
Summaries

The civilization theory at stake

by J. Goudsblom

The summer 1982 issue of *Sociologische Gids* (XXIX, 3/4, pp. 195-344), entitled 'Civilization and Violence', contained a series of articles in which certain aspects of Norbert Elias's theory of civilizing processes were subjected to criticism. According to the editors in their introduction, the theory was found to be deficient at several crucial points. The present paper consists of two parts. In the first part, the major criticisms are examined, and most of them are shown to rest on a misconception of Elias's theory, notably on the failure to recognize that it is a developmental theory and not a static typology of 'civilized' versus 'non-civilized' societies. In the second part of the paper an attempt is made to bring some recurrent issues in the discussion about Elias's theory into sharper focus, such as the role of the Christian church in the civilizing process in Europe, the nature of development theories, and problems related to ethnocentrism and value judgements in sociology and anthropology.

Interest groups and economic growth: a cross-national study

by L. B. van Snippenburg

The hypothesis of Olson (1982), that interest groups slow down economic growth, was tested in a cross-sectional study of 103 countries. A causal model in which also age of a society, level of economic development and liberal democracy figured as variables was employed to investigate it. The analysis revealed that interest groups do indeed slow down economic growth, while the level of economic development enhances it. Age of a society and liberal democracy however, did not appear to have a direct influence on economic growth. It was found that age of a society, economic level and liberal democracy stimulate the rise of influential interest groups.

Amsterdam and the squatters' riots, a research note

by A. K. den Boon and Bob de Ruiter

Violent political conflicts have become more and more frequent in the Netherlands. Notably, the squatters' riots, which are a recurring phenomenon in Amsterdam.

Despite these riots, public opinion is positive toward the squatting of empty dwellings, but is highly critical toward the activities of the Squatters' Movement. The Squatters' Movement is associated with violence, whereas individual squatters are not. In general, the squatters' riots are attributed to rioters, not to squatters. The relationship between individual squatters and Amsterdammers tends to be unaffected by the riots. The commitment of the squatters to their movement is not very high. It dropped to a very low point after the serious clashes in October 1982.

The decreasing sympathy for the squatters goes along with increasing support for the policy of the local authorities. Although a solution has not been found and new problems can be expected, relations between squatters and other inhabitants are likely to remain good.