

SUMMARIES

E. MORA, *G. Simmel and the communicative approach to social theory.*

The Author argues that Simmel's work should be viewed as the first attempt toward the constitution of a communicative sociology. To support such a position the Author refers to the three sociological apriori assumptions which according to Simmel make the constitution of society possible. Moreover, the role played by the notion of Wechselwirkung is stressed. This is essential in order to consider the social actor as like an isolated individual but as a subject whose social condition is originally relational.

F. VILLA, *Sociology and methodology in Simmel.*

The relationship between philosophy and sociology is analysed moving from the contribution offered by Simmel, who firstly gave a clear illustration of the topic by distinguishing between the gnoseological and the metaphysical level. It is within this framework that social science should be placed. The formal feature of his methodology strengthened the distinction between sociology and philosophy. A number of tensions and contradictions existing in his work stems from his complex anthropological perspective. After having discussed the relationship between Simmel and other founding fathers of the sociological tradition, the author concludes by discussing the role of values in social research.

R. COLLINS, *Ethical controversies of science and society: a relation between two spheres of social conflict.*

The article traces first the ethical ideals of science and structures that produce them. The primary ideal of scientists is truth, which is, according to the Author, an ethical even more than an epistemological principle. The very nature of the scientific community brings about conflicts over this ideal, the struggle for precedence in the scientific discovery. Then the Author examines briefly the social bases of lay ideals, the ethical claims that come from the non-scientific parts of society. Though endless numbers of conflicting claims in each sphere can be imagined, there are social structures which limit attention to a few conflicts at a time. The Authors comments on the ways in which modern science has acquired the structures which allow it to claim ethical autonomy from the lay world as well as on the conditions which recently have mobilized a great del of ethical distrust of science.

D. LA VALLE, *Market, society and differentiation.*

The article considers the relationship between market and society. The basic thesis is that the market, as a specialized mechanism dependent on a process of functional differentiation on the *economic* subsystem, can only work fully when flanked with the complementary differentiation of the *social* subsystem. It is the existence of a strong *society* (strong particularly with respect to the economy) that guarantees and optimises market self-regulation. Market self-regulation is reinforced by a society that does not flatten the distribution of social incentives (that sustain obligations, values and qualities that the economy is not able to produce but are necessary to its operation) against those of the market. From this point of view market operation today requires and provokes the overcoming of capitalism.



Capitalism is a social formation characterized by the prevalence of the economic over the social subsystem: today it is a cage that limits the market. The second part of the paper analyzes some indicators of this process of differentiation taking place within the social system, particularly in the area of employment regulation and consumer behaviour.

M. LOMBARDI, *Elders and political representation.*

Italy has been traditionally characterized by a strong electoral stability. Yet since 1985 there has been an increasing electoral mobility which favoured new political formations, often opposed to traditional parties. In such a fragmented and uncertain situation, the elder has been usually considered a stable voter. But, as a matter of fact, the deep and complex social questions which affect the elderly condition favour a tendency towards a greater electoral mobility even in this segment of society. In consideration of the growing incidence elders have on the demographic structure of the Italian society, this segment of the population is going to play a pivotal role in the future Italian political scene, becoming a crucial target in the next political competitions.