

## Summaries

**J. Goudsblom**

### *The Importance of Sociology*

Sociology is the study of social processes. In this sense, as the most general social science, it can provide the context for the findings of other, more specialized disciplines. Following Auguste Comte, we can make an analytic distinction between social dynamics and social statics. Social dynamics refers to those processes which account for the long term sociogenesis of any given social situation. Social statics refers to the processes which account for the recurrence of similar situations. Several examples, including the Milgram experiments, are used to illustrate the distinction and to demonstrate that social dynamics and social statics are complementary.

**Loïc J.D. Wacquant**

### *Decivilisation and Demonisation*

This article analyzes the post-1960s transformation of America's dark ghetto in material reality and public discourse as the product of two interconnected processes. At the social-relational level, the ghetto has undergone a process of 'de-civilizing' in Elias's sense of the term, caused not by economic 'mismatches', the excessive generosity of welfare, or the 'culture of poverty' and 'antisocial' impulses of its residents, but by the withdrawal of the state and the ensuing disintegration of public space and social relations in the urban core. This process is echoed, at the symbolic level, by the demonization of the black subproletariat via the trope of the 'underclass', a scholarly myth anchored by the loathsome imagery of the fearsome 'gang banger' and the dissolute 'welfare mother'. Decivilizing and demonization form a structural-cum-discursive couplet in which each element reinforces the other and where both serve in tandem to legitimize the state policy of urban abandonment and punitive containment responsible for the parlous state of the contemporary ghetto.

**Loïc J.D. Wacquant**

### *Elias in the Dark Ghetto*

Norbert Elias's figurational sociology offers a potent tool for dissecting the changing nexus of caste, class, and space in the American metropolis. Adopting a relational perspective and bringing fear, violence, and the state to the analytic forefront

makes it possible to portray the transition from the mid-century 'communal ghetto' to the contemporary 'hyperghetto' in terms of the dynamic interaction of three master processes: the depacification of everyday life, social dedifferentiation leading to organizational desertification, and informalization of the economy. Each of these processes is set off and abetted by the collapse of public institutions and by the ongoing replacement of the 'social safety net' of welfare by the 'dragnet' of police and prisons. Elias thus helps us spotlight the distinctively political roots of the urban patterning of racial and class exclusion of which today's hyperghetto is the concrete materialization.

## **Maarten van Bottenburg & Johan Heilbron**

### *Ultimate Fighting*

#### *On de-sportization and the commercialization of fighting contests*

Ultimate fighting is a violent, bloody and highly controversial fighting contest, with hardly any rules. In the Netherlands, this fighting contest (known and practised as cage fighting) has been under a wide public debate. The discussion primarily focuses on the political question of the tolerability of cage fighting. From a more detached sociological point of view, however, several theoretical questions come to the fore. In this article, we discuss two of them.

The first question concerns the theoretical notion of sportization, as introduced by Norbert Elias. We show that the most recent developments in ultimate fighting are in fact examples of counter-movements of sportization; i.e. de-sportization. The organizers of ultimate fighting championships do not follow a general principle of all sport: developing a framework of rules to establish a balance between the possibility of attaining a high level of combat-tension on the one hand and a reasonable protection against injury on the other. On the contrary, they are consciously increasing the level of violence of fighting contests by withdrawing or abolishing rules, penalties and physical protections used in existing combat sports.

The second question concerns the explanation of this process of de-sportization. To answer this question, we examine the changing balance of power between media-entertainment companies and traditional sports organizations as rule-making and rule-enforcing bodies, and their orientation towards the interests of participants and spectators. Ultimate fighting is organized for commercial interests. Media-entertainment companies make huge profits by organizing these fighting contests and by selling them at the 'pay per view'-market. The fighters, trained in various styles of the martial arts, take the risks of participating in these combats, because they hope to win cash prizes and to enhance their reputation as ruthless combat champions. For the spectators, ultimate fighting provides a new type of excitement which does not have socially and personally dangerous implications. Ultimate fighting is neither a sport nor a fictitious show; it is a pure fighting combat, very close to reality, created to suit the imagination.

In the context of this explanation, we hypothesize that the process of de-sportization is not confined to the rise of ultimate fighting. De-sportization will probably

also occur in other sporting contexts, where (primarily spectator-oriented) commercial media-entertainment companies take power as rule-making and rule-enforcing bodies from the (primarily participant-oriented) traditional sports organizations.

### **Willem Koert**

#### *Tales of Strength. An analysis of a gym based mythology*

In this article stories, told in a Dutch bodybuilding gym, are analyzed. Over the years social scientists have accused bodybuilders of sexism, fascism, narcissism, capitalism - and practically all other contemporary 'social evils'. Especially male bodybuilders are mostly described as human beings, unable to cope with modernity, and therefore withdrawing from it, locking themselves up in 'the iron prison of the cult of health and muscles'. Analysis of oral gym culture tells us something different. These stories, told over and over again, are very diverse. Some are of a personal nature, others are collective, but all have one thing in common: the undertones of fear. In these mostly frightening stories bodybuilders' perception of the world is revealed, and their conception of their role in it as well. The world, in the bodybuilders' eyes, is a dangerous place, where only the strong survive. By committing themselves to bodybuilding, they make sure to belong to the survivors. So far, analysis of oral gym culture does not contradict the traditional sociological point of view. However, bodybuilders do not think of themselves in terms of immortality, superiority or invincibility. There are also stories in which bodybuilders, in spite of their physique and strength, were not able to make a difference. This indicates that bodybuilding must be seen as a form of fear-therapy in the first place, and not as a symptom of whatever 'social evil' some scientist may come up with.

### **Marjet Derks & Ruud Stokvis**

#### *Women and Rowing. The road of elegance*

Every branch of sports is characterised by its own type of relations between women and men. The nature of these relations depends on the social class of the practitioners and on the social definition in terms of masculinity and femininity a sports activity acquires. In general most sports were initially practised and organized by men. When women became involved, they entered the sport in a number of different ways. Rowing was a high class male sport in which women entered via - what we call - 'the road of elegance'. In the article we describe and explain how women took this road and how they abandoned it, and managed to become participants in modern race rowing, where special considerations of gracefulness became irrelevant.

*Reading the Human Skull*

*A dutch Enlightenment debate on the embodied nature of man*

This article examines Franz Joseph Gall's phrenology as a 19th-century biological program for the human sciences. Phrenologists argued that the study of the external features of the human skull provide unique insights into the operations of the human mind. Ethnological data informed the phrenological explorations of the human skull. Phrenologists and ethnologists alike set out on a journey aimed at the comprehension of the natural features of mankind. Summarizing his maps of the human mind, Gall was indeed known as the Columbus of the human skull.

*Leitmotif* in the discussions among proponents and critics of Gall's frenology in the early 19th century is the analogy between natural and bodily change of individual humans and change of human society as a whole. In the article this is shown by way of an examination of the Dutch debate on phrenology. Two viewpoints are discerned. The Enlightenment ideal of the perfectability of human society is represented by the Remonstrant theologian Martinus Stuart (1765-1826), author of a book on Gall's lectures in Amsterdam. The second viewpoint is represented by the doctor Jacob Doornik (1777-1837), author of several publications on phrenology. Doornik argues for a biological perspective to shed light on human society and civilization.

Marion van San

*Shame, Disgrace and Loss of Face*

*How do Curaçao mothers view the delinquent behaviour of their sons*

Previous studies indicate that mothers play a significant role in the justifications Curaçaoan youngsters give for their violent behaviour. The insult of the mother appears to be one of their most important justifications for knifing.

This article analyses what the Curaçaoan mothers think of the delinquent behaviour of their sons. The ways in which the mothers describe the delinquent behaviour of the youngsters as well as their explanations for this behaviour are dealt with in this article. The reactions of the mothers to the behaviour of their sons is also being examined: do they use the same justifications as their sons? Finally, the question to what extent the opinion of the mothers has an influence on the behaviour of the youngsters, is closely looked at. It turns out to be very interesting to verify the assumption that the justifications, which were forwarded by the youngsters in former studies, are connected with their specific backgrounds and the culture of the society they live in. This assumption has been confirmed by the justifications of the mothers.

## Mieke Komen

### *Dangerous Children*

*Changes in the nature of and approach to youth criminality, 1960-1995*

This article shows the changes in the severity of youth criminality and the way juvenile judges and judicial child welfare workers try to control the behaviour of delinquent juveniles. The study is based on an analysis of files on adolescents and children placed in the Dutch juvenile system by judges during the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The comparison of the older and recent files demonstrates a decrease of external constraints by parents and juvenile justice workers. This was accompanied by the exercise of more severe violence and criminality committed by the children, suggesting further inquiry into the circumstances under which self-control comes about.

## Karel Davids

### *Family Firms, Familism and Individualization*

*The Netherlands, c. 1880-1990*

*A contribution to the development of theory*

This article deals with the paradoxical relationship between family firms and individualization in the Netherlands. It is a curious fact that in the Netherlands, as in other industrialized countries at present, family firms persist to be of great importance to the economy whereas the institutions that underlie the very existence of this type of enterprise, viz. marriage and the family, have been seriously weakened by an ongoing process of individualization since the 1960s. To resolve this paradox, it is argued on the basis of an analysis of a large number of case-studies on medium and big-size family firms from the onset of modern industrialization in the Netherlands till the present, that (1) in larger Dutch firms, the primacy of family interests in the definition of business policy (often called 'familism') was already on the wane for a considerable period of time, before the consequences of the effects really began to make themselves felt, (2) the overall decline of 'familism' can not be ascribed to some putative inherent 'defect' of this particular kind of business management, but rather (3) to a specific response to changes in the legal and fiscal systems and the opportunities and pressures of economic growth and European integration after World War II. It is stressed that 'familism' is by no means doomed as a viable way of business management, however. Under certain conditions, 'familism' can still live and thrive even in a highly industrialized and individualized society like the present-day Netherlands.

*Christmas Dinner as Family Ritual in the Netherlands since World War II*

Dutch people, when explicitly asked, sometimes seem to be rather skeptical on the subject of celebrating Christmas within the family, and feel it as more or less an obligation rather than a festive occasion. Moreover, family ties seem to have grown less important than before the War. But in everyday life, the majority of the Dutch enjoy an evermore beautifully cooked Christmas dinner, prepared by the mother of the house. At first sight, this is a bit of a paradox. When reading the advice columns of one of the most popular weeklies for women, from the fifties till the present, it becomes clear that much has changed with regard to Christmas, thus reflecting changing life styles. Tradition proves to be far more flexible, the need to maintain family ties as great as ever, concludes the author.