



**Committee on Family Research  
(CFR) (RC06)  
International Sociological Association  
(ISA)**

**CFR-GAZETTE**

**Volume 34, Issue 1, 2008**

## **Contents**

President's column	2
Honorary president's column	3
From the secretary	4
Obituary: László Cseh-Szombathy (1925-2007)	5
Upcoming Interim Conference (2009)	6
Recent Publications by CFR Members	7
New members	8
Board of the CFR	9

# 1. PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear members,

This year is a very busy midterm year for our research committee. We will have a meeting in Boston in May discussing the ageing of society and we will meet in Lisbon with the focus on family diversity and gender.

Immediately before Lisbon, the first ISA Forum of Sociology will be held in Barcelona, where presidents or other representatives of the RCs will discuss the relation between sociological research and public debate. I will be there and present the issue from the point of view of our research committee.

I would like to quote for you from the letter the Vice President of ISA, Arturo Rodriguez Morato, wrote:

*“Our society is now going through a phase of deep transformations and sociology is compelled to renew itself in order to confront them.” The renewal of the link between sociological research and public debate “... is a very important subject for our discipline because more than any other disciplines Sociology is conceived as a tool for social reflexivity. Sociology is compelled to address the public agenda indeed, to become relevant for society, to contribute to its transformation.”*

For family sociology this is an everyday agenda and the interim meetings in 2008 will show how family sociology deals with these relations. Sociology as a scientific discipline primarily understands, explains and analyses central societal problems with its various methods and theories. Sociology in general and family sociology in particular perceives political debates and fertilizes them by offering scientific knowledge to contemporary problems. The connections between public debate and scientific results might especially be close in family sociology. This is not always an advantage. True, it brings sociology to the public; it makes the public aware of that which sociologists are doing. On the other hand there is also the danger of getting too much involved in everyday political issues. The danger to be incorporated in political programs is just as apparent as the risk of “going native” in the wish to help the underprivileged. We have dealt with this issue through our professional life and I think we can give fundamental answers to the debate in Barcelona. As I will represent our research committee there, I ask you for help. In sending me your thoughts on these issues, it will not only enrich my presentation, but will also contribute to the

paper being a presentation of our RC's views rather than just mine. What do you think about the intervening of family sociology in the public debate? It will be fruitful if you make references to key transformations and social problems such as migration, the social gap in the global society, demographic changes or whatever you think is of essential importance for family sociology. What problems for family sociology as a science come along with this?

Please e-mail me ([rudolf.richter@univie.ac.at](mailto:rudolf.richter@univie.ac.at)) your thoughts on these matters.

Rudolf Richter

## 2. HONORARY PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

László Cseh-Szombathy, president of the CFR 1982 – 1986, has died.

He and I were good friends during many decades. I just want to tell two stories about him and me.

One is about **food**.

During the years before 1990 the monetary situation was somewhat complicated for some of us. Without anyone of us ever saying anything about it, the following happened: When we were in Hungary together László always decided where to eat, what to eat, what to drink and he paid the bill for both of us. And he was a real gourmet.

When we were together outside of Hungary the situation was reversed. I decided where to eat, what to eat, what to drink and I paid the bill for both of us.

We never spoke about it. We never thought about it – I did afterwards. I don't know if László ever thought about it. We both acted spontaneously.

The other is about **stamps**.

László's wife Kathy was a stamp collector. I decided to subscribe to Swedish first-day-letters for her. But when I contacted the postal system I was told that Hungary had forbidden the Swedish system to send first-day-

letters to anyone in Hungary. So, my solution was to subscribe myself to these letters and then I sent them by regular mail to her. This worked perfectly until she sadly died about ten years ago.

JT

[jan.trost@soc.uu.se](mailto:jan.trost@soc.uu.se)

### **3. FROM THE SECRETARY**

There is excitement in the air as we are looking forward to our next interim CFR-conference which will be held this coming May at Lasell College, Boston, USA. We would like to thank Tessa le Roux and Mark Sciegaj (and their team) for all their hard work in organising this conference.

Allow me, once again, to bring a few important matters under your attention:

- Please be so kind as to inform me if any of your contact details have changed. You are welcome to send me an email, using the following address: [rsmit@uj.ac.za](mailto:rsmit@uj.ac.za)

- In the event that your CFR-membership fees are due, we would appreciate it if you would consider renewing your membership by paying the CFR (RC06) membership fee via the ISA's website with your credit card. (This is the easiest and cheapest way). The membership fee is US\$40 (or US\$10 if you are a student) for a four year membership. The following website address will take you to RC06's (CFR) page on the ISA's website: <http://www.isa-sociology.org/rc06.htm> Scroll down to "Membership" and click on <https://secured.com/~f3641/formisa.htm> This is the ISA's 'Individual Membership Form'. Section two of the form deals with affiliation to research committees, working groups and thematic groups. The Committee on Family Research (RC06) is listed at number 6. Once you have provided all the relevant detail, you can submit the form online by clicking on the button labelled "Submit form to ISA".

Once you have renewed your membership on the ISA website, we would appreciate it if you could send me an email informing me of the payment. This will help us to keep our records up to date and to cross check the membership information sent to us by the ISA. Please contact me if you require alternative payment options.

Kind regards

Ria Smit

#### **4. OBITUARY: LÁSZLO CSEH-SZOMBATHY (1925 – 2007)**

László was president of CFR for the period 1982 - 1986. Previously he had served CFR as a member of several CFR committees. Yet, it was atypical for a scholarly living in Hungary (at that time one of the so-called countries behind the “iron curtain”) to be so international in his contacts. László was pre-destinated to occupy such a position. He was rather low-profiled but efficient in building sustainable scholarly networks in family sociology enabling scholars from East and West to collaborate.

He studied at the universities of Budapest, Basel and Geneva. After a short teaching career in secondary schools joined the staff of the Hungarian Statistical Office, where he carried out research on deviant behaviours, on the social aspects of ageing, and on population policy. At present deputy director of the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and associate professor of sociology at the Eötvös University of Budapest. Since 1970 member of the CFR.

His strong democratic values, his scholarly intellect and his almost aristocratic and gentlemanlike behaviour earned him high respect to the effect that the academic positions he achieved allowed him to play an instrumental/expressive role in bringing together scholars in the field of family sociology on national, regional, European and international level. For example: in 1982 László edited a volume on “Hungarian Sociology Today” publishing contributions by almost all leading sociologists in Hungary. A remarked book on many accounts. E.g. it illustrated the Western orientation of our colleagues behind the iron wall (as marked by German, French, American references). On regional level he organized meetings such as the one on Lake Balaton inviting colleagues from “Eastern Europe” as well as from Western Europe and so giving them an opportunity to meet. On the European level he was an active member of GIRD (Groupe International de Reserche sur le Divorce) and a key-actor in the East-West comparative study on divorce, sponsored by the Vienna center. On the international level CFR was his home.

Yet, László was not the “organisation man”, he was too scholarly oriented to be a bureaucrate of any kind. To me, his work in family sociology is marked by three characteristics. In his writings and lectures, in his typical English idiom, he tended to focus on the relation between internal (inside the family) and external (societal) factors. The impact of social change on

the internal family relationship is a continuous preoccupation. Secondly, he was comparative in this methodology, as well in terms of time as in terms of space (time: present situation being related to past and future developments). Last not least: he was more focused on universal rather than on particular trends. For example, in his later years he still devoted himself to fundamental issues such as “what is family”.

Lászlo was a noble man, a man for all seasons. We hardly realize how much we owe him.

Lászlo past away July 21<sup>st</sup> , 2007.

Wilfried Dumon

## **5. UPCOMING INTERIM CONFERENCE (2009)**

### **“FAMILIES AND MEMORIES”**

The CFR seminar 2009 will be held in Oslo, Norway with the theme *Families and Memories*. The exact dates are not fixed yet, but it will be at the end of May, beginning of June 2009. The seminar is a co-arrangement between Oslo University College and the Center for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities (HL-center) and will take place at Villa Grande on the Bygdøy peninsula – the museum area in Oslo. Villa Grande which now hosts the HL-center was the perpetrator Vidkun Quisling’s private estate during the war.

Families construct memories as well as memories constitute families. Each family member creates different stories and biographical narratives. At the same time these stories are related to each other and there is a collectiveness in the memory-making within a family. Memories are crucial both for the development of individual and collective identities, and they are framed by discourses such as national master narratives.

Memories are centered around events experienced from birth to death. The memory is how the person experiences and interprets the events. It can be either shared by other family members or kept secret from others. Memories are reproduced by language and symbolic actions for instance rituals. Some are constituted around traumatic experiences, others are more related to everyday life.

The memory making happens within social norms. Social norms regulate the person's definition of the situation and behavior. What is being talked about as well as being silenced are connected to these definitions of situations and the social norms. How are processes of memory-making intialized, negotiated and continued, both on macro- and micro level? There will also be a special session on qualitative methodology.

**Local Organizer**

**Irene Levin**

Phone: +47 99228325

[Irene.Levin@sam.hio.no](mailto:Irene.Levin@sam.hio.no)

## **6. RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY CFR MEMBERS**

- Linda Haas and Steven Wisensale

Haas, L. & Wisensale, S. 2006. *Families and social policy - National and international perspectives*. Haworth.

(<http://www.HaworthPress.com/store/product.asp?sku=5908>)

- Fumi Kumagai

Kumagai, F. 2008. *Families in Japan: Changes, Continuities, and Regional Variations*. University Press of America

(<http://www.univpress.com/Catalog/SingleBook.shtml?command=Search&db=^DB/CATALOG.db&eqSKUdata=0761840168>)



## 7. NEW MEMBERS

The CFR welcomes the following members:

A.L. Sinikka Dixon  
Behavioral Science Department  
Canadian University College  
5415 College Avenue  
Lacombe, Alberta T4L 2E5  
CANADA  
Phone: 1-403-782-3381  
[sdixon@cauc.ca](mailto:sdixon@cauc.ca)

Melinda Mills  
Department of Sociology  
University of Groningen  
Grote Rozenstraat 31  
9712 TG Groningen  
NETHERLANDS  
[m.c.mills@rug.nl](mailto:m.c.mills@rug.nl)

Carmen Bulzan  
Sos. Mihai Bravu nr. 57-65  
Bl. C 19, Sc. A, Et. 4, Ap. 21  
Sector 2  
Bucarest  
ROMANIA  
Phone: 40-744192138  
[cbulzan@yahoo.com](mailto:cbulzan@yahoo.com)

Bárbara Barbosa Neves  
Research Fellow  
CAPP - Centre for Public  
Administration and Policies  
ISCSP - Institute of Social and  
Political Sciences of Lisbon  
Technical University  
Pólo Universitário do Alto da Ajuda  
Rua Professor Almerindo Lessa, Gab.  
28, Piso 0 1300-663 Lisboa  
PORTUGAL  
Tel: 351 21 361 94 30  
[barbara.neves@iscsp.utl.pt](mailto:barbara.neves@iscsp.utl.pt)

Ahuva Even-Zohar  
ISRAEL  
Phone: 972 3 5352044  
[ahuvaez@gmail.com](mailto:ahuvaez@gmail.com)

Abdullah Mamun  
34 East Rampura, 3rd floor  
Dhaka 1219  
BANGLADESH  
Tel: 88-02-9347530  
[advmamun@yahoo.com](mailto:advmamun@yahoo.com)

Please send address and other corrections to the CFR secretary/ treasurer.

## **BOARD OF THE CFR**

President	Rudolf Richter, Austria
Vice-president	Rudy Seward, USA
Secretary/ Treasurer	Ria Smit, South Africa
Members at large	Cristina Gomes, Mexico Irene Levin, Norway Peter Somlai, Hungary
Honorary president	Jan Trost, Sweden

### **Editor's address:**

CFR-Gazette  
c/o Ria Smit  
Department of Sociology  
University of Johannesburg  
P.O. Box 524  
Auckland Park, 2006  
South Africa  
[rsmit@uj.ac.za](mailto:rsmit@uj.ac.za)  
fax: +27 11 559 3787  
office ☎: +27 11 559 2319

### **President's address:**

Rudolf Richter  
Department of Sociology  
University of Vienna  
Rooseveltplatz 2  
1090 Vienna  
[rudolf.richter@univie.ac.at](mailto:rudolf.richter@univie.ac.at)  
office ☎: +43 1 4277 48240

CFR home page:

<http://www.soz.univie.ac.at/rc06/>