

Summaries

Meindert Tjoelker and the myth of random violence

by Nelly Pouwels and Laura Vegter

An attempt is made to investigate the increased attention for the phenomenon of random violence in Dutch society. In this article we investigate the first case of random violence that gained national attention as a victim of random violence and we describe how the concept of 'random violence' became absorbed in Dutch language. We found that the publication of an article in a newspaper immediately after the death of the victim, which emotionally appealed to the public to protest against random violence, was the catalyst for the subsequent massive media attention and the many societal reactions that followed them. The content of that article failed to account for the real events and replaced them by an account that link up with – latent – feelings of fear for violence and feelings of discontent that exist in society. The media played an important role in the creation and maintenance of this distorted account. The subsequent societal reactions gave opportunity to amplification and extension of the concept (Walgrave and Rihoux 1998). The various and frequent use of the concept ultimately led to the consolidation as a societal phenomenon. The concept seems to be used now to express discontent with almost every event that, in one or another way, can be linked to violence. An explanation for the frequent use of the concept could be found in the broadened fear for violence in a society where the sensitiveness for violence has increased.

An investigation of other cases of ran-

dom violence will learn what other explanations are valid and if these conclusions have to be adjusted.

The mobilizing capacity of victimhood and the Kollum revolt

by Niels Rigter

In and around the small Dutch village of Kollum, a few events took place that may tell us a great deal on the future of social movements. The first was the raping and killing of a sixteen year-old girl named Marianne Vaatstra, which led to a mourning procession in which 15.000 people took part. While no evidence of the killer was found, rumours were spread that the killer could be a resident of the asylum-seekers centre (AZC) in Kollum. When a few months later the local government called a public meeting to present its plans for a new, permanent AZC, the newly formed committee against the AZC managed to mobilize 1000 people to demonstrate outside the hall where the meeting took place. That same day, the public meeting was disturbed by rioting youngsters, who were all friends of Marianne Vaatstra. Soon after this riot more parties and action groups arose, all with one issue leading their motivations: say 'no' to the AZC. Their success in organizing sustained collective action was relatively brief.

The mobilization coarse around Kollum, which leads from the silent procession to the institutionalisation of the hostility against the AZC, tells us that mobilization doesn't need organization, but can occur spontaneously. In fact, in Kollum, most organizations arose only after the events of mobilization. The circumstances that gave the oppor-

tunity for these mobilizations were not merely political, as the prevailing social movement theory tells us. Moreover, we saw that the more vaguely the demonstrators put their demands, and the more they were led by their emotions, the bigger their number was. When people saw themselves forced to put their demands more specifically, most of them dropped out.

Internal dilemmas: The 'Linking Act' and exclusion of illegal immigrants from public services in practice

by Joanne van der Leun

Like other European countries, the Netherlands is witnessing an increasing 'irregularisation' of immigration. Concerns about lack of control have stimulated new legislation, particularly during the last decade. The most comprehensive new law, the so-called *Koppelingwet* or 'Linking Act' was enacted in 1998. The aim of this new law is to bar undocumented immigrants from public services such as social benefits, health care, education and public housing. On the basis of empirical research in the four largest Dutch cities, this article examines the mixed reactions of gatekeepers of the welfare state to the presence of illegal immigrants during their day-to-day work. On the one hand, exclusion is taking place in some sectors and procedures have been intensified. On the other hand, professionals are still confronted with illegal immigrants, which saddles them with concrete dilemmas. As a result, the effects of the law have been softened or counterbalanced by (informal) practices as well as by local arrangements or 'bypasses'. In this respect, the 'discouragement policy', which is now pursued for over ten years has clearly enlarged the distance between national and local level poli-

cies. Subsequently it is maintained that the gap that inevitably exists between formal policy goals and street-level practise, varies over sectors. Discretionary freedom is relatively large in sectors with a high level of professionalisation, such as health care and education.

The comfort of routine: Reflections on the quality of work from the perspective of work and care relationships

by Ruud Tap, Arie Glebbeek en Margo Brouns

Although the quality of work is widely debated, social developments with respect to the work-family relationship hardly enter into this debate. In an attempt to determine how the quality of work should be regarded if one tries to achieve a (better) balance between work and care, qualitative research has been carried out in one of the larger hospitals. Three different cases illustrate that the organisation of work is an important factor when it comes to combining work and care. Workers in a Tayloristic laboratory for example, where routine thrives and autonomous work is rare, often have ample opportunities to cope with sudden demands from home. Perhaps current opinions regarding the quality of work should be revised when the balance between work and care comes into play.

Ex-officio: Bureaucratization and the regulation of the civil servant

by Remco Ensels

This review article discusses four historical studies on bureaucratization in the early-modern Dutch Republic that took their cue from the social sciences, in particular Weberian sociology and

transactionalist ethnology. The article focuses on the emergence of the modern notion of *ex-officio* among civil servants. It appears that the bureaucratic system from the fifteenth-century onwards was organised by way of informal and fluid personalised networks. From within this particularised bureaucracy the modern bureaucracy developed. The paradoxical conclusion that bureaucratization was strengthened by the reliance on familial and amical bonds can be explained by the centralized demand for loyalty and trust. In second instance this personalised code of honour was transformed into an ethos of professional duty. It is the merit of this ethos to interpret subservience and insignificance as praiseworthy attitudes.

Does market economy reduce happiness?

by Jan Ott

In his latest book Robert Lane notes a considerable rise in incomes in the USA between 1972 and 1994 and claims that companionship and happiness have declined. He attributes that decline to market forces that press for money making at the expense of intimate bonds. This review article firstly shows that happiness did not decline in the USA in these years, but was actually rather stable on the balance. Secondly it mitigates the claim that companionship has dwindled and notes that money making and companionship are not necessarily antithetical. Still the article does not rule out that Lane is right and that there was a loss of happiness by too much priority for money making. Increased personal freedom may have compensated this loss. Extra happiness is conceivable if people get more freedom to revise their priorities.