

SUMMARIES

D. LA VALLE, *Different types of social exchange: Homans, Becker and Parsons. Utilitarianism and rational choice in sociology.*

The theory of social exchange has various advantages. However, the use of exchange model risks collapsing the sociological dimension onto the utilitarianism of the economic dimension. This paper proposes a non-utilitarian model of social exchange, that reflects the non-reducibility of the social dimension to the economic dimension. The second section illustrates and criticises the traditional version of social exchange theory. The third and the fourth section consider Becker's approach and discuss the limitations of utilitarianism. Finally, the fifth section highlights the Parsonian roots of the new model proposed.

R. BICHI, *Biographic field and longitudinal intelligibility.*

The article examines one of the problems opened by the specific diachronic perspective of the *biographic field*, i.e. the set of the theoretical and methodological approaches that use biographic material. The forms of memory implied in the narrative of the *life story* are analysed, along with two of the main pre-methodological conceptions that deal with the problem of the knowledge that is reachable by using biographic methods.

L. ZANFRINI, *The case of life stories in the sociological research.*

Beginning from the recent redesccovery of the qualitative approaches in the sociological research, the essay focuses on one of the main methods: the life stories. After underlining the main features of this method, the potentialities of its use during the different phases of the empirical research are showed. Moreover, moving from the concepts of «thematic representativeness» and of «saturation», the crucial question of representativeness is tackled. Finally, it is highlighted as the biographic method could be a profitable convergence point among scholars of different fields, particularly sociologists and historians.

A. MASSA, *Promotional cultures and political marketing: considerations on the Italian case.*

The general election held in 1994 in Italy has been considered a watershed in the way of conceiving electoral campaigning. Since the 50's, campaigning in Anglo-saxon democracies, embedded in promotional cultures, has been characterized by a «professional approach», based on political marketing, focus group researches and opinion polls, political commercials on mass media – all managed by professional political consultants. The author questions whether campaigning in Italy in recent years is turning or not to this professional approach.

M. COLOMBO, *The environmentalist mobilisation.*

The article presents the results of a series of studies carried out in and around Genoa in the period 1994-1997 about the citizens' mobilisation on the issue of the environment. Based on qualitative data acquired in the field, a comparison is made between two different forms of environmentalist mobilization: the formation of committees and of associations. Characteristics of both forms, the differences between them and their relationship with the civic and environmentalist culture of the population are described. In the conclusion it is suggested that the committees might have made local politics more «cultural», whereas the associations might have made the city cultural life more «political».

M. DE BENEDITTIS, *Media, communication and environmentalist values.*

Communication about the environment is of crucial importance in contemporary society, as it is located at the intersection of two fundamental processes of this historical period: the growing importance of the media and the globalization of risk. Based on the result of a study carried out in the Genoa area, the article examines the relationship between the media and environmentalist associations, highlighting its contradictory character and pointing to the difficulty of communicating environmental values without giving in to the spectacular logic of the media. It also examines the main communicative strategies adopted by environmentalist associations towards institutions.