

## SUMMARIES

C. MONGARDINI, *Sociological theory and modern culture.*

Historically, sociology developed as a product of modern culture and of the growing autonomy civil society acquired versus the State and the individual. More recently, the discipline went through a deep crisis which is basically due to its inability to offer a new synthetic image of society. Striving in search of a new ideological role, sociology risks losing its crucial function, which is intrinsically critical. A purely economic explanation of social life as well as a post-modernist approach fail to satisfy this condition. According to the author, a renewed critical capacity of the discipline can develop only if two main elements would be taken more seriously in theoretical and empirical studies: a sociology of modern culture and a fresh outlook at socialization.

M. MAGATTI, *Social change and differentiation of universalism.*

Modernity has been viewed by the Founders of sociology as the process which brought to the formation of a new kind of social life they called society. This idea was based on the notion of universalism, which was fully developed by Parsons. Yet, the route towards a progressive universalization revealed to be harder and harder. For a number of reasons, the parsonian approach appears untenable. Above all, the spread of universalistic values is to be closely linked with specific institutional condition — the market and the state — which greatly contributed to its success. Nowadays the problem is that both these two institutional conditions are in disarray. That is why growing difficulties in maintaining universalistic practices are experienced in many advanced countries. In the final part, the A. analyzes the conditions which may contribute to the creation of a new kind of universalism.

E. CARRÀ, *Adolescence: strategic research material on family relations.*

The article focuses on key categories by which young generations has been represented in the last forty years. At present, adolescence and youth appear like a parents' and sons' joined intergenerational enterprise for crossing to adulthood. It is on this topic that the Centre for studies and research on the family of the Catholic University of Milan realized a survey interviewing not only adolescents but also their parents. The survey points out the centrality of family relations, which should be considered a crucial resource youngsters dispose of to complete the transition to adulthood, as well as the complex plot among expressive, instrumental, cognitive and affective functions inside the family. On the whole, a very different image of family comes out in comparison with the traditional parsonian model

G. TAMANZA, *Family associations.*

The article presents the main results of a recent research on Italian family associations. This kind of associations is innovative yet scarcely known and legitimated despite the quality and quantity of services they offer and of the societal functions they perform. In particular, the Author stresses the high level of

differentiation existing among these associations as well as their specificity, which is mainly due to their organization aimed at satisfying family needs and at realizing cooperative interactions. The research points out that family associations should be viewed as a permanent component of the Third Sector, able to contribute to the creation of a new kind of society.

F. VILLA, *Person and society: which hermeneutics?*

The article aims at developing an approach in which the social actor is viewed as a person. The Author's claim is that such a perspective may offer a way out from the traditional dilemma between collectivism-individualism. The term person is taken from the personalistic school of thought. This involves a clear extra-scientific position which — according to the author — is essential to clarify the point of view a theory implicitly assumes. Only this kind of effort may conduce to a more reliable sociological theory and, above all, only such an intellectual honesty makes possible a more in depth comprehension of the multidimensional nature of the social actor. The second part of the article discusses the main theoretical implications of the philosophical assumptions the Author has introduced in the first part of the essay.