

### **The Guide Overtaken. Remarks on the *Sociologische Gids***

by Lodewijk Brunt

After the second World War a sociological 'explosion' occurred in the Netherlands. The results of sociological research were in demand everywhere, and at all Dutch universities sociological departments came into being, whereas the number of students rose dramatically. But the youngest generation of sociologists was greatly frustrated by the quality of the sociological know-how it had achieved. At the University of Amsterdam, by far the most important sociological center, students had been trained more or less as geography teachers, not as professional sociological researchers. Their sociological knowledge and their command of sociological research methods was greatly deficient. In this climate the *Sociologische Gids* ('Sociological Guide') was established in 1953: a truly sociological journal, meant to realise a modern sociological identity. Much oriented towards American functionalism and inspired by Merton's theories of the middle range.

In this article the first twenty or so years of this journal are described and analysed. As a consequence of rather stressing the form than the content, and mainly featuring methodological issues, the editors have been able to successfully propagate the scientific nature of their discipline. However much they sometimes tried to fuse their journal with other sociological journals, the *Sociologische Gids* became by far the most respected and popular one, especially in the sixties. The journal not only was the most important guide for the development of a modern sociology, it also stimulated the professionalisation of Dutch sociologists by initiating an ethical code for research and a modern professional organisation. After the sixties, when the so-called 'crisis in the social sciences' began to manifest itself, the nature of Dutch sociology changed drastically as a consequence of an increasing specialisation and the birth of numerous different 'paradigms'. The former sociological guide was overtaken by these developments, which brought about a rather pluriform kind of sociology. The *Sociologische Gids*, once the only serious sociological journal in the Netherlands, has become just one of many different journals. Although its reputation continues to be quite solid, the kind of sociology it professed has lost its dominant character.

### **The making of society**

by P. Thoenes

In the Netherlands social scientists have contributed to the construction of the social welfare state after World War II. Evaluating such attempts, this article describes long term developments in the ideologies of social welfare states. Since Thomas More, many scientists have written about the constructing of ideal, utopian states. One of the core problems was the orga-

nization of mutual care. Designing and redesigning society is a key problem for politicians as well as for social scientists. How is the making of society possible? Voluntaristic aspects are part of political decisionmaking; but rational elements based on scientific knowledge are essential as well. It is necessary to find a equilibrium between both aspects. In recent times we live in a period of reconstructing the welfare state influenced by the free market ideology. New ideas about how to reconstruct a society based on the old concept of a welfare state are necessary. The social sciences do have responsibilities they cannot and should not deny.

**The *Sociologische Gids* (Sociological Guide) 1953-1993: contributions on social inequality**

by J. Berting

The analysis of contributions on social inequality which appeared in the *Sociologische Gids* during a period of forty years, reveals some specific patterns. On the one hand it is shown that a social stratification paradigm emerged in the very beginning of this period, that did not change basically during forty years. This paradigm brought about an accumulation of knowledge and a specification of research questions, especially with reference to the roles of education and of the labour market in intergenerational mobility. At the same time this paradigm was the cause of the strong neglect of theoretical analysis and of sensitivity for major social changes. On the other hand, many contributions outside this dominant paradigm paid attention to major social problems related to the changing structure of social inequality in the Netherlands. This line of research is very responsive to the changing patterns of inequality problems, such as ethnic inequality, poverty, gender differences, and unemployment, but this responsiveness to social problems tends not to go together with a growth of knowledge concerning the nature of social problems. The author concludes his analysis with the observation that both research lines can gain a lot by taking into account the advantages of both research strategies and by systematically relating their research to the major social changes pertaining to the Dutch social structure and its relationships with the outside world.