Summaries

The concept of 'modernity' and the study of innovationprocesses
by J. A. I. Coolen

In order to give an interpretation of findings in the field of innovationprocesses rural sociologists have used and still use the concept of 'modernity'. In this orientations farmers resistance, for example, against landconsolidation programs was conceived to be caused by al low level of modernity among farmers of low socio-economic status.

This article is a report of the design and results of a small-scale empirical investigation. It is tried to examine the significance of the concept of 'modernity' — and the theory based on this concept — in studying the diffusion of innovations. As a field of application was chosen: the adoption of a landconsolidation program among full-time farmers. The main question can be stated as follows: do farmers of lower socio-economic status vote more often against the implementation of a landconsolidation program than farmers of higher socio-economic status do. And if so, is it because of their lack of rationality in their innovation-decisionmaking-process. Based on this question, four hypotheses are formulated. For this purpose Simons theory of the decisionmaking process proved to be of value. Components in this theory are: alternatives of choice, perception of consequences, evaluation of consequences, decision.

The research findings obtained from the investigation indicate that the adoption of a landconsolidation program is determined by the magnitude of problems, — relating to the quality of roads, the quality of waterdrainage, the amount and situation of farmparcels. If low socio-economic-status farmers see themselves confronted with on or more of the mentionel problems they will vote in favour of the implementation of the landconsolidation program as much as high socio-economis-status farmers will do. The following conclusion must be drawn: resistance towards a landconsolidation program cannot be accounted by the presence of a low level of 'modernity' but rather by the absence of grave problems.

Between farmers of low and high socio-economic status no differences were found wit hregard to: the perception of relevant aspects of a landconsolidation program, the perception and evaluation of costs and benefits, and the amount of agreement with regard to: the perception of relevant aspects of a landconsolidation program, The research findings raise doubt as to whether the concept of 'modernity' is useful in describing and explaining diffusion and adoptation of innovations in the agricultural sector.

The operationalization of the concept loneliness
by J. de Jong-Gierveld
This study reports the initial results of an attempt to introduce and validate the theoretical construct loneliness. The conception of loneliness included four components: (1a) intensity and types of missing relations; (1b) rationalizations of and defense to feeling of missing; (2a) time-perspective; (2b) perception of personal (in)abilities to change the situation. Besides an existing one-dimensional loneliness-scale and an external measure, a measuring instrument based on the four components of loneliness was constructed. The construct-validation of the new measuring instrument is based on the data of a pilot-study among 59 men and women. It was predicted that the instrument is capable of distinguishing differences in intensity of loneliness-feelings, as well as different kinds of types of loneliness. For example: people belonging to different categories of marital status are scoring differently on the four components of loneliness. This prediction was confirmed.

Ten years after Buckley; recent trends in systems theory and systems methodology and their impact on sociology
by J. van der Zouwen
An answer to Buckley's (1967) question 'why sociology has remained virtually untouched by the interdisciplinary generalizing and integrating potential of newer systems theory?' is sought in the object of sociology itself.
Due to the complexity of social systems, application of the systems approach to the study of these systems appears difficult and sometimes disappointing. However, in the last decade we can recognize developments in systems theory and systems methodology, leading to an increased applicability; a problem shift towards more complex systems, and the development of methods of model construction and simulation better adapted to the specific character of (our knowledge of) social systems (E.g. verbal modelling and mixed simulation procedures).