

### **Youth in transition to adulthood: a review of sociological theories**

by Brigitte van Dam and Leo B. van Snippenburg

Very often, social scientists who studied young people in the transition to adulthood, tried to characterize every new generation of youth by some general features. They paid little attention to cultural diversity among youth. Mannheim however, pointed out that every generation consists of different cultures, 'generation-units' as he calls them. These units play an important role in the process of social change.

Roughly, sociological studies on youth can be divided into some main flows, and except for the functionalists, in every flow we can detect the influence of the ideas of Mannheim. In fact, these studies can complement each other, and together they can help us to understand how cultural diversity among new generations arises, and make clear how generations contribute to the process of social change.

### **Social position as a criterion for the selection of key informants**

by N.Y. Kuiper and H. van Goor

Interviewing of key informants is thought to be a useful method for obtaining comparable data across organizations or communities, at least if we are able to select the right informants. One way to achieve standardization of method and comparability of data, which is often suggested, is the selection of informants on the basis of their position in the social systems under study. The social position of the informant is supposed to affect the amount and the type of information he supplies about the social system he belongs to. In a study of informants in Dutch municipalities, occupying different political and bureaucratic top level positions, we found that the position of the informants indeed affects the amount of information they supply. However the amount of information obtained by interviewing key informants was by no means complete. We also found that their information was equally biased, irrespective of the position they occupy. Characteristics of the person of the informant, of the municipalities and of the policy making processes studied had an independent and probably more important effect on the amount of information supplied than social position. Because of the incompleteness of the information and the strong biases found in the reports of all informants, regardless of their position, we conclude that interviewing of key informants as a method of data gathering should be combined with other, supplementary techniques.

### **Religious Conversion of adolescents; Testing Lofland and Stark's Model of Religious Conversion**

by W. Kox, W. Meeus and H. 't Hart

In a study among 92 Dutch adolescents we tested the Lofland and Stark model of religious conversion. Our results show that this model offers a fairly adequate set of conditions of religious conversion; it is however inadequate as a model for the process of conversion.