

GUEST EDITOR COMMENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

We had the honour of organizing ISA RC06 seminar in Lithuania two times: the topic of 1993 seminar was "Rapid Social Change and Family." It was supported by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology under the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. In 2013, we have opted for the topic "Family and Migration". Thirty scholars from eleven countries were selected to participate in a round table seminar. It took place in Vilnius University and was supported by CFR and the Research Council of Lithuania. When organizing a seminar after twenty years, the aim was not so much for continuity as for focusing on the hot issues that concern family sociologists today.

Obviously, the two seminars differ in their topics and the emotional charge they carry. Remembering 1993, the seminar participants were interested in rapid changes in family life at the end of the 20th century. At that time the collapse of the autocratic regimes and dogmatic family ideology in different countries of the world promised positive changes—in family life and family sociology. Twenty years later, we suggested examining the questions of family and migration. Does that mean that the period marked by optimistic mood and expectations for better is already over and we witness a shift of focus to the consequences of global mobility? We will leave it up to the readers to judge, whether the fears about mobility is just "identity panic," whether the impact of global mobility on the family becomes a strategic phenomenon for the nation-states. Our intentions are to introduce how the situation stands when viewed from the perspective of mass immigration/emigration countries and address the challenges to theory of family sociology, its research methodologies and practical work with individual families.

The first topic of the CFR seminar was connected to a widespread belief that family is a small part of society, situated within a nation state. The established image of nuclear family as a benchmark and the spirit of nationalism connected to family with one nation-state did not recognize the fact that humans are capable of creating family constructs across several nation states. Established theoretical (perhaps even ideological) family schemes prevent from recognizing families as lived realities, brought about by mobility of individuals.

Secondly, we aimed to open the discussion about new phenomena and new concepts coming up to emphasize the networks and boundaries of emerging family variations and to define their diverse lived realities. It seemed reasonable to bring the social category of "the other," disclose class and cultural connotations of the concept, and go on with the word "migrant," usually attributed to economic migration, then continue with the transnational elites as "mobiles"—neutral word without connotations of social stigma.

Holding the seminar in Lithuania, as a country supplying migrants, presented an excellent opportunity to the third topic of the seminar—a look at both sides of global mobility, namely, examine how emigrants integrate into new cultural environment, how they define relation with a titular nation, and examine the perspective of countries subject to emigration.

This special issue is a result of the CFR in Vilnius, 2013. Nine selected articles are devoted

to the hot topics in family and migration studies and represent the different modes of inquiry.

The issue starts with theoretical model for everyday behaviour introduced by Jan Trost. He suggests that behaviour of most people is a result of a choice, or determined by chance? Adopting this approach, readers might view the phenomena discussed in the journal from the perspective of choice and chance. Is long-distance, extended-commuting choice or chance? Are parents migrating to wealthier countries for economic reasons, while their children are left behind in the country of origin, an independent choice we make? To what extent are we free and creative in doing bi-national families?

The issue presents articles discussing new concepts and phenomena. The new concept of Displaying Family is introduced in Sylvie Seymour's and Sylvie Walsh's article. It shows that it is not enough simply "to do" migrant family life, it also must be "seen to be done" by multiple audiences. Data from a study, shows that this category of social practice can be successfully developed within the context of study of families undergoing migration. The authors raise yet another question concerning connections between family, community, and nation-state. They empirically validate the role of family in promoting community connectedness in culturally diverse regions, and the impact family display has on the development of a 'world building' rather than a 'nation building' sensibility.

The topic of "world building" sensibility is further elaborated in the article of Bénédicte Brahic. The author's attention is focused on European bi-national couples in large European cities, attractive to emigrants. Politics of bi-nationality is explored between partners and in their relationships with their families of orientation and procreation. The article demonstrates how the experience of "otherness" is constructed on the basis of national boundaries and can be studied with respect to couples' everyday practices.

The concept of silence is introduced by Irene Levin. She opens a discussion of the concept of silence in connection with memories and migration and demonstrates how this concept is used in Holocaust studies as well as provides references to application of this concept in migration studies. Special attention should be given to author's comment noting that silence is an important concept not only in the analysis of extraordinary events, but it also appears in everyday life, containing past, present and future and focusing on connections between micro and macro levels of analysis.

Sylvie Fogiel-Bijaoui and Mark Hutter introduce phenomena related to mobility. Sylvie discusses the phenomenon of "*Babushka*" as a central icon of Soviet culture and disputes its re (configuration) in new cultural and social contexts of Israel. Her study reveals that ethnic return migration is not solely a change of geographical place, but also an act of reshaping of grand-parenting, womanhood, ethnicity and nationality, because family support and child rearing institutions are gendered, dynamic, and class-related. Mark discovers another example of reshaping gender and motherhood. He highlights the phenomenon of nannies from the Third World countries as integration of cultural "other" into families for the purpose of caring for elderly people and childcare. The article demonstrates how pragmatic exchange relations gradually transform themselves into attachment/hate relations and can lead to unforeseen effects on family life.

The perspective of countries subject to emigration is introduced in Irena Juozeliūnienė's article. She embraces Trost's perspective and traces the development of an outline for migrant family research. The author theorizes family change and coping with hardships by means of ideas of symbolic interactionism and goes one step further to combine this

perspective with theoretical constructs of intergenerational solidarity, kin networks, personal networks and conceptions of family practices: doing and displaying family. The article shows how pragmatic approach, mixed method research and integrative methodology could be applied to study migrant families through the lens of changes, resources, definitions of the situations, and impact management practices.

In the following two articles, studies of families in migration take a comparative perspective. Judy Landesman and Rudy Ray Seward focus on voluntary, employment-related mobility and long-distance, extended-commuting in Israel and U.S. Firstly, the authors demonstrate how long distance commuting is located within the mobility discourse and then present the exploratory study that provide details on patterns of voluntary long-distance, time-extended mobility that does not involve a permanent change of residence or separate residence, and seek to assess the impact of the commutes on couples' satisfaction with their relationship. The comparative analysis of commuters and non-commuters, as well as commuting couples in Israel and U.S. is a significant contribution to the resilience perspective in migrant family research.

The article by Claudia Vogel and Elena Sommer draws attention to the substantial number of transnational child-parent relationships among ethnic German migrants from the former Soviet Union. They focus their attention on financial transfers flows and interpret different patterns in the direction of giving and receiving financial transfers between adult children and parents in transnational versus non-transnational relationships. Their article demonstrates once again how significant analysis of social phenomena is within a larger macro context—the directions of financial transfers are related to the differences in the welfare systems which guarantee different levels of provision for old age.

Summing up, the articles presented in this issue help to answer the questions raised during the CFR seminar in Vilnius. The voluntary long-distance, extended-commuting couples and their family life remind us that families are not confined to one nation state, while multi-directional family support flows extend not only within a nation state, but also between the states. New phenomena in family life emerge due to changes of social and cultural contexts, because these contexts lead to reshaping of parenting, grand-parenting, womanhood constructed in migrants' countries of origin. Multiple audiences in destination countries draw sociologists' interest in migration family displaying, since displaying category contains the meanings of both—personal identity and family connectedness with a new communities. The lived realities of nannies from the Third World prove that in migration studies the categories of "I" and "other," "we" and "others" constitute an important chain in sociological analysis. Moreover, the understanding that the otherness of the "other" could not always be clearly defined and verbalized, creates pre-conditions for analysing migration issues through the lens of silence and memories. The articles presented here reveal new modes of inquiry into the constraints and opportunities of the mixture in bi-national couples, and formulate insights for articulating the theoretical background of and outlines for migrant family research.

~Irena Juozeliūnienė and Jan Trost