

SUMMARIES

S. HALL, *The culture's centrality: note about cultural revolutions of our time.*

Culture is nowadays increasing its importance, both inside the social world and social sciences. During the 20th century, it happened a «cultural revolution»: the realm of activities, institutions and practices we define «cultural», is more and more wide; at the same time, culture is playing a great role within the structure and the organization of the contemporary society. As a parallel of this empirical process, we had an epistemological change called the «cultural turn»: it assumes that economic and social processes depend on meaning and so they have to be understood as cultural and discursive practices.

M. DE BENEDITTIS, *For a reconceptualisation of the relationship technology/society.*

The article put in question every kind of monological explication of the relationship between technology and society, either moving from technology as a causal factor either from culture of social actors. After discussing some of the most popular theories about these relationship, the author proposes a multifactorial approach utilising the analytical category of *embeddedness*, borrowed from the NES (New Economic Sociology). At the end of this discussion, technology is conceptualized as an *institution*.

G. GUAITANI, *Technological and organizational transformations in the banking sector. Some remarks.*

In the last decades big changes have taken place in the Italian banking and financial system. During the 70's technology played the leading role in changes: its diffusion drastically transformed banks and bank employees' way of working. During the 80's most credit institutions were reorganized and restructured according to the increase in information technology use. Finally, in the last 10 years, competitiveness has fueled a process of change which is still under way. These events have redesigned the bank world and, above all, have totally changed the working habits, modifying the scenario, the rules, the procedures and the perspectives which were previously clearly defined in the internal job market of bank employees. Job and life quality of this «new bank» are nowadays different; different are the every-day problems that employees have to face and different are the products and services offered to modern bank clients. Human resources are the key issue in the present competitive games, representing both a limit and an opportunity for the leading banks of the market.

M. MONACI, *Women entrepreneurs: recent trends and issues.*

In the 1990s the issue of female entrepreneurship has gained increasing visibility, giving rise to an interdisciplinary new area of inquiry in social science. Starting from the premise that an in-depth analysis of entrepreneurial trajectories of women cannot avoid framing the topic in the context of some broader changes in the current socio-economic scene, this article focuses mainly on the «work

experience» of female business owners, that is, the distinctive professional and organizational processes which seem to underpin the creation and evolution of female entrepreneurial initiatives. Drawing on a gender perspective – and therefore on some comparison of the entrepreneurial paths used by men and women – the paper explores and discusses a set of themes which have emerged as critical in theoretical and empirical research, such as the determinants of women's entrepreneurial choice and business start-up strategies, female entrepreneurs' background and career routes, their motivational profiles and value systems, and the managerial and organizational features of women-owned enterprises.

A. PALTRINIERI CASELLA, *Donne del Nord: vite differenti, fili comuni. Le donne del Circolo Polare Artico si incontrano a Whitehorse (Yukon, Canada).*

This article is about the Women's Circumpolar Conference, that has been in Whitehorse (Yukon, Canada) in November 1999. Hundreds of women, coming from arctic nations like Scandinavia, Greenland, Russia, Alaska, Canada (but also from warmer countries like Great Britain and the Mediterranean) go together to talk about problems of their social and common life. The event, developed into the spirit of Beijing's conference, and due to the active community life in Whitehorse, allowed the representative (many of them coming from native communities) to discuss about themes particularly dramatic in the world such as ecology, social isolation and what it leads to, youth politics, physical and cultural survival of native populations. Reading the event, a few months after, helped by some privileged witness, interviewed in Whitehorse in June 2000, I can clearly underline some strong anthropological themes: the peculiarity of Canadian population in the Arctic regions in which old and new group of immigrants live together; the delicate balance between man and Arctic environment, that is now endangered by multinational economic operations, women's role yesterday and today in building social links and cultural meanings that can allow people to «live» in this wide and desolate land; the search for «common threads», that go for beyond national borders, through which plan future.

A. SCISCI - M. VINCI, *Politics in support of female occupation: conciliation between family and work across Italy and Europe.*

This article deals with the transformation of female identity in the current social and cultural context, in which women have to play different roles inside and outside home and face the everyday difficulty to reconcile the different times for family life, for work and for care. In this perspective, many researches identify obstacles both of structural nature (rigidity in the labour market, lack of services...) and cultural nature (gender stereotypes, occupational segregation...) to be considered in the social policies which try to support female occupation. This kind of policies reflect the different characteristics of the welfare system in which they were elaborated; that is to say that they also reflect a different conception of the family and of the role of women in reconciling family and work. Politics of conciliation have been introduced in the official document of UE since the first years of '90, to indicate to all European countries measures able to protect the opportunity for each woman to combine work and family life. The so-called «Mediterranean model», that includes also Italy, the Liberal and the Nordic models of these policies are discussed; actually, in this perspective, Italian legislation is one of the most advanced across Europe, even if a great number of women still now decides to give up work in the period of maternity leave.