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## SOCIOLOGISTS ON THE LABOUR-MARKET IN THE NETHERLANDS\*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In Holland university training for sociologists, in the sense of a separate, independent branch of study, did not exist officially until 1950; this was a relatively early date, in comparison with other European countries where sociology had for a long time been restricted as merely a part of, or as an auxiliary science to, other branches of study.

Until 1950 this had also been the case in our country. Sociologists, although without specialised training for this 'profession', already existed long before World War II. In 1922, W.A. Bongers was appointed as first professor of sociology at the University of Amsterdam. At the same university S.R. Steinmetz was employed as ethnologist; but in fact he covered a much wider field with his publications and his teaching, including sociology. When, in 1921, social geography became a separate branch of study, it was his influence in particular which strongly stressed the 'social' aspect. Because of the distinctly empirical nature of Steinmetz' pursuit of science, he stimulated socio-scientific research. H.N. ter Veen, who was professor of social geography in Amsterdam in the thirties, took great pains to obtain employment for graduates (the Amsterdam sociographers) outside the field of education. At an early stage already the Dutch 'pre-sociologists' were orientating themselves towards 'practical' problems. Developments after the war linked up with this.

Officially, university training for sociology in Holland takes five years (actually most students take 7-8 years to graduate) and is concluded by the so-called doctoral examination, which means that the student who passes it has graduated as doctorandus (drs.) and can go on for the Ph.D. degree. In practice, this means that such a student has finished his/her study and can begin to function as a sociologist.

The Dutch universities are structured according to 'faculties' among others the faculty of social sciences which does not include, however, the studies of law and economics; these are situated in separate faculties. Most faculties give courses leading to various degrees within that faculty (e.g. 'Diplom-Psychologe' and 'Diplom-Soziologe' in the faculty of social sciences). From the point of view of sociology the most relevant faculties and university degrees (these degrees are legalized by Royal Decree) are mentioned in Table 1.

\*Part of this text has already been published as 'The Dutch Labourmarket for Sociologists', *The Netherlands' J. Sociol.* 15 (1979) 83-86.

Table 1. Number of students and graduations of Dutch universities, 1977/78-1978/79.

Faculty University degree	New undergraduates 1978/79		Total number of students 1978/79		Number of graduations 1977/78
	abs.	%	abs.	%	
Economy	2 104	8.6	11 508	8.1	715
Law	3 636	14.9	18 489	13.1	1 388
Social sciences	4 127	16.9	25 574	18.1	1 815
Psychology	1 407	5.8	9 180	6.5	711
Pedagogics, andragology	1 294	5.3	8 474	6.0	515
Socio-cultural sciences	1 352 + 74	5.6 (-)	7 740 + 180	5.5 (-)	589
Sociology			4 132	2.9	434
Cultural anthropology/n.w.s. <sup>a)</sup>			1 883	1.3	62
Political science			1 725	1.2	87
Business administration	130	0.5	413	0.3	67
Administrative sciences	121	0.5	269	0.2	—
All Faculties	24 357	100.0%	141 609	100.0%	10 222

a) Non-western sociology

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Mededelingen*, nos 7695 (March 1979) and 7698 (July 1979). There are 12 institutions of higher education in the Netherlands: 4 state universities, 1 municipal university, 3 denominational universities, 3 (state) technical high schools and 1 (state) agricultural high school.

## 2. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND GRADUATIONS IN SOCIOLOGY

The earliest statistical record of the number of first-year sociology students dates from 1954; in that year 94 students were entered as undergraduates. In 1959 the number was 225; in 1969 it reached a peak of 954; in 1976 this had fallen to 467, but in 1977 it had risen again to over 540. There are training facilities for sociology at nine universities and colleges for university education. See also Table 1.

The cumulative number of postgraduates in sociology was 72 in mid-1955, in 1965 there were 751; in 1975, 3696; in 1979, 5319 and for mid-1980 the estimate is 5750. In addition to this, there are also a number of sociologists who have not received a formal sociological training (notably the students who graduated before 1950) or with a foreign training (approximately 60 and 20 respectively).

## 3. THE NUMBER OF SOCIOLOGISTS AND THE SOCIAL SECTORS WHICH EMPLOY THEM

The number of employed sociologists in 1980 is estimated at 4500-5000. Mid-1979 probably 350 graduates will be registered as unemployed. In 1977 approximately 340 graduates preferred to remain unemployed by choice.

It is difficult to anticipate future developments. The Ruiter Commission's estimate for 1980 of 7300 graduates in the socio-cultural sciences (sociology,

political science and cultural anthropology) *in employment* seems to be reasonable. The estimate for 1990, viz. 19 800 (based on developments up to 1970), certainly seems too high, as the number of first-year students since 1970 has increased much less than expected. I estimate that the number of graduates in the socio-cultural sciences in employment in 1990 will probably be from 12 000 to 14 000, of which no more than 10 000 would be sociologists.

In connection with the labour market for sociologists it is of importance to know in which sectors the graduates work and how developments have been proceeding. See Table 2. For reasons of comparison the data of some countries are presented in Table 3.

Table 2. Graduate sociologists, employed, according to social sector, since 1954 in the Netherlands.

Generations of graduates researched	1950-1968	Sept. 1968 -Dec. 1971	Sept. 1974 -Aug. 1978
Social sector	(a)	(b)	(c)
University education	26.4 %	26.6 %	20.1 %
Other research	11.7	10.2	5.8
Other education	7.7	10.9	18.8
Government	20.4	26.7	24.9
Public services	20.9	15.0	21.3
Production industries	12.6	9.9	4.6
Remaining and unknown	0.3	1.7	4.5
Total	100.0 % N = 794	100.0 % 534	100.0 % 757

- (a) Employment at the time of the survey (1968) of the graduate sociologists, investigated by Westerdiep.
- (b) Employment at the time of the survey (January 1972) of the graduate sociologists, investigated by Eleveld. In most cases (approx. 90 %) a first employment is implied.
- (c) Employment four months after the doctoral examination of the graduate sociologists investigated by Braaksma and Van der Zwaag. The total (757) refers to those who are in employment of which the nature is known. The 313 without employment and the 51 in military service are not included here. Other education is divisible into 12.4 % H.B.O. (higher vocational education) and 6.3 % primary and secondary education; government into 9.8 % central authorities and 14.2 % other; public services into 8.2 % social services and 13.1 % other; production industries into 2.2 % industry and 2.4 % commerce, banking, transport, P.T.T. and N.S. (Dutch Railways).

In this connection the advertisements to which sociologists are eligible to reply are also interesting. Table 4 gives a comparison of an analysis of advertisements from the years 1968-1974.

Tables 2 and 4 present a similar picture: most sociologists are employed in the sectors of government and civil service; these are followed closely by the sectors

Table 3. Graduate sociologists, employed according to social sector in the Netherlands, U.S.A., B.R.D., Great Britain and Belgium.

Country and year of investigation	Netherlands (1968)	U.S.A. <sup>a)</sup> (1970)	(1975)	B.R.D. <sup>b)</sup> (1968)	B.R.D. <sup>d)</sup> (1970)	München (1973)	Gr. Brit. (1967) <sup>f)</sup>	Gr. Brit. (1971) <sup>g)</sup>	Belgium: Louvain (1972; <sup>j)</sup> 1975) <sup>j)</sup>	Belgium: Antwerp (1974; <sup>j)</sup> 1977) <sup>j)</sup>	Belgium: Gent (1972) <sup>j)</sup>
University education	26.4%	83.0%	95.2%	41.9%	48.0%	21.3%	9.2%	6.8%	25.7%	23.0%	19.6%
Other education	7.7						10.2	5.9			
Other research	11.7					29.4	16.9	8.1	16.2	3.0	
Government	20.5	8.4	2.6	6.5	12.0	5.9	14.4	23.3	21.6	7.0	40.2
Public services	20.8	5.1	3.4	19.0	5.0	20.6	21.5	25.3	24.6	15.0	—
Production industries	12.6	1.9	1.2	14.1	33.0	22.8	9.7	16.4	12.0	16.0	40.2 <sup>k)</sup>
Self-employed	—	0.8	— <sup>c)</sup>	3.8	— <sup>e)</sup>	— <sup>c)</sup>	6.2	3.1	—	—	—
Remaining and unknown	0.3	0.8	— <sup>c)</sup>	14.7	2.0	— <sup>c)</sup>	12.9 <sup>h)</sup>	11.1 <sup>i)</sup>	—	—	—
Total abs.	100.0% 754	100.0% 6835	100.0% 7967	100.0% 717	100.0% ca. 3600 <sup>e)</sup>	100.0% ca. 130	100.0% 195	100.0% 621	100.0% 167	100.0% 106	100.0% 209

a) The figures for 1970 are dealing with graduates which are registered with occupational associations and the like; those for 1975 include only people with a doctor's degree. These figures are exclusive 612 'not employed' in 1970, and 589 'not employed' in 1975.

b) It is uncertain whether these figures include only employed sociologists or employed as well as unemployed.

c) These categories are not mentioned in the reports.

d) Figures from Gottwald (1974) which are estimates based upon the 1970 census in the B.R.D.

e) Of which 5% institutes for market and opinion research.

f) Investigation among sociology graduates in 1966/67.

g) Investigation among sociology graduates in 1970.

h) Of which 6.2% clerical and 2% manual.

i) Of which 1.8% manual.

j) Sociologists who have graduated in the years mentioned.

k) We are not sure whether this percentage is for production industries only, or for all four remaining categories.

Sources: Westerdiep (1970), National Science Foundation (1970 and 1977), Schlottman (1968), Gottwald (1974), Von Bebenburg (1974), Webb (1973) and De Jager & Mok (1978).

Table 4. The demand for sociologists as reflected in advertisements, according to social sector, 1968-1974, the Netherlands.

Sector for which advertisements appeared	1968	1969	1st half 1970	1971	1974
Social sector					
University education	10.5 %	20.8 %	26.6 %	24.8 %	18.2 %
Other research				7.1	7.2
Other education	4.4	6.1	6.4	14.4	13.9
Government	20.4	25.3	22.1	22.5	25.8
Public services	23.2	25.3	20.6	22.1	20.9
Production industries	39.4	22.1	23.2	9.1	14.0
Remaining and unknown	2.1	0.4	1.1	—	—
Total	100.0 % N = 383	100.0 % 553	100.0 % 267	100.0 % 736	100.0 % 929

“Universities” (which, however, is of diminishing importance) and “Other Education” (which, on the contrary, is of strongly increasing importance). The sectors “Other Research” and “Production Industries” show a relative decrease.

#### 4. THE APPLICATION FOR A JOB

One of the aspects of finding a job is whether applicants meet with restrictions. In our investigation since 1974<sup>1</sup> we have asked for some of these restrictions (Table 5).

Table 5. Have there been any restrictions in finding a job? (new graduate sociologists, 1974-1978, the Netherlands).

Restrictions	Yes	No	No answer.
a. Few jobs corresponding with the academic training	30.4 %	57.0 %	12.4 %
b. Few attractive jobs	44.4	43.8	11.7
c. Small supply of jobs	51.3	37.5	11.1
d. Certain social sectors are/were not attractive	51.2	34.5	13.4

N = 1156

Source: M. van der Zwaag (1979), p. 20.

It seems that a majority of the respondents do not consider the required level of academic training below that of their own.

The number of respondents who think that the supply of attractive jobs is bad almost equals that of respondent with a favorable opinion.

<sup>1</sup> In this investigation a questionnaire is sent to almost all graduated sociologists four months after their graduation. The tables 5-8 and 10-12 show some results of this investigation.

As far as the supply of jobs is concerned, the majority of the respondents thinks it to be small.

A majority of the respondents has a clear opinion on the inattractiveness of jobs in specific social sectors. When one looks at the relation between the social sectors of the jobs the respondents apply for, and the rank order of the applications in time it is clear that the interest for jobs in the central government and the universities declines, but the interest in jobs in the regional and local governments and in the production industries increases. We think it is safe to conclude that the latter social sectors are considered less attractive than the first two.

Of all respondents who have a job (four months after their graduation) more than half need four or more applications to get it (Table 6).

Table 6. Number of applications for a job by employed graduate sociologists, 1974-1978, the Netherlands.

Number of applications needed to find a job	
No applications	5%
One application	19
Two or three applications	23
Four or five applications	17
Six to ten applications	19
Eleven to twenty-five applications	13
More then twenty-five applications	4
Total	100%
N =	725

Source: M. van der Zwaag (1979), p. 19.

Table 7. How new graduate sociologists apply for a job, 1974-1978, the Netherlands.

Private employment offices	5.3%
Advertisements	78.0
Personal relations	3.5
Through universities	1.2
Official employment offices	2.3
Invited by employer	3.8
Own initiative	5.4
Remaining and unknown	0.5
Total	100.0%
N =	5348

Not all applications result in getting a job.  
Source: M. van der Zwaag (1979), p. 22.



Table 8. Social sectors in which new graduate sociologists have applied for a job, 1968-1971, 1974-1978, the Netherlands.

Social sector	Eleveld 1968-1971	Van der Zwaag 1974-1978
Universities	18%	13%
Other research	9	5
Other education	9	18
Government	31	34
Public services	18	20
Production services	14	5
Abroad	1	1
Remaining	1	3

Source: M. van der Zwaag (1979), p. 21.

Another aspect of 'job hunting' is the means by which the new graduate tries to find a job. Remarkably, the advertisements (in newspapers and some weeklies) are prominent in the Netherlands. All other means are of little importance (Table 7).

Looking at the preferred social sectors for jobs (Table 8), we notice that the government has a prominent place: 34% of all applications for jobs are in this social sector. The next two sectors are the public service and other (non-university) education (20% and 18% respectively). Comparing these figures with those of an earlier investigation (1968-1971) one notices a decline of applications in the universities, other research and the production industries, and a doubling of the applications in other education. This is a clear sign of the end of a period of rapid expansion of employment in the universities and research institutions (most of which are financed out of public funds).

## 5. THE FUNCTIONS AND TASKS OF EMPLOYED SOCIOLOGISTS

To gain some insight into the type of function fulfilled by graduate sociologists, we can use Table 9.

This shows an increase in the teacher functions which results from a greater number of sociologists in non-university education, a sharp decrease in the number of pure research functions, and an increase in the number of functions which could be labelled as not-specifically-sociological. To some extent this impression is supported by the way in which sociologists regard themselves: many do not consider their activities as those of a sociologist, but of a social scientist. Also in accordance with this is the intense competition experienced by sociological graduates from other graduates in their search for employment. This is also evidenced by the training which is demanded in advertisements for functions for which sociologists can apply: in the period 1971-1974 the demand for graduates with an exclusively



Table 9. Graduate sociologists in employment, according to type of function, 1950-1971, the Netherlands.

Generations of graduates Type of function	1950-1968	1968-1971
Teacher	14 %	18 %
Researcher	35	10
Teacher/researcher	15	19
Management researcher		28
Management staff	36	17 53
Organizer		8
Total	100 %	100 %
N =	537	359

sociological training diminished; also the number of management functions which combine advice, guidance and counselling.

In the investigation under way among sociologists four months after their graduation (all graduates from 1974-1978) we try to get a more clear picture of the work they do (M. van der Zwaag, 1979). For that reason the respondents are asked to mention their tasks as well as the amount of time they spent on it (as percentage of the total time spent on the job) and the importance to them each activity holds. The question as to the tasks themselves is open-ended. In the analysis the tasks are reduced to 14 categories. For the analysis of the data as far as the respondents have filled out this question (quite a few did not have a job at the moment they filled out the questionnaire), see Table 10 A and 10 B.

Relating the tasks to the social sectors of the jobs one gets the following picture:

1. Much time spent on *teaching* and the importance which is given to this task are especially present in the social sectors of universities and other educational institutions.

2. *Research* is most important in universities and next with government. Much time spent on research is found mostly at the universities; but also government and the research institutes score rather high.

3. Much time spent *advising* is found mostly with government and public services. They are most important in the same social sectors.

4. Much time spent on *decision making* is found with public services and government. In these same sectors it is also of importance.

5. Much time spent on the *execution of decisions* is found mostly with government and public services. It is specially in these sectors an important task.

6. Much time spent on *publishing* is found mostly with public services. It is of importance in this sector as well as in the sector government.

7. Much time spent on *study* is found mostly with research institutes and

Table 10 A. Activities of new graduate sociologists, 1974-1978, the Netherlands, in percentage of time spent on job.

Activities % of time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1-30%	15%	34%	53%	56%	76%	75%	94%	95%	71%	88%	88%	36%	96%	84%
31-70%	37	31	39	34	23	20	4	3	15	12	11	37	3	16
71-100%	48	34	8	10	2	5	1	2	14	—	1	17	1	—
N=	227	305	292	82	133	40	77	136	71	91	198	77	220	45

Table 10 B. Idem, as measured by the importance to the respondent each activity holds.

Activities degree of importance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
very important	83%	69%	61%	61%	33%	60%	45%	13%	49%	35%	35%	79%	10%	29%
rather important	14	25	33	33	46	20	43	51	38	47	51	17	41	26
of some importance	2	3	3	3	19	14	9	25	9	15	11	3	26	17
unimportant	0	—	1	2	1	3	1	7	1	2	2	—	11	17
impossible to tell	—	3	3	—	1	3	1	4	3	1	2	1	2	12
N=	224	307	284	82	136	35	76	134	69	89	199	76	220	42

Source: M. van der Zwaag (1977), p. 48-49.

The figures on top of the columns refer to those in the text on pp. 368 and 370. 14 refers to the category 'remaining activities'.

less with public services. It is of some importance in public services, government and research institutes respectively.

8. Much time spent on *documentation* is found with government, universities and other educational institutions respectively. It is most important in government and other educational institutions.

9. Much time spent on *personnel management* is found predominantly in production industries. It is, however, most important with government and next in public services, production industries and other educational institutions.

10. The time spent on *external contacts* is small in all social sectors. One finds most of it in public services and with government. In these same sectors it is also of some importance.

11. Much time spent on *internal contacts* is found almost only with government. It is of some importance in this sector as well in public services as in other educational institutions.

12. Much time spent on *training activities* is found most in public services. There it is also special importance.

13. Much time spent on *administrative tasks* (including 'paper work') is found in other educational institutions and public services. It is, however, most important in the last mentioned sector as well as with government.

## 6. COMPETITION ON THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE THREAT OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

Looking at the training of the predecessors of employed sociologists (Table 11) one notices almost half of them (42%) have jobs without a predecessor,

Table 11. Academic or other training of predecessor of employed new graduate sociologists, 1974-1978, the Netherlands.

Education of predecessor	Employed sociologists with predecessor
Sociology	40.5%
Psychology, pedagogics, andragology (Sozialpädagogik)	7.5
Economics, law	7.5
Other university training	11.3
Schools of social work	11.6
Other tertiary education	6.4
Other education	6.7
Unknown	6.7
	9.3
Total	100.0%
N =	389

Of all employed new graduate sociologists 42% (276) did not have a predecessor in their job.

Source: M. van der Zwaag (1979), p. 41.

i.e. newly created jobs. Almost a quarter of all employed sociologists did have a sociologist as predecessor; all others did compete with people with another training. However, these data only present one side of the picture. We do not know which sociologists have lost the competition.

One of the most urgent problems at the moment is the employment situation, or rather the lack of employment. When we compare the unemployment figures for sociologists with those for other graduates and more especially with

Table 12. The number of unemployed graduates, 1976-1978, the Netherlands.

University degree <sup>a)</sup>		July 1976	June 1977	June 1978	June 1979
Sociology	abs. <sup>b)</sup>	237	245	283	307
	> 12 months <sup>c)</sup>	13.5%	24.6%	25.5%	29.3%
	% of grad. <sup>d)</sup>	49.6%	57.5%	65.2%	e)
		100	106	131	
Psychology	abs. <sup>b)</sup>	297	352	412	549
	> 12 months <sup>c)</sup>	16.1%	23.5%	25.7%	25.0%
	% of grad. <sup>d)</sup>	46.8%	53.4%	57.9%	e)
		100	114	124	
Pedagogics, andragology	abs. <sup>b)</sup>	90	127	189	235
	> 12 months <sup>c)</sup>	2.2%	14.9%	19.6%	19.1%
	% of grad. <sup>d)</sup>	22.2%	25.7%	36.7%	e)
		100	116	165	
Economics	abs. <sup>b)</sup>	290	266	240	227
	> 12 months <sup>c)</sup>	20.4%	24.8%	26.2%	28.2%
	% of grad. <sup>d)</sup>	37.2%	33.1%	33.6%	e)
		100	89	90	
Law	abs. <sup>b)</sup>	441	430	402	377
	> 12 months <sup>c)</sup>	13.1%	18.5%	25.1%	24.9%
	% of grad. <sup>d)</sup>	31.2%	29.0%	29.0%	e)
		100	93	93	
All university degrees	abs. <sup>b)</sup>	3620	3888	4359	4755
	> 12 months <sup>c)</sup>	17.6%	18.9%	25.1%	24.9%
	% of grad. <sup>d)</sup>	35.7%	38.0%	42.6%	e)
		100	108	121	

a) The final, so-called 'doctoral examinations'. Those who have passed this examination may go on for a Ph.D. or other doctorate.

b) The absolute number of unemployed graduates in June or July.

c) Percentage of graduates which is registered as unemployed longer than 12 months.

d) The number of unemployed graduates as a percentage of those who have graduated during the ending academic year. This percentage is only a rough index of the seriousness of the (un)employment situation.

e) The data on final examinations are not yet available.

Sources: Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics and Bureau Arbeidsvoorziening Academici (Employment Office for Academically Trained).

those for other social scientists (see Table 12), it appears that until some years ago the situation of the former group did not differ unfavourably from that of the others. For sociologists the number of registered unemployed seemed to be stabilized between 1976 and 1977 at 50% of the graduates produced in that academic year (in mid-1972 this was no more than 10%); mid-1978 however, it rose to 65% and surpassed most of the other social sciences. The duration of unemployment is also becoming longer: in the middle of 1977, 25% of the unemployed sociologists had been registered for more than a year (compared with 19% of all graduates). In the middle of 1979 this figure rose to 29%, while the figure for all graduates had risen to 25%. We have also tried to calculate the number of unemployed sociologists as the percentage of those who are willing to be employed (some graduates emigrate and some abstain from employment by choice because of marriage and other reasons); see Table 13. Although these figures are rough estimates, they suggest a rather stable level of unemployment of about 5%.

Table 13. Relative unemployment of sociologists, 1972-1978, the Netherlands.

Date of gauging*	June 1972	June 1973	July 1974	July 1975	July 1976	June 1977
a. Graduating sociologists in academic year	458	479	459	490	476	426
b. Cumulative number of graduated sociologists	2541	3020	3479	3969	4445	4861
c. Corrected b.	2160	2567	2957	3374	3778	4132
d. Unemployed sociologists	45	136	179	250	237	245
e. Unemployed as % of a.	9.8%	28.4%	39.0%	51.0%	49.8%	57.5%
f. Unemployed as % of c.	2.1%	5.3%	6.1%	7.4%	5.8%	5.0%

\* The date of gauging concerns the number of unemployed. The data for June 1972 as well as those for July 1976 and following are of graduates. The data for June 1973, July 1974 and July 1975 are not comparable with the former ones because they include also some non-graduates.

ad a. The figure of graduates indicate the number of graduated sociologists during the academic year ending that summer.

ad c. The total number of sociologists which is willing to be employed is calculated by correcting the figures ad b. for 8% emigration and 7% unemployment by choice.

ad d. The statistics for 1972-1975 show only the data for graduates of the socio-cultural sciences. The data for graduates of sociology are estimates.

Sources: Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics and Bureau Arbeidsvoorziening Academici (Employment Office for Academically Trained).

All things considered, the foregoing is, in my opinion, an indication of the considerable potential for absorbing sociologists. But one should not conclude from this that there are no problems. There certainly are, and they will increase. It is, after all, very doubtful whether the market will continue to be able to absorb such a growing number of graduates.

## 7. DISCUSSION

In the foregoing we have given some data on the labour market of sociologists in the Netherlands. For fellow-sociologists abroad, however, there are more interesting questions. In a discussion with my German colleague, Miss Barbara Wischnewski of the University of Bremen, she wondered about the high number of sociologists and the low level of unemployment among them in my country. A rough estimate of the density of sociologists in Holland is 0,09% (4500 graduates out of 5 million employed), and for Western-Germany 0,05% (7500 graduates out of 15 million people ready to work<sup>2</sup>. It would be interesting to compare these density figures with those of other European and North-American countries.

Although we don't have very exact data on the density of sociologists I am quite sure that in Holland it is quite high. The interesting question from a sociological point of view is why there are so many sociologists in this country, and why unemployment is relatively low. This, I think, is especially remarkable because the study and training of sociology is more 'professionalised' than in many other countries. By this I mean that students immediately start their academic study in sociology while abroad very often the academic study begins as a study in social sciences in a wider sense, or in combination with economics, political science or the like. My impression is that the training of Dutch sociologists is more focussed on sociology proper than in most other countries. In a way this may lead to a more professional and specialized training. It may give the sociologist a better, i.e. specific standing, and in that way he may differ distinctly from other and related social scientists. By this specialization on the other hand, he is more limited in finding jobs. Because of the introduction of various academic courses closely related to the study of sociology but set up as separate courses (e.g. business administration, administrative sciences, and educational sciences) the market for the sociologically trained shrinks.

In the meantime one notices a widening of the demand of academically trained people as far as the social sciences are concerned. Many advertisements are directed to 'social scientists' or 'behavioral scientists', both of which may include cultural anthropologists, non-western sociologists, political scientists, (social) psychologists, pedagogues, educationalists and andragogists, and even lawyers and economists<sup>3</sup>. The employers don't want to decide in advance which training is most adequate. The more differentiation, the more competition there will be between the graduates of these courses. In the future, the Dutch sociologists, I

<sup>2</sup> Private conversation and 'Exkurs: Soziologen in den Niederlanden' 23.5.1979. The estimate in her paper of 0.15% is mistakenly based on 3 million employed persons. Some of the ideas in this paragraph I owe to my discussion with Miss Wischnewski. However, I am the only one who is responsible for any (mis) interpretation.

<sup>3</sup> In Holland the term 'sociale wetenschappen' (social sciences) is most times used confirming the division of universities in 'faculties' (departments); so it includes the first seven of these disciplines as well as (western) sociology. We also use the unofficial term 'maatschappijwetenschappen' (Gesellschaftswissenschaften) which can include sociology, political science, law and economics.



think, have to realise that many jobs will be less specifically sociological. His chances for a job will depend more on the total employment opportunities for social scientists in a broad sense.

Another matter is why Dutch sociologists are employed in such numbers by government agencies and the public service (many of the last ones are financed out of public funds). We end with some tentative answers and remarks:

a. Dutch sociology has always been oriented towards application and has served the administration in collecting and analysing data, in preparing advice for the administration, and the like.

b. Dutch sociology has never excelled in sociological theory<sup>4</sup>. 'Grand theorizing' is not popular in Holland; there is more interest for theories of the middle-range (R.K. Merton).

c. Dutch sociology has a strong tradition of positivistic empiricism in its research.

d. Holland has quite strong tradition in planning, not only of new land (e.g. the reclaimed Ysselmeer polders), but also of regions and towns. Originally the focus was on spatial planning, later on it extended to social planning.

e. Dutch sociologists (and politicians!) are more interested in small-scale social changes than in changes of the total social structure.

f. Some sociologists in Holland are critical of the functioning, or in their view: non-functioning of sociology. According to them Dutch sociologists are not interested in the structural conditions of their society, and therefore, can hardly or not at all contribute to the solution of fundamental social problems.

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<sup>4</sup>This is, of course, a very general and therefore inadequate statement. There have been and are some very good theoreticians and methodologists.



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