarian sphere. His main object however is to describe what problems and complaints the population is used to submit to the commissioner and his assistants (the „Bestuursopzichters“).

His inductive material consists of accounts of what happened on some „audiëntie-morgens“ (public audiences on fixed dates) he attended. There was an enormous diversity of matters.

Moreover the commissioner himself as well as his assistants are often involved in public and even private festivities as well expected to take part in mischief and trouble.

The author's conclusion is that the present impartial and socially important position these functionaries needs to be maintained by wise policy of the Surinam government.