

SUMMARIES

L. RIBOLZI, *Social research and decision-making process. Sociology of education and educational policies.*

As far as educational policy is concerned, sociology has long been seen as a way of offering theoretical or methodological support the decision-making process. This is particularly the case in Italy, where sociology has been carried out in an empirical way, with a characteristically strong link that has been maintained between ideology, research method and the interpretation of data. I have drawn up a typology in which educational policy and the role of the researcher are both seen as variables dependent on two characteristics of the society as a whole: the degree of centrality of educational problems and the degree of indeterminacy to be found in the area of policy-making. The specific place of the sociologist in the decision making process can be defined in two models: the low trust model, in which he simply supplies knowledge and there is little collaboration with decision maker, and the high trust model in which the two collaborate in interpreting the data and in evaluating their implications in practice. In Italy we have had also two essentially perverse models: in the first one, nobody interprets the data, or, even if interpreted, policy makers don't use them. In the second one, the decision making process has reached a situation of impasse. Suffering from a poor perception of his own position, sociologist overestimates his role. The problem is now to trigger off a «virtuous cycle» which gives the sociologist of education a legitimate basis for the production of knowledge, helping education to fulfil the crucial role which society has assigned to it.

G. ROVATI, *Power, deference and status. Goffman's approach to social stratification.*

Goffman was used to deal with classical issues in an indirect, allusive and unconventional way. At the same time, Goffman insistently came back to his favourite topics being able to examine them from various and complementary points of views. Not surprisingly, in his coherent and unitary approach to social behaviour, remarkable theoretical, methodological and chronological variations may be discovered. Indeed all these features emerge in relation to the topic which is taken into account in the present essay which aims to evaluate Goffman's contribution to the analysis of power and social stratification. Moving from those criticisms external to Goffman's reasoning and then following his internal logic, the article is focussed on the implications of the dramaturgical theory for the processes structuring social inequality. This analysis shows his fundamental interest for status symbolism (rather than for the oscillation between integration and conflict, between apology and criticism of inequalities, between determinism and transgression, between cynicism and demystification. All these ambivalences — the Author says — are never definitively resolved by Goffman, nevertheless they generally open to critical vision of social order.

M. COLOMBO, *Assesment and social research: from methodological to practical considerations.*

This essay concerns the way in which evaluation is applied in social research. Two basic models which inspire the diffused practice — economic and educational evaluation — are taken into account. The first involves the cost benefit analysis; the second concern the efficiency/efficacy balance. Environmental Impact and Evaluation Survey as two major extensions of these models are examined from a methodological point of view. The comparison allows to evaluate the role played by sociologists in the processes which ground assessment.

G. OSTI, *Rural classes' geographical and social mobility.*

The European tradition of research concerning mobility migration-relationship is based on the concept of social class and relative mobility. In this article the impact of migration on social mobility is analyzed on the basis of sample data referring to north eastern Italy (4 regions). As regards to absolute mobility, migration showed a remarkable, although contradictory, influence. As regards to relative mobility the situation was more easily defined: the residence had no effect on social mobility, except in very specific cases. People from farming families, although they had more frequently altered their class position, had never obtained advantages relatively to their class.

E. ZUCCHETTI, *Reading unemployment.*

Unemployment is rapidly changing its ordinary meaning. By criticizing approaches which gave a dominant and structuring role to the demand side, recent sociological analysis has suggested to take into account the supply side as well as the mix between informal and formal aspects (which ground the action of subjects within the labour market). This article is particularly concerned with long-term unemployed; this group, which is scarcely affected by economic cycles, is increasingly stable and it suffers evident social disadvantages. The article is based on an empirical research recently done in Lombardia.