

# Summaries

Piet Nijhoff

## *Modern? Postmodern? Zygmunt Bauman's Diagnosis of our Times*

This is an introductory essay on the series of eight books written since 1987 by the Polish-British sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. As regards methods, a sociological audience is asked to appreciate the value of his unorthodox approach. To Bauman the incongruities of life are best reflected in an analytical effort that moves between perspectives without forcing them into a synthesis. He shows little respect for the boundaries and divisions of academic discipline. The substance of the argument that connects the eight books is presented here as an ongoing diagnosis of our times. It is organized around the notion that, from certain viewpoints and in certain respects, the social order of modernity is broken up by a post-modern pluralisation of authority. Bauman is primarily interested in the effect of this break-up on the possibilities of a personal morality: his studies had shown that the centralized mechanisms and dominant constructs of modernity had effectively neutralized individual moral responsibility when it was most needed. His weighing of the chances of morality under postmodern conditions hovers between optimism and pessimism. In consumerism, freedom of choice may lose the guidelines of sense and meaning. It is here that the tasks of modern sociology still retain their value.

Mart Bax

## *The Dead of Šurmanci The Local Sources of 'the War' in Bosnia-Herzegovina*

Bosnia-Herzegovina is the site of a striking number of World War Two monuments erected on or in the immediate vicinity of mass graves. Unlike war monuments and war graves elsewhere in Europe, these memorials are bones of contention and generate inter-ethnic violent animosity. This paper gives an extensive description of the trials and tribulations of one of these war monuments and the Serb and Croat communities involved. It addresses an aspect of ethnic cleansing that has hitherto been the focus of very little research, i.e. the destruction of mass graves. In addition, the paper advocates a more systematic inquiry into the local sources of 'the war' in this part of former Yugoslavia.

Wilfred Uunk & Wout Ultee

*Knowledge or Culture?*

*The importance of education and participation in the high arts in partner selection in the Netherlands between 1948 and 1992*

This article examines the role of educational attainment and cultural participation in mate selection in the Netherlands between 1948 and 1992. Our main research question is to what extent persons match on similar preferences in the high arts and to what extent this tendency of cultural homogamy is stronger than the tendency of educational homogamy. Another question is to what extent women use their cultural knowledge and skills to attract higher educated men for marriage. To answer these questions, we use data on spouses' educations and cultural participation from the Netherlands Family Survey 1992-1993 and apply zero-order and residual correlation models. The results of our analyses indicate that cultural homogamy is as strong as educational homogamy and that only recently cultural homogamy has become weaker than educational homogamy. Given the additional finding that exchange of wife's cultural and husband's educational resources decreased, culture seems to have lost its strength in mate selection. This finding challenges predictions from Bourdieu's theory of compensatory strategies which hold that status groups increasingly distinguish themselves by higher standards of social conduct.