



CFR COMMITTEE ON FAMILY RESEARCH
ISA INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

CFR-GAZETTE

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FROM THE SECRETARY

This Gazette contains only three messages. First comes news from members and then we welcome new members. Gladly, they are quite a few as usual and we hope more will come. The third issue is a new membership list. If you want to make corrections in your file, please, contact me and I will rapidly execute the wishes. If you know some other's change of address, please, inform me.

We are now publishing the CFR-Gazette in regular paper form and also at the home page of the CFR. It can also be sent by "bulk" e-mail. Those of you who do **not** want to receive the Gazette in regular paper form, please, tell me about that. Our home page is open for visitors and information about the next international CFR seminar, in Bodrum, Turkey, can be found there: <http://www.rc06.net>.

The CFR organizes another international seminar in 2004: in São Paulo, Brazil, September 27-29, 2004, on the topic of "Family, Personal Biographies and Identity". More information on this seminar will come in the next issue of the CFR-Gazette and on the CFR home page.

Please observe that the year your payment is due, is shown on the right hand side of the name tag on the envelope. Please pay as soon as possible; either with an American check written to: CFR c/o Irene Levin or CFRs account: 6042 06 23383, Nordea bank, Frognerveien, Oslo, Norway. The amount is the same as for all the years: 40 US\$ or 40 EURO for four years and 10 US\$ or 10 EURO for students, also for four years.

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NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Irena Juozeliuniene wrote:

„JANAS TROSTAS, IR ŠEIMOS SOCIOLOGIJA“ (Jan Trost and Family Sociology), ISBN 9955-428-42-2

Every time you get the volume of CFR-gazette you find Honorary President's column with Jan's personal opinion on various issues of family life. He always has to say something to us.

One day I decided that it's time to say some words about Jan himself. It took me three years to prepare a book on Jan's contribution to family sociology. The book is entitled „Jan Trost and Family Sociology: new trends in research studies“. It is written in Lithuanian language and has extended Summary (14 p.) in English.

I feel I should explain how and why did it happen.

I met Jan in 1991 at a CFR conference held in Norway. I was overwhelmed from the experience of a forum of scholarly discussion, accompanied by marvelous sightseeing and excellent food arranged by Irene and Jan. During the above conference in Norway I became interested in the idea of conceptualising family and the dyadic approach in family studies suggested by Jan.

For a long time family studies in Lithuania have been dominated by the approach of structural functionalism. Family has usually been identified with a household, and even terms 'family' and 'marriage' have been used as synonyms; the concept of nuclear family has enjoyed a privileged status, while studies of other forms of family like partnership have made only the first steps. The problem of family conceptualisation has caused amazement, as it has been understood that everyone *knows* what family is.

My intent has been to show in this book that the answer to the question of “What is family?” is not that obvious as it may appear at first glance. This question opens the way to family discourse and new possibilities in family studies.

Chapter One of the book introduces an outline of Swedish sociology, discusses three stages and, accordingly, three generations of scholars, each developing the thought of sociology in an individual manner. It analyses the theoretical approaches and research methods developed in these works and discusses the trends that prevailed in Swedish sociology of the 20th century. When writing this chapter I made attempts at disclosing the social environment and the theoretical atmosphere in which Jan Trost initiated his family studies.

Chapter Two of the book features an outline of Jan Trost’s creative biography and the theoretical sources as well as social reception of the approach to family studies proposed by him.

The chapter indicates that Jan Trost chooses the approach of symbolic interactionism; therefore I argue that his works echoes of ideas by William James, Charles H. Cooley, George H. Mead, William Isaac Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, Robert M. MacIver, Anselm L. Strauss and Georg Simmel, and the development of these ideas. The influence of the Swedish sociologists Torgny Segerstedt and George Karlsson on the professional activities of Jan Trost is also analyzed.

The discussion of Jan Trost’s creative biography focuses mainly on his initiatives in the sphere of family studies and family related matters. A brief review of research work is supplemented by my personal reflections on his activities. The world of Jante’s law in which Jan lives does not allow him to tell much about himself. Thus, it was my opportunity to introduce him as a person, who could feel „the pulse of life“, is open to the novelties, intolerant to categorical judgement and able to mock those who seem to know the recipes of „correct“ family life. Jan Trost demonstrates a gradual fall of such standards in Sweden’s current society and calls for a more open talk on what previously was subject to silent taboos.

The chapter “Jan Trost: A Scholar, Pedagogue and Colleague” presents the comments of Professor Irene Levin, Jan Trost’s life companion of many years and co-author of a number of works, on the relationship of Jan Trost’s works with the approach of symbolic interactionism and its further development. The author notes that this approach has permeated Jan Trost’s entire life, from the questions asked in adolescence to mature sociological studies. She shows that Jan Trost has always been concerned with the “definition of situation” and has stressed the need for speaking about people’s mutual relations of two kinds: my relations with you and your relations with me.

This chapter presents the opinion of Clary Krekula, Jan Trost’s former student and later his colleague who wrote a master thesis under his supervision, on the peculiarities of the pedagogical activities of her former teacher and supervisor of her essays. In an extremely sincere writing reminiscent of an essay one can feel deep respect to Jan Trost as a pedagogue and a perceptive counsel on professional issues. The chapter features Jan Trost’s replies to the questions put to him by the author of the book in October 2001 during her professional upgrading studies at Uppsala University.

The chapter “Definition of Family as a Problem” touches upon the theme of family discourse and discloses Jan Trost’s attempts to bring it to one’s attention that the normative concept of family that has prevailed in modern sociology is only one of the possible sections of conceptualizing family.

The chapter “Dyadic Approach” presents a broader introduction to the landmarks of the approach to family studies proposed by Jan Trost. Various types of families (with both parents, one-parent families, step families) are analysed through the prism of dyads.

The chapter “Empirical Family Studies” introduces the original research methodologies proposed by Jan Trost and Irene Levin and ways of interpreting results of research.

The chapter “Living Apart Together” is devoted to the discussion on a new family relations. It presents the history of “discovery” of this type of

partnership, the search for terminology and the first qualitative studies that allow characterising the partners' distinctive style of being together.

Based on the results of a qualitative LAT relations, the book discusses six examples of partnership, which Jan Trost calls LAT relations. It shows that LAT studies carried out by Jan Trost and Irene Levin are among the first attempts to typologize this kind of family partnership.

At the end of the book the reader will find Annexes, which contain two works by Jan Trost. The first is on the diadic approach in family research, the second – on qualitative interview. My students in family sociology at Vilnius University found those articles very important in their research studies, thus I have translated them and included into the book.

The Notes show how the issues discussed in the book are investigated in Lithuania. Seeking to delineate an original field of theoretical and empirical family studies, they discuss family discourse in Lithuania, and sociological, demographic, psychological and educatory family studies, as well as family research in works of ethnologists, historians and culturologists. They also examine the results of the first studies of the LAT relationships, present a discussion in the process of conceptualising this type of partnership and propose a Lithuanian term for its definition.

I would like to thank Jan for his patience and support in my activities. I appreciate that Irene and Clary have kindly agreed to prepare a chapters in the book.

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Irene Levin has a chapter on “Reflections After Holocaust” in Abel Abrahamson (ed.): *Jewish Life and Culture in Norway*; New York: Wergeland's Legacy, 2003, pp.79–81, 0-9744601-0-9

Irene Levin and *Jan Trost* have published a book in Norwegian about Living Apart Together (LAT) relationships: *Særbo – ett par, to hjem*, Oslo: N W Damm & Søn, 2003, ISBN, 82-496-0124-6.

NEW MEMBERS

The CFR welcomes the following members (some addresses are not complete, they will hopefully be so in the next membership roster in the Gazette)

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