

### **The concept of 'world-system': a review**

by Bart Tromp

In the early seventies the American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein developed the concept of 'world-system'. He used this foremost to interpret modern capitalism. In this article a review is given of the theory of the world-system as a sociological research-program. The theory is shown to be very successful in terms of its institutional bases and number of adherents, and well-developed on the level of research. However, it is pointed out that the theoretical underpinnings of this research-program are very weak, and its meta-theoretical foundations as good as non-existent. Much of its popularity can be seen as a result of its more or less implicit political message. Nevertheless, it is the conclusion of this article that a more adequate theory of the world system is the most fruitful approach for understanding secular social and political processes in modern history.

### **Societal development in relation to human rights and rights of people**

by Jan Berting

Human rights as universal right, based on the recognition of the inherent dignity of all individuals, are not a central interest in sociology. It is argued in this contribution that this lack of interest is amazing in view of the fact that both the rise of the idea of human rights and their subsequent development are related to processes of societal transformation. By studying various types of context boundedness of human rights, sociology can contribute to the debates on the nature of the universality of human rights and the necessary conditions for their implementation.

### **Pillarization and depillarization of roman catholics in Belgium and the Netherlands**

by Staf Hellemans

Although the Belgian catholics started from a majority position while the Dutch catholics had to emancipate themselves slowly from total marginalization, a vigorous catholic movement with a centralized church and an intensive mobilization of the rank and file developed in both countries. It is out of this religious revival movement that emerged around the turn of the century a network of mass organizations in different domains (church, party, unions, sick funds,...). the so-called catholic pillars. Given the convergence of the former developments in both countries, we are struck by the divergences since the 1960's: the catholic pillar disappeared in the Netherlands, while it lasted in Belgium. Looking for possible explanations, we put forward as hypotheses i.a. the continuing bipolar confrontation

in Belgium of the catholic and socialist pillars and the more advanced organizational development and integration of the Belgian pillar organizations.

**Suspicion and defence in public space**

by Piet Eken and Erica Moens

Behind the Amsterdam Zoo, which is called Artis, there have been developed a rough terrain in the eighties, as a consequence of vast restoration activities in the neighborhood. It became used partly as a parking lot, partly as a settlement area by squatters, who lived there in tents, caravans, and even in a hole in the ground. For visitors to Artis, trying to park their cars on this terrain, the confrontation with this excentric colony usually posed an embarrassing situation. By observing how they reacted we attempted to understand human coping with the complexities of modern urban life. We used the perspective employed by Lyn Lofland in *A world of strangers*, and found that her analysis could be readily applied. We also concluded, however, that her concepts are very thin in the specific area of 'embarrassing' situations.