

Summaries

BERNARD KRUIITHOF

The AST as collector's item

In the history of the *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* is plain to see the enormous impact of technological developments in the last decades. What started as a journal typed on stencil – the famous Gestetner – edited by students grew to be a beautiful printed magazine, thanks to the advent of computers. The cover designs from 2001 onwards, after the *AST* came to be published independently, are sure to become collector's items, thanks to the work of designer and artist Ewald Spieker.

BART VAN HEERIKHUIZEN

The prehistory of the AST

The first issue of the *AST* appeared in the spring of 1974. What seems to be the start of something new can also be seen as the outcome of a rather tumultuous episode, preceding the foundation of the new journal. Recently appointed teachers at the Sociology Department of the University of Amsterdam, in collaboration with promising students, wanted to create a new forum, where 'the Coming Crisis of Western sociology' (as the then Amsterdam-based sociologist Alvin Gouldner had termed it) would be debated. In order to do this, the founders of *AST* invited Marxist sociologists to join them, but this led to bitter disputes about the aims of the new journal. The Marxist editors wanted to concentrate on the political struggles within the Sociology Department and on the national political debates about university education. Their adversaries favoured a discussion about the content of the sociological enterprise in the light of a worldwide debate about the value and relevance of the social sciences. The outcome was that the Marxist editors left the journal, even before the first issue appeared. In a few years time the *AST* was recognized as one of the three major sociology journals in the Netherlands, whereas the Marxist current in Dutch sociology was submerged in its own provincialism.

*'An attempt to fit together fragments of solutions'
The first five years of the Amsterdam Sociological Journal*

The *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* (Amsterdam Sociological Journal, *AST*) was founded in 1974 by students and young lecturers of the sociology department of the University of Amsterdam, in the midst of what was considered the crisis of sociology. From the perspective of sociologists born around the time when the journal was founded, this article looks at the first five years of the *AST*, in which it evolved into a respected journal. In the editorial of the first issue, the pluriformity of sociology is identified as a problem: the editors announce that they aim to 'fit together fragments of solutions' for the crisis in sociology. In the first years, much space is devoted to reflexive sociology: theoretical debates, and articles on the history and philosophy of science. But gradually, the focus moves towards more empirical and historical studies, in which the perspective of figurational sociology becomes more dominant. The *AST* is very much a product of the younger generation of sociologists: established sociology is occasionally attacked – sometimes savagely – but mostly ignored. The most striking difference between these young academics of the 1970s and the present generation of young sociologists, which seems to be characterised by a mixture of pragmatism and relativism, is the sense of urgency and relevance in their sociological writings: for the contributors to the *AST*, all sociology – including the most theoretical varieties of Marxism and philosophy of science – seemed to have direct social as well as personal relevance.

NICO WILTERDINK

Marx & Co.

The article deals with the rise and decline of the popularity of Marxism since the late 1960s, taking *AST* as an illustrative source. Marxist theory and practice ('praxis') were intensely discussed – defended sometimes, but criticised more often – in the journal from its inception in 1974. After 1980 however, Marxism was hardly any longer an issue. This shift reflects broader ideological and social developments, including changes in the power balance between 'labour' and 'capital' in favour of the latter and the downfall of communism in Eastern Europe. The Marxian tradition was continued, to some extent and in certain respects, in other social theories, such as in particular the figurational approach which, as Elias stated, went 'beyond Marx'. Many articles on various topics in *AST* testify to the fruitfulness of this approach. A more direct continuation of

Marxian thought is the theory of the modern world-system about which Wallerstein published several essays in *AST*. The article concludes by giving some reasons why a critical power and class analysis – not necessarily or even preferably Marxist – is urgent in a world that has become more ‘capitalist’ since the 1970s.

CHRISTIEN BRINKGREVE

Figurational sociology and feminism

In this article, the author deals with similarities between figurational sociology and feminist ideas, and what, on the other hand, are the differences. The differences especially made the relationship between the two rather complicated. For a long time, Dutch feminists opposed biological ways of thinking. Gender differences were seen as socially and culturally constructed. However, this tendency seems to be countered by new modes of thinking, in which a larger role is being played by biology.

STEPHEN MENNELL

Through a Glass, Darkly

One of its relatively few overseas subscribers reflects on the *AST*. Goudsblom has likened writing about sociology in Dutch to the view from behind a one-way mirror: the Dutch can see out into the English, German and French-speaking academic worlds, but few outsiders can see in. Nevertheless, through a glass darkly, the *AST* has opened up important academic terrain, notably in the long-running debates on ‘the permissive society’ and informalisation processes, and on various other theoretical disputes arising from the sociology of Norbert Elias. The article concludes with some comparative remarks about the state of British and Dutch sociology, and the contrasting dangers of scientism on the one hand and philosophoidal cultural studies on the other.

Hidden injuries in education

This article explores some of the effects of rising meritocracy, starting from Michael Young's vision of the future, in which differential education, based on innate capacities, leads to a hierarchical order in society. The question is raised of to what extent Young's predictions have come true.

Two topics are discussed. The first is the relation between parental social class position and the level of schooling of children. It is argued that the cultural capital of parents has remained important for the educational success of children. In that sense, present-day society cannot be considered as meritocratic. The second topic concerns the emotional impact of the meritocratic ideology on children who do not live up to the criteria used in the process of selection in education.

In the Netherlands, children are selected for the hierarchical ordered secondary schools at the age of twelve. An important criterion used in this selection is the score in an 'objective' test which measures only cognitive capacities. Children who score low on that test are referred to types of school with little prestige. As these children learn to accept the criteria that are used in the selection process, they internalise a self-image of failure. And because they realise that they are destined for the lowest ranks of the occupational hierarchy, as Michael Young predicted, their motivation to complete school will be at risk.

RUUD STOKVIS

Sport and sport sociology

The article gives an overview of the development of the sociology of sport, with special attention for the period of the existence of the *AST*. It first shows how the resurrection of the Olympic Games at the end of the nineteenth century, with its accompanying ideology, influenced the interest of historians and philosophers in the study of sport. Sociologists of sport became seriously involved in the study of sports during the Cold War. Sport performances of athletes came to symbolise the vitality and power of the nations they represented. The social significance of sport increased and this attracted the attention of, among others, sociologists. Stimulating general sport participation became one goal within the welfare policies of many national governments. With the general diffusion of television, sport became more visible and sport performances and sport stars became more than ever symbols of national

vitality and national self-esteem. The main themes of the sociology of sport were closely related with the social forces that brought sport under the attention of sociologists. One large theme became soccer hooliganism, and from the 1990s onward this widened into the general study of soccer in national societies. Another theme was participation in sport. In the Netherlands this is the most studied theme. The government ordered research into groups that lagged behind the rest of the population in their sport participation. A third large theme became the study of the relations between sports, media, and their publics. Communication scientists and cultural studies scholars annexed this field. The commercialisation of sports that resulted from the media attention made it into a study object for sport economists who defined their field as the sports business or industry.

The organisational basis for the sociology of sport dates from the middle of the 1960s. Then, an international organisation for the sociological study of sport was founded and it started to publish a journal for the sociology of sport. From the 1970s onwards it became an established subject in many universities around the world. In the Netherlands the founding of the W.J.H. Mulier Institute in 2002 gave the sociology of sport a firm institutional base. Not long after its founding, the Mulier Institute managed to introduce professorships in sport economics (Groningen, 2004) and sport development (Utrecht, 2004), and in 2004 the Free University (Amsterdam) appointed a professor in sport history.