

## Summaries

### Abram de Swaan

#### *Dyscivilization, Mass Extermination, and the State*

Is massive violence and destruction a manifestation of 'modernity', even its very essence, or rather its total opposite: 'a breakdown of civilization'? Although ostensibly, Norbert Elias mainly occupied himself with the civilizing process, he was always, though mostly implicitly so, preoccupied with its complement and counterpart: violence, regression and anomie. In recent years, a number of his students have returned to these themes. Whether they wanted to or not, they were drawn into a debate that in this century has never subsided for long. Is shall argue a position that transcends this opposition between 'modernization', and 'regression': at the core of the civilizing process, another contrary current may manifest itself, allowing extreme violence on a mass scale to be perpetrated towards specific categories of people, while civilized relations and modes of expression are maintained in other sections of society. The concepts of identification, disidentification and compartmentalization should help to describe and explain these 'dyscivilizing' processes in their complex relations to processes of civilization.

### Erik Snel & Godfried Engbersen

#### *Contemporary Poverty: Individualization, Concentration and Social Inbeddedness*

This paper presents three theoretical assumptions about contemporary poverty. The individualization thesis assumes that poverty in modern welfare states is a temporary problem, often the result of changes in the personal biography. The concentration thesis assumes, on the other hand, that persistent poverty is a reality, especially in certain urban areas. The social embeddedness thesis assumes that especially in poor neighbourhoods informal solidarity is an important resource for poor households. In the empirical part of the paper we present some statistical information about poverty showing that persistent poverty still exists in the Netherlands and that persistent poor or recurrent poor (multiple spells) face more social and material deprivation than the transient poor. In the last part of the paper we present some findings of a qualitative research program among persistent poor households in the city of Amsterdam. We show that informal solidarity within families and neighbourhoods still are important for the life changes of the poor.

## **Ali de Regt & Don Weenink**

### *A Bit of Discipline*

#### *The Pressure of Private Education*

The pressure on children to stay in education for an extended period of their lives is high. Children who cannot meet this obligation are in danger of becoming school dropouts. Upper middle class parents confronted with their children's failing in regular secondary education, can resort to private education to ward off the threat of downward mobility. Parents and children who choose this possibility define the children's school problems not as their lack of intellectual capacities, but as a lack of discipline or self-control. While these parents succeed in installing their own high ambitions in their children, they do not succeed in disciplining their children to fulfill these ambitions. When children have not enough self-control to pass their exams, parents feel they cannot force them. Private schools, characterized by strict rules and permanent supervision, take over the discipline parents and children think is needed. Children subject themselves to this strict school regime, because for them it is the only way to get a high school diploma, needed to stay on the same level as their parents.

## **Isabelle Diepstraten, Peter Ester & Henk Vinken**

### *Discussing Generations*

#### *Alter en Ego Images of Generations in the Netherlands*

Mainstream sociological research on differences in life chances between various generations typically focuses on objective indicators. Salient issues in this respect are intergenerational contrasts related to educational attainment, labor chances, income, consumer goods, pensions, political participation, basic values and norms. These studies can be characterized as 'generational accountancy'. There is a striking lack of studies that address the crucial question how members of generations themselves evaluate intergenerational differences in life chances and dominant values and norms. This is remarkable because the very core of Mannheimian generation theory states that generations are united by a sense of subjective belonging, i.e. they identify with their generation because they share a common history. A generation by definition is a birth cohort that experienced major societal 'Schicksale' during its formative years which have a lasting influence on the world views of members of this generation and which sets them apart from other generations. Thus, there is a clear need for studying subjective heuristics that reflect how members estimate life chances and basic values and norms of their own generation vis-à-vis other generations and whether they relate possible differences to unique youth experiences in their formative years. Based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative research this article analyzes these subjective heuristics and estimates for five generations in the Netherlands: the prewar generation, the silent generation, the protest

generation, the lost generation and the pragmatic generation. Results indicate the necessity of 'bringing man back in' into mainstream generation research.

### **Mathijs Tuynman**

*On Dutch Lewdness and 'Inlander' Corruptability  
A Historical-sociological Perspective on Indonesian-Dutch Mixed Marriages.*

Acceptability of Indonesian-Dutch mixed marriages is still influenced by stereotypical images that stem from the colonial age. More generally, the relationship between intergroup mixed marriage and stereotypical images is only one of a complex of interrelationships between intermarriage, interdependence and power, group composition and size, and stereotype. Due to a shortage of Dutch women in the colony, Dutch domination of the Indonesian archipelago would have been impossible without mixed marriages. In Indonesia, the Dutch created a caste society based on racial symbols, appraising white females as the most desirable wives, followed first by Eurasian and then by Indonesian women. In post-colonial Netherlands, vestiges of this racial validation can still be seen in the way some elder Eurasian and Dutch parents validate their children's mixed marriage: Eurasians prefer mixed marriage, whereas for the Dutch the opposite is true. Most cases, however, showed unproblematical acceptance of mixed Eurasian-Dutch marriages. Some of the Dutch positive reactions can be explained in terms of a Dutch attachment to Indonesia(ns) rooted in the colonial experience. Acceptance of mixed Moluccan-Dutch marriage was more problematic, both from a Dutch and a Moluccan point of view. This is mainly due to the troubled relationship between the Moluccan minority and the Dutch state. Younger mixed couples, both Eurasian-Dutch and Moluccan-Dutch, experienced less characteristic reactions. A few of the younger couples met with Dutch negative reactions based on stereotypes. These reactions seemed more likely to have been based on heterophobia rather than on racist stereotypes stemming from the colonial age.

### **Luuk Wijmans**

*Is starting as a Self-employed Person a New Tendency?  
Independent Entrepreneurs without Personnel in a More Flexible System of  
Industrial Relations.*

There is much ado about starting entrepreneurs. It is assumed that more people than ever are starting small businesses as self-employed without any personnel. They are viewed as the potential 'job machine' of the future.

An analysis of the developments on the Dutch labour market however does not show any fundamental change. There is no revolution in labour relations. The share of independent entrepreneurs of all the working people has remained stable over

many years. About half of the independents are self-employed people without any manpower. This share is stable too.

However, in some sections of the economy, in the construction industry, the commercial services and health, there is a considerable increase of this category, due to specific labour relations in these sections, i.e., little labour satisfaction, the low level of commencing capital and deregulation.

## **Geert de Vries**

### *The Meritocratization of Health*

As in other western countries, the Dutch population is aging. This is one of the factors responsible for the increased demand for health care. The retrenchment of the welfare state, the privatization of social health insurance, and the widening of income differences will exacerbate tensions arising from this growing demand. Government, insurance companies and doctors jointly emphasize the importance of health consciousness and preventive behaviours among the population. The internalization and individualization of the medical perspective is greatly enhanced by the fact that for many people, being healthy has become an emblem of civilization. The ideology of 'healthism' and the newly emerging corporate health ethic have strong moral overtones: illness becomes a sign of individual weakness and therefore brings about feelings of personal guilt. The advancement of genetic screening turns this meritocratization of health into an even more dangerous development.