

Anthony Giddens: a review article

by Gert Spaargaren, Hugo van der Poel en Q.J. Munters.

The crises of social science foreseen by Alvin Gouldner around 1970 has now been one could say completed. The era of the 'orthodox consensus', during which the discussions were dominated by structural functionalism, neopositivistic epistemology and the theory of industrial society, is definitely behind us. The British sociologist and theorist Anthony Giddens has been one of the leading proponents of a general reorientation of the social sciences – a necessary initiative to create new directions.

First of all Giddens' structuration theory is discussed: his attempt to reach a methodological reconstruction of social theory based on the notion of the 'duality of structure'. Then attention is paid to his more substantial theory of industrial society in which he extensively argues and subsequently rejects evolutionist schemes of historical development. The final section describes and analyses the critical reception of Giddens' work.

Non-socialism in the USA

by J.B.R. Gaspersz, J.L.M. Hakvoort en W. Kers

The underlying article is the result of the activities of the multi-level workgroup of the Faculty of the Social Sciences of the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. This group of scholars of various disciplines has come together to discuss multi-levelproblems in social science research. As the main interest of the group is not in the statistical-technical aspects, but in the theoretical and methodological aspects of multi-levelproblems, it was decided to begin with a discussion of the multi-levelproblems in a major sociological classic.

The study of Werner Sombart 'Warum gibt es in den Vereinigten Staaten keinen Sozialismus' (1906), was chosen as an example of a brilliant macro-sociological analysis, which nevertheless falls far short of dealing with the severe multi-levelproblems inherent in this type of analysis.

The major comparative and multi-levelproblems in Sombart's study of non-socialism in the United States of America are discussed in this article.

The main conclusion is that Sombart's explanation of non-socialism in the USA fails, because of his inability to treat multi-levelproblems in a systematic way. In order to solve these problems a multi-level methodology would have been required. A methodology we, eighty years later, still lack, but are working on.