

SUMMARIES

G. GASPARINI, *The social dimensions of silence.*

Silence, which is currently defined in terms of «absence» (of words, sounds etc.), is in fact a significant form of interpersonal and social communication. Until now, silence seems to be considered an interstitial and thus neglected phenomenon in our social systems. The author distinguishes between three species of silence, which are called respectively generalized, qualified and interactive silence, and tries to show their significative interrelationships in some social units and current daylife experience. The article discusses then the social functions and values inherent in silence; the conclusion points to the fact that silence is a polysemic phenomenon which has several links with today's social life and some shared values which are becoming more and more important in contemporary Western societies.

C. MONGARDINI, *Social distances and socialization in the high-modern culture.*

Since N. Elias seminal work, the analysis of all those microprocesses which structure social interactions is at the core of the European Sociology. Socialization — that is the disclosure of social relationships up to their institutionalization — is a basic process which is affected by a set of preconditions in which distances and spaces among subjects are continuously redefined. This structuration is a central topic of contemporary sociology and the A. focusses on it as a central analytical element. Accordingly, the high-modern culture may be viewed as characterized by specific social spaces and thus specific social relationships. This transformation, in fact, changes the subject itself, within the contradictory dynamics among the globalization and the reemergence of the localities.

A. MASSA, *Beyond industrial capitalism: a comparison of two different approaches.*

The changing structure of capitalist societies, the coming of post-industrialism, the increasing importance of globalization are among main topics in contemporary sociology. Authors like Dahrendorf and Giddens described and explained these processes, producing accepted theoretical frames, empirical references and a definite terminology. Nevertheless, not only sociologists approach these social phenomena. Also academic and non-academic scholars in other disciplines do, such as, for example, organization or management studies. The aim of this paper is to show the differences between these two approaches to the same social reality, in the definition of concepts, in the choice of words and even way of looking back to the sociological cultural tradition.

S. SEGRE, *A new direction in the sociology of knowledge: contexts of scientific knowledge.*

This essay sets out to present as a new direction in the sociology of knowledge the study of the contextual conditions that constrain, shape, and orient the production of scientific knowledge. In this connection, reference has been made to a recent work by Nico Stehr. After having summarized this work, its specific subject matter and contribution have been brought into light by means of a comparison with Scheler, Stark and Mannheim. Moreover, some substantive integrations have been suggested bearing on the institutional contexts that pertain to the production of the social sciences, namely, on the one hand the research communities, especially those subcommunities whose members share values as well as cognitive presuppositions and theoretical assumptions; on the other hand, the

élite personnel of political and administrative institutions in charge of deciding and executing public policies. By way of example, emphasis has been laid on the contextual conditions that have been necessary for implementing the teaching of Keynesian economics and the Chicago school of sociology. Some general conclusions have been drawn from this example.

L. ZANFRINI, *Local development in centralized system: the french case.*

The interest for the local systems, in the tradition of the social sciences in France, was usually marginalized because of the egemony exercised by the macro-economic approaches. In the last years, this orientation has been replaced by a growing interest for the localized industrial systems, by the «aménageurs» and by the sociologists and economists too. The relegitimation of the local dimension has been suggested also by the experience of the «Third Italy», often assumed in an a-critic and a-contextualised way, with the risk of creating a new «ortodoxy», so dangerous as the structuralistic one. Aim of this paper is to demonstrate how we can appreciate the euristic importance of the studies on the Third Italy and on the industrial districts only renouncing to the perspective of their generalization. Starting by a wide revisitation of the French literature, this reflexion highlights the social foundations of a given model of development, with particular reference to the institutional and political context conditioning economic actors.