

Im-possibilities of turnovers: the moment of entering into politics by Hungarian Conservative Women in 1989

Pető, Andrea

Preprint / Preprint

Sammelwerksbeitrag / collection article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Pető, A. (2005). Im-possibilities of turnovers: the moment of entering into politics by Hungarian Conservative Women in 1989. In Z. Profantová (Ed.), *Malé dejiny veľkých udalostí v Česko(a)Slovensku po roku 1948, 1968, 1989 (The Small Histories of Great Events in Czechoslovakia after 1948, 1968 and 1989)* (pp. 143-156). Bratislava <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-72557-2>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more Information see: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

MALÉ DEJINY VEĽKÝCH UDALOSTÍ I

v Česko(a)Slovensku po roku



Lektorovali:

prof. PhDr. Ján Michálek, DrSc.

doc. PhDr. Jan Pešek, DrSc.

PhDr. Jana Pospíšilová

Editor, vedecký redaktor a zostavovateľ:

Mgr. Zuzana Profantová, CSc.

Jazyková a technická spolupráca:

PhDr. Zora Vanovičová, Edita Vrátna, Milan Procházka

© ÚSTAV ETNOLÓGIE SAV V BRATISLAVE

ÚSTAV PAMÄTI NÁRODA V BRATISLAVE

v spolupráci so

Slovenským národným múzeom v Bratislave

Katedrou etnológie UCM v Trnave

Národopisnou spoločnosťou Slovenska

Vyšlo v rámci grantového projektu VEGA č. 2/3030/23

ISBN: 80-89069-13-4

Vydal: Tomáš Písecký – ARM 333

Editor, vedecký redaktor a zostavovateľ:

Zuzana Profantová

Bratislava 2005

postoj Nemcov voči vlastnej histórii. V Nemecku boli jednými z významných aktérov celospoločenskej diskusie o nacizme a vyrovnávaní sa s touto otázkou historici a univerzitná a akademická obec. Je teda aj na nás, aby sme sa viac pousilovali prispieť do debaty o našej minulosti.

POZNÁMKY

¹ Podrobnejšie sa venujem tejto problematike v pripravovanej dizertačnej práci.

² Považovanie Oral History len za text je istým spôsobom v podstate odsabotovanie využitia naratívov a autobiografie pre precízny historický, sociologický, etnologický či antropologický výskum, a zároveň naháňa vodu na mlyn všetkým odporcom a kritikom tohto druhu výskumu. Som presvedčená, že je potrebná okrem iného aj analýza získaných textov (nielen ich odcitovanie na zvolenom mieste našich prác). Nielen samotný proces zachytenia textov, ale najmä ich následná analýza i celého interview totiž poukazuje na množstvo špecifik, ktoré s týmto druhom výskumu súvisia, a preto musia byť zohľadnené a zachytené aj vo „výstupoch“ z výskumov. O niektorých zo špecifik sa zmienim v ďalšom texte.

³ Konkrétne sú to slová pána S. Krčméryho. Žiada sa poznamenať, že hoci citujem slová, ktoré boli vydané knižne, takmer identickú výpoveď som nahrala počas môjho interview so S. Krčmérom vo februári 2000.

⁴ K tejto problematike pozri napr. MATLIN, M. – STANG, D.: *The Pollyanna principle. Selectivity in language, memory and thought*. Cambridge 1978.

LITERATÚRA

KRČMÉRY, S. – JUKL, V.: *V šľapajách Kolakoviča*. Bratislava 1996, s. 94.

MATLIN, M. – STANG, D.: *The Pollyanna principle. Selectivity in language, memory and thought*. Cambridge 1978.

SCHUTZ, A.: *Collected papers I*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, Hague 1967, s. 9.

SOLŽENICYN, A.: *Súostrovie Gulag*. Tatran, Bratislava 1991, s. 191.

IM-POSSIBILITIES OF TURNOVERS. THE MOMENT OF ENTERING INTO POLITICS BY HUNGARIAN CONSERVATIVE WOMEN IN 1989

ANDREA PETŐ

If we are measuring democracy by women's participation rate in political decision making, we find in the literature that the main obstacles to women's participation in politics are the party structure and the party systems.¹ This paper analyses the historical moment of 1989, when new parties were formed and a new party structure was formed in Hungary, in order to investigate how conservative women experienced the transformation and how they narrated their experiences.² The paper explores how conservative women got into politics without any institutional background in 1989.³

The sample

For my research I selected the life-story interview method and combined it with a theme-oriented questionnaire. I interviewed 25 Hungarian politicians, active, conservative, and female, who represent different generations in the capital and also in other Hungarian urban centers. The women's conservatism is manifested in their political activities in women's NGOs or foundations and in conservative political parties. The interviewed women were active members or supporters of the different national conservative parties such as *Magyar Demokrata Fórum* (MDF, Hungarian Democratic Forum), *Keresztény Demokrata Néppárt*, (KDNP, Christian Democratic People's Party), *Magyar Demokrata Néppárt* (MDNP, Hungarian Democratic People's Party), *Fiatal Demokraták* (FIDESZ, Young Democrats), *Magyar és Élet Igazság Pártja* (MIÉP, Party of Hungarian Truth and Life), *Független Kisgazda Párt* (FKGP, Smallholders' Party). By analyzing the different frames and aspects of narrativity, we get to understand how their social identities were formed. My purpose was to reconstruct the way in which the women formulate their political views on different symbolic issues of gender politics.

The method

In my work I am using the method of description to represent the different standpoints.⁴ I wanted to know, on the one hand, what made these women work full-time or part-time as politicians in political parties whose official rhetoric does not support women doing politics in general, and, on the other hand, how ideology operated on the individual level. During my work methodological principles of oral history such as empathy and empowerment had to be revised,

especially when working with “benign memories” of women on the extreme right who spoke about their family background or expressed racist views.⁵ I had also to keep in mind the methodological problems arising from researching a “politically resistant community”.⁶ Through their life-stories we get to know the women’s narrated experience, the ways in which the specific narrativity constructed their social identities, and how the different levels of conservative identity serve as a site of women’s agency. My analyses of the life-story narratives of politically active, conservative women are based on the following questions: why did they join in politics, and how did they experience the world of politics?

The birth of new parties and movements

The conservative women’s associations were banned between 1945 and 1951 and no political parties were operating between 1948 and 1989.⁷ Studying conservative women in politics, it is impossible to identify either personal or institutional continuity. This statement at first sight would reinforce the theory of “immaculate conception”, so frequent in the varied literature on social movements. Verta Taylor, in her pioneering study on the periods between the waves of American feminism, revealed the inaccuracy of the “immaculate conception” theory, pointing out the factors ensuring the survival of the movement in its invisible or inactive periods.⁸ A supportive network, which is a key factor in renewing operation, only survived in clerical institutions in traces. But the two other elements set forth by Taylor, the maintenance of aims and tactics and the survival of collective identity, worked chiefly by way of cultural means. And if that is accomplished in the family, it is vital for the survival of Hungarian female conservatism.

The new historic situation is to be mentioned as an explanation. The élite participating in the political transition was permissive towards women’s participation, but at the same time drew its limits as well.

There are lots of women in the MDF. Just for the movement, the activity. It meant a tremendous, but unprofessional force. We made armbands, posted letters, while the men sat and held discussions. We came impulsively, unorganized in great masses and wanted to become a professional party. It became neither professional nor a party. And the movement was killed. 19⁹

Participants, though not on a generation basis, agreed upon the experience of marginality and discrimination.

Conservative women entering politics in 1989

It is difficult to explain why one woman becomes passionately political while another with relatively similar background and emotional setup does not. With conservative women I am trying to survey how they narrate their involvement in politics, what narrative framework they find appropriate to describe this

personal and unique experience, or the steps leading up to their decision to join politics. This analysis also provides an answer to the question of the formation of political identities.

Entering politics has changed women’s lives to various extents: some experiences it as dramatic conversion, some as pure accident but all of them assess it as a dramatic change of their lives.¹⁰ Our question is not only the extent of change but how it occurs, in values, in individual relationships or in other things as well. The most significant is the change in the character of narration because those standing up for the “good” cause are characterized by an unrelenting service of this “cause”.

Women describe their participation in politics in three different ways.¹¹

The first narrative strategy is a *selective adaptation* narrative. This is mostly typical of the traditional conservative discourse. This type of narrative requires a certain ideological flexibility. It is also a political recruiting means suitable for accessing the largest number of women from the mainstream. Those women who describe their entry into the world of politics based on a selective adaptation strategy do so with reference to their “collective identity”, that is, they have become part of something and thus are capable of saving their collective identity. This identity is fragmented and relies on the partial and individual acceptance of values and aims selected by their own ideals. Tension between the official, established and the individual interpretation can be rather productive. For instance, a long-standing complaint of women is that their party is too male-dominated and oriented. Women can achieve their programme only partly within such circumstances and are consequently dissatisfied with their opportunities. Conservatism provides an opportunity for ideological flexibility anyway. This is a key for understanding why conservative women’s movements are so popular and also why women only partly satisfied with the woman policy of their own party remain in that particular party.

But in the family I started to be engaged actively in politics. I don’t know how it started. In 1988 I read in Magyar Nemzet¹² that you could join the MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) if you had the proper references. Back then I didn’t know anyone. An acquaintance of mine did know someone, though. My parents did not take part on that level. They’re members, too. They joined in 1990, during the taxi-drivers’ blockade, because they felt the government needed support. That was the most decisive experience of my life when I started going to the MDF. Up to that point my life was just, you know, from one day to the next. I minded my own business. Going to the theatre was a big thing. I used to go a lot to the theatre. But my life has changed. I’ve become terribly busy. I used to be the president of the youth organization of the Democratic Forum, now I only give them a hand. I manage the pensioners’ club instead. In 1993 it occurred to us why there was no pensioners’ club. Right then I founded IDF (the youth organization). Don’t ask me why it had to be me. 16

It wasn't like a sudden burst of activity for me to be engaged in politics, I just kept drifting along. Mainly because of my acquaintances. There were quite a few Fidesz-people among them and it had an effect on me. In 1990 I certainly voted for them. First because of the company, not because of a consciousness or a resolution. Step by step it dawned on me that I liked this and I felt increasingly at home. It wasn't a conscious choice. I lived in the suburbs, in a peaceful neighbourhood, stuck there with the two kids. I've been kind of left out of the political transitions, started to realize what was going on when there were no more nappies around. 12

I got a phone call from the KDNP. They told me to accept the candidateship for the elections. My husband was ill by then. I called him to tell him I had refused. You must accept it, he said. He was fantastic, incredible. Even Churchill started his career with no experience, he said. It was horrible, I started off to the great big unknown. All men around. But they appreciated me. I was a total stranger. Used to campaign from 7 in the morning till midnight. I've achieved good results, too. I felt there was nothing much to represent. What I had learnt, though, I can represent very efficiently. 10

The second type of narrative is the *strategy of resignation* which relies on a knowledge of discrimination. This narrative strategy is typical of the emancipated conservative group of women.

My husband's a FIDESZ bigwig. Originally we joined the MDF, but the kids got ill when it was founded, and of course my husband left to be present. When he came home he said, "What a shame you couldn't be there!" 6

Among spiritual conservative stories we come across the third type of narrative: *stories of conversion*.

Stories of conversion are narratives which describe a sudden change in the individual's life. This change generally occurs by some external influence after negative sequences in life and provides a purpose and significance. This is a basic motif in Christian culture and a frequently used metaphor. Women were seldom given the chance to recount their lives, since their field of activity had almost never been considered important; therefore when describing their own experience they borrowed ready-made phrases and pre-fabricated narrative frameworks. Stories of conversion are no exception to that, either. In the 19th century, before the enfranchisement of women, stories of conversion were the only form of female life-experience to become public. Women established religious schools, organized collections of donation and founded missionary communities following their conversion, that is, they could legitimately be active in public. At the same time the experience of conversion gave women a chance to be active in public and also to prepare others for the advent of conversion. Together with Brereton we might interpret stories of conversion as a socially accepted opportunity that enabled women to act publicly within an environment and ideological frame (like Christian fundamentalism) which otherwise wouldn't

hear of supporting any female activity other than working in the family or serving the husband.¹³ 20th century stories of conversion follow the same narrative pattern but conversion itself may take two directions. With the acquisition of suffrage, the introduction of divorce and the increase of female employment the leading role of man as economic and moral head of the family has started to crumble. Almost each of the interviewed women belonging to Hungarian conservative groups had a conversion element in their description of entering politics, but it was mostly typical of the spiritual conservative group.

Conversion, however, does not necessarily go hand in hand with institutional membership. On the contrary, one may not only enter politics by acquiring institutional membership but the refusal of such a membership may lead to a kind of spiritual identification. Conversion is a public event followed by rituals. It may come about in the limelight, like at a political rally, for the purpose of creating a common identity, but it may be of private character, too. Conservative women are averse to big gestures, large, dramatic actions, and they do not need the reinforcement of safety given by their own community.

It didn't happen overnight. I have always known who I am, I have grown up in a decisive family atmosphere. What I had seen was always explained to me, so there was no sudden waking up to the truth when it could be talked about freely. The year of 1989 was spent in ecstasy, it had a fantastic atmosphere of liberation. I remember the Imre Nagy funeral, we were standing there, I'd made a rosette of the national tricolour and a mourning-band. I repeated the words of the oath, saying never more. I was thinking of my father, wondering if he was proud of me being there, to fulfill something, to be there. 3

Rationale of entering politics

Returning to an earlier question, why one woman joins a conservative political party and why the other does not, we are going to refine it further by asking: if both joined the same party, why do they describe their decision in an entirely different narrative frame? For quite some time sociologists have used the "brain-washing" argument for the explanation of conversion, and it has long dominated explanations. Even today it is often declared that conservative women are "deceived" or have a "false consciousness".

The second, so far rather popular explanation concerning the reason why someone chooses a life radically different from the previous one enlists personality disorders, such as respect for authoritarianism, the desire to be subordinated in an insecure society. Those possessing a "searching" type of identity are specially responsive to the experience of conversion.

József Antall¹⁴ has been my most influential political experience. I felt that his ideas concerned me. His personal attraction has decided my political side. Were it not for Antall, I would have picked the smallholders or Csurka.¹⁵ They are sometimes right, too, but Antall's personality had this special effect on me. 18

The third explanatory frame relates political activity to personal conflicts, marital or family problems, i.e. the individual wants to decrease tension by way of conversion. The explanation is rendered authentic by the converted person emphasizing the dramatic significance of these conflicts as opposed to the inner peace after conversion.

In 1994 everyone died around me. My father and mother passed away within six weeks. On the 30th of June, 1995 my phone rang, saying "Torgyán¹⁶ is waiting for you in Parliament". I remember because the 30th of June is my daughter's birthday. So he wanted a personal counsellor in return for a seat in Parliament. Well, I thought it's a long time until the elections...I'd known him for 16 years, we worked in the same lawyer's office, I used to finish his cases. I became a candidate in Újpest,¹⁷ where I was born. My parents had been old friends with Torgyán, his wife and my father had the same music teacher, well before their marriage. That phone call decided my life. I

The fourth frame of explanation, which is a structural frame, analyses social characteristics which lead the individual with a given position in the social structure to conversion. Here it is mostly about poor, marginalized and in some cases lonely people who find a long desired community this way. However, our interviewees had not been in marginal positions, not even before entering politics.

The association was established in 1992. It is about charity. We don't want to be involved in politics. We help wherever we can. We haven't got money. We address the private sector. I work in communication as a managing director. I know the ways and tricks how to get to people. We have ideas about what we want, and have got the means. There have always been supporters. We organize high level cultural events. I'm happy and satisfied. Never felt I had a disadvantage as a woman. Personally I had an impression that my success had to do with being a woman. My appearance and personality. 23

The fifth explanatory argument stresses social influence as one element affecting conversion. Most importantly, social networks forwarding information and anything else to be known about conversion. Social networks also motivate the individual to approach a situation which then radically alters the life of a politically active woman.

My husband used to belong to the workers' council. I just sat down and composed the statutes for them. I sort of got into it, we had fun. It was for him I joined, too. 14

The Smallholders' Party, I joined it in January, 2000, because Torgyán said a chief attorney not being a party member was against the rules. It was a take it or leave it situation, no chance to choose, so I joined. I

Politics came up with the 1990 general elections. My mother took me to see Mrs. Szilágyi Teréz Császár.¹⁸ No one knew a word of French in the whole headquarters, they were rushing to and fro with a French fax to find someone to translate it. Later I worked at the foreign affairs department, then with Antall as government counsellor, I prepared his trips abroad, drafted up projects and so on. I kind of drifted into the situation. 8

Women belonging to the spiritual conservative trend lay special emphasis on the dramatic nature of conversion, which reforms the whole personality.¹⁹

Before 1988 I didn't care about politics. I had no definite system of ideals. Things happened to me on the physical level. The decisive event in my life was my experience of God, first when I realized He didn't merely exist on paper, second, when I found Him watching over us and teaching us through trials. Nothing happening to us is ever accidental. This recognition of God has changed me completely, I didn't want to leave home for two years. That was my mental and spiritual re-birth. That's the only thing worth mentioning in my life. Being directly spoken to by God. He appeared to me unmistakably on the 14th of February, 1994. I had a radiating experience of God. 7

The narrative sets things in order in a life otherwise chaotic and disorderly. In the course of the narrative the radically changed identity is invested with a different significance after a rational calculation. These stories, however, follow acquired and socially accepted patterns of narrative.

The stories of conversion

Analysing stories of conversion we are to acknowledge four characteristics.²⁰

The first is the question of biographical reconstruction. With their conversion women joined the "true" cause (professed "true" by themselves), consequently they manipulate their biography to point into that direction, omitting details which would possibly decrease the dramatic transformative potential. It is in itself a *Bildungsroman* presenting the course of an individual.

The second characteristic of conversion stories is that they are told with expressions available to them, most frequently with the terminology of conversion available in the Christian culture.

By then we were involved in politics at home with my husband. How awful, I thought, that there was no MIÉP in our town. For me Csurka alone personified MIÉP. Come on, I said to my husband, let's go and see Csurka, he needs help to make him popular around here. They held a national assembly in the summer of 1994, it was very difficult to get into there. I won't tell you what tricks I used to get there, past three security guards. Csurka was coming out right then, talking to Torgyán, who asked who this pretty girl was waiting for. I said I was waiting for Csurka. So Torgyán said, "What pretty party members you have!". Csurka went out to see him off and then came back saying, "So tell me what you came for". I told him quickly. When my daughter was born, the doctor in the delivery-room asked me if I believed in God. "Because God wants you to do something completely different, something you never did before", he said. I was told there and then on the delivery-bed what to do. Csurka said they were going to test me, and also said, "Go ahead, found a local party organization. Sell as many copies of Magyar Fórum²¹ as you can." And in October 1994 Csurka came to visit us and held a rally. I worked a lot in the party, they said I should be a leader. Csurka said a good leader is one who surrounds himself with more intelligent people. My background is

solid, I am supported by doctors quite well. It also showed at the elections in health issues that I had a solid background. 11

The third characteristic of conversion stories is the abandonment of analogic thinking. As the experience is unique and it is about finding Truth, it cannot be compared to anything else.

1989 was a decisive period. The first 15th of March. The first 23d of October. The experience, the joy, the expectation and hope that something is changing at last. It was nice. 15

The fourth characteristic typical of conversion stories is the necessity to carry on activism, that is those who are still astray receive guidance from the convert.

I've read the Lakitelek declaration²² in Magyar Nemzet. I felt an urge to join. I was trying to find how to become a member (of the MDF). At last I managed to find a member in our house who signed my application. Antall made his debut in Ugocsa cinema.²³ I found Dénes Csengey attractive, too. That was a "wow-effect" for me. We speak the same language with these people. The core of the movement lived in Márvány street. 1988-1989 was fantastic. I took part actively in 1990. Until 1991 it was wonderful. Csengey²⁴ was a true revolutionary, which fascinated me. He was not made for this world, he couldn't stop, although practising power is mostly about compromise. He was a stranger to that world. I loved that period with its revolutionary spirit and energy. Lezsák's²⁵ a real popular leader. 19

Stories of conversion, however, describe such a process of empowerment in which women symbolically support a man-dominated family structure but acquire power on their "own". Within the interpretation framework "men are men and women are women"; they question the dominant male culture from within by stepping out in public.

Another conversion story of the 20th century, besides the religious Christian one, is that of feminism. This type of conversion is also a reaction to social changes and cultural conflicts. The vocabulary of conversion stories is used to describe this experience, as the American women's movement since its birth has had a close relation to various Protestant churches. Betty Friedan's textbook can equally be regarded as a conversion story and its readers receive precise instructions and a proper vocabulary for expressing the basic feeling of a woman "interned in a comfortable concentration camp". The "wow-effect" when someone reading about another person's conversion, on the way to her own conversion suddenly realizes that she is to change her life radically, is the common point relating the two types, religious and lay conversion stories. This "wow-effect" may also lead to uncritical self-identification.

When examining conversion stories it needs to be underlined again and

again that given a particular story told by a woman we must never ever make efforts to find out what happened "in reality". The narrator's internal point of view is to be understood, how she herself explains the change in her life, what factors have caused that particular change.

The experience of discrimination as a political mobilization force

Rosalind Bunt has pointed out that the key issue of identity policy is representation. It is first determined by what identities appear in culturally and otherwise defined social space and secondly by who represents what policy, who talks about what in public on our behalf. Only then can any political action or movement be effective if it represents the participants' own identity, since that position in society is the root of identity. Conservative women mentioned their experience of discrimination almost without exception, but that never appeared in their political rhetorics.

I've never had any disadvantage of being a woman. I wouldn't have let myself, no! I've done everything with three little children. Before that I had only given lectures at university. Just look at my husband, he had an easy job. It is self-evident that it's pretty tough for women. The operation of society is motivated by money. Companies don't give a shit about politics, they simply don't employ women because they're unreliable. Women shouldn't work out of economic necessity, that would be the solution. But 99 % of women work out of economic necessity. 6

In this rather typical argument the experience of individual but gender-related discrimination is not connected with what is called "feminist consciousness" in literature. Discrimination and disadvantage is a general experience. However, the rhetorical strategy used by conservative women denies the existence of a general structural phenomenon, yet the individual experience outscored the expected narrative.

It goes with my job and in politics, too, there are plenty of men around me. I haven't been thinking about women's roles. It happens that women get less money for the same job. Society's just like that. 16

In Hungary there's a rule of men, that's a fact. That's not the problem, that's the consequence. Women are not appreciated. It needs time. Men are getting feminine, women are getting masculine. There are intelligent women employed at the multinational companies, I admit. Those women who deserve it become bosses. Today it is somewhat easier for women than it used to be. Of course it is different in a God-forsaken little village. 4

I am often handicapped just because I'm a woman. My articles are often left out. Men are in a majority here, too. Men throw tantrums when their articles are left out, I can't. 2

Equal rights, there's no such thing. Women are supposed to prove everything three times. This is a man's world. A woman is supposed to perform everything three times better if she wants to achieve something. To know is not enough. 18

Conservative women and their parties

It is difficult to stay in FIDESZ as a woman. The younger a man is, the less he appreciates that a woman is capable of anything else than producing children. As men grow older, they get to appreciate women's competence. 12

It was easier while I had nothing to do with women in the workers' councils. When I started organizing something about women's decision, I was immediately given the red light. 14

There's no room for intelligent women beside Torgyán. 8

There's no asserting women's interests in the MDF. Men are old-fashioned. "We're the exception". Our women's organization is pro-man. There are men participants. 17.

We have seen that the experience of discrimination is present in the life of almost each woman. But the explanation of the individual experience happens within various frames: with traditional, emancipated or spiritual ones. Their decision, why they made up their minds to enter the male-dominated world of politics, has not been explained by any of them as an intention to fight against discrimination experienced as women. Organizations in principle should meet their members' requirements and consequently be able to maintain their dedication. Belonging to an organization also helps the individual to carry on, because in times of conflicts serving the great common "cause" may come in handy. Belonging to an organization should also be a source of pleasure, but it seems that parties give less than pleasure for politically active conservative women.

Considering the fact that women members of Parliament are a minority, it follows that women members representing women's interests often run the risk of marginalization within their own parliamentary faction. This happens above all when representations of women's interests are not shared by the whole of the society. We should not forget either about the generally prevailing stereotype that considers politics a forbidden territory for women. Consequently those women who might win a seat in parliament or obtain any representative function, tend to keep away from representing women's issues publicly as that would reinforce their secondary position.

We women are not just for beauty. We are to represent vital questions because women are more genuinely attentive to those than men. If a man is a husband and father with a family, he may understand this problem, too. What I'm driving at isn't that in the women's movement everyone should be equal, I didn't even think about that. I was

more concerned with the introduction of full-time motherhood. There are lots of women in the campaign rallies of MIÉP, about half the crowd. They actively help in the local party organizations, too. Because MIÉP's program deeply concerns Christian conservative Hungarian women. Globalization disrupts the family. That also concerns women. Women are interested in the wave-trough of demography. MIÉP deals with just what concerns women. The well-being of my future family, our Hungarian fate. This is all a question of money. And in many families the cashiers are women. 22

A woman's engagement in politics is an internal urge. I don't believe women have much to expect here. 19

Women today still live in feudalism. Under serious oppression. They are to perform perfectly everywhere. They are on edge both physically and mentally. There are no women in politics because there's a rule of men here. Men decide, most of all stupid men decide about clever women. Equal rights education should be started at school, or even at kindergarten. Men are no fools to give up power! Life's just like that. 2

Conclusions

Conservatism appeared as culture and the diversity of interpretations became a built-in element of conservatism. The institutional system is still being constructed, which will last long after the expiration of "foundation fever", together with the remaining capital of networks and relations. The identity, principles and future political vision of the conservative women's movement are "under construction" for the time being, therefore it is very important to study them now. Women's movements mobilize women along cultural and symbolic lines that are related to identity issues. Ideals, values and their contents define who belongs to a certain social group, with the members' self-assessment and self-positioning on the political spectre. The members share their views on various issues, even those concerning intimacy, like love, sexuality, behavioural and dressing codes.

An interesting aspect of conservative women's organizations today is that they reach back for symbols and legitimization to discourse patterns of pre-1945 Hungary, an aspect which is also interesting in the framework of resistance to communism. During communism, stereotypical women's characteristics such as intimacy, sensitivity, or family-centeredness were performed to resist a "statist feminism" whose rhetoric was aimed against exactly these characteristics.²⁶ Private resistance to communism was based on restoring so-called "female virtues" in the family according to the cult of the Virgin Mary and it aimed at preserving family values in private life against the pseudo-equality of state socialism.²⁷ The paradox, how a woman might be active in public when the conservative discourse expects them to stay passive, was solved with the post-1990 revival of the cult of the Virgin Mary, which celebrated normative motherhood.²⁸

NOTES

¹ MATLAND, R. E., MONTGOMERY K. A.: "Recruiting Women to National Legislatures: A General Framework with Applications to Post-Communist Democracies" In: *Women's Access to Power in Post-Communist Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. 19–42., and WILCOX C., STARK B., THOMAS S., "Popular Support for Electing Women in Eastern Europe" In: *Women's Access to Power in Post-Communist Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. 43–62.

² See more on this: PETŐ, A.: *Napasszonyok és Holdkisaszonyok. A mai magyar konzervatív női politizálás alaktana*, (Women of Sun and Girls of Moon. Morphology of Contemporary Hungarian Women Doing Politics) Budapest, Balassi, 2003.

³ See PETŐ, A.: "Hungarian Women in Politics" In: Joan Scott et al. eds., *Transitions, Environments, Translations: The Meanings of Feminism in Contemporary Politics*, New York 1997, 153–161.

⁴ I followed the methodology of GINSBURG F.: "The Case of Mistaken Identity: Problems in Representing Women on the Right" In: BRETTEL C.B. ed., *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography*, Westport 1993, 163–176.

⁵ See BLEE K. M.: „Evidence, Empathy and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan" In: *Journal of American History*, 80 (1993), 596–606.

⁶ See. KLATCH, R. E.: "The Methodological Problems of Studying a Politically Resistant Community" in: Robert G. Burgess ed., *Studies in Qualitative Methodology: A Research Annual*, 1, London, Greenwich 1988, 73–88.

⁷ See PETŐ, A.: *Frauenvereine in Ungarn (1945–1951). Vom Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs bis zur Zerstörung des Vereinswesens*, In: Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann and Claire Duchens eds., *Nach dem Krieg. Frauenleben und Geschlechterkonstruktionen in Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Herbolzheim 2000, 138–154; PETŐ, A. *Hungarian Women in Politics 1945–1951*, New York 2003.

⁸ TAYLOR, V.: „Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance" In *American Sociological Review* 1989. Vol. 54. 761–775.

⁹ Number of the interviewee.

¹⁰ On the theory of conversion and on the literature of „conversion" see: SNOW D., MACHALEK R.: „The Sociology of Conversion" In: *Annual Review of Sociology* 1984. 10. 167–190.

¹¹ BLEE, op. cit. 1996. p. 688.

¹² The conservative daily

¹³ BRERETON V. L.: *From Sin to Salvation: Stories of Women's Conversions, 1800 to the Present*. 1991. Published by herself. From now on I follow her arguments, mainly. 89–121.

¹⁴ The first Prime Minister of Hungary elected in 1990 from the MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum)

¹⁵ István Csurka, member of MDF later the founder of the MIÉP

¹⁶ József Torgyán, leader of the FKGP

¹⁷ A district of Budapest.

¹⁸ Politician of Christian Democratic Party

¹⁹ BOOTH W. C.: „The Rhetoric of Fundamentalist Narratives" in *Fundamentalism Comprehended* eds. MARTY M. E., R. APPLEBY S.: Chicago, The University of Chicago Press 1995. 367–393.

²⁰ SNOW, MACHALEK (1984). 173–175.

²¹ weekly of MDF later of Csurka

²² Founding document of the MDF

²³ A cinema in the 12th district of Budapest.

²⁴ Founder of the MDF, writer.

²⁵ Founder of MDF

²⁶ See PETŐ, A.: "As He Saw Her": Gender Politics in Secret Party Reports in Hungary during the 1950s" In: *CEU History Department Working Paper Series*, 1, Budapest 1994, 107–121.

²⁷ See PETŐ, A.: „Phantasien. Europas Töchter und „Damen" in der Vergangenheit" In: Silke Roth and Ingrid Miethe eds., *Europas Töchter. Traditionen, Erwartungen und Strategien von Frauenbewegungen in Europa*, Opladen 2003, 21–31.

²⁸ See PETŐ, A.: A „Napba öltözött asszonyok." A (szélső)jobboldali magyar női politizálás ideológiai hátteréhez" (Women Dressed in Sun. The Ideology of Extreme Right Politics of Hungary), In: CSEPELI GY. ÖRKÉNY A. eds., *Gyűlölet és Politika*, Budapest 2002, 303–338.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BLEE K. M.: „Evidence, Empathy and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan" In: *Journal of American History*, 1993. 80. 596–606.

BOOTH W. C.: „The Rhetoric of Fundamentalist Narratives" in *Fundamentalism Comprehended* eds. MARTY M. E., R. APPLEBY S. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press 1995. 367–393.

BRERETON V. L.: *From Sin to Salvation: Stories of Women's Conversions, 1800 to the Present*. 1991. Published by herself..

GINSBURG F.: "The Case of Mistaken Identity: Problems in Representing Women on the Right" In: BRETTEL C.B. ed., *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography*, Westport 1993, 163–176.

KLATCH, R. E.: "The Methodological Problems of Studying a Politically Resistant Community" in: Robert G. Burgess ed., *Studies in Qualitative Methodology: A Research Annual*, 1, London, Greenwich 1988, 73–88.

MATLAND, R. E.: MONTGOMERY K. A.: "Recruiting Women to National Legislatures: A General Framework with Applications to Post-Communist Democracies" In: *Women's Access to Power in Post-Communist Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. 19–42.

PETŐ, A.: "As He Saw Her": Gender Politics in Secret Party Reports in Hungary during the 1950s" In: *CEU History Department Working Paper Series*, 1, Budapest 1994, 107–121.

PETŐ, A.: "Hungarian Women in Politics" In: Joan Scott et al. eds., *Transitions, Environments, Translations: The Meanings of Feminism in Contemporary Politics*, New York 1997, 153–161.

PETŐ, A.: *Frauenvereine in Ungarn (1945–1951). Vom Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs bis zur Zerstörung des Vereinswesens*, In: Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann and Claire Duchens eds., *Nach dem Krieg. Frauenleben und Geschlechterkonstruktionen in Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Herbolzheim 2000, 138–154;

PETŐ, A.: A „Napba öltözött asszonyok." A (szélső)jobboldali magyar női politizálás ideológiai hátteréhez" (Women Dressed in the Sun. The Ideology of Extreme Right Politics of Hungary), In: CSEPELI GY. ÖRKÉNY A. eds., *Gyűlölet és Politika*, Budapest, 2002, 303–338.

PETŐ, A.: „Phantasien. Europas Töchter und „Damen“ in der Vergangenheit“ In: Silke Roth and Ingrid Miethe eds., *Europas Töchter. Traditionen, Erwartungen und Strategien von Frauenbewegungen in Europa*, Opladen 2003, 21–31.

PETŐ, A.: *Hungarian Women in Politics 1945–1951*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2003.

PETŐ, A.: *Napasszonyok és Holdkisasszonyok. A mai magyar konzervatív női politizálás alaktana*, (Women of Sun and Girls of Moon. Morphology of Contemporary Hungarian Women Doing Politics) Budapest, Balassi, 2003

SNOW D., MACHALEK R.: „The Sociology of Conversion“ In: *Annual Review of Sociology* 1984. 10. 167–190.

TAYLOR, V.: „Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance“ In *American Sociological Review* 1989. 54. 761–775.

WILCOX C., STARK B., THOMAS S.: „Popular Support for Electing Women in Eastern Europe“ In: *Women's Access to Power in Post-Communist Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. 43–62.

SPÔSOBY PREŽÍVANIA KRÍZ PODĽA VÝSKUMOV PAMÄTI ŽIEN

MARTA BOTIKOVÁ

Môj príspevok je koncipovaný na základe materiálu, získaného výskumami v rokoch 2000–2003 v rámci projektu *Pamäť žien – za socializmu*. O tomto projekte som informovala na stránkach Slovenského národopisu (BOTIKOVÁ 2001:244–246).

Myslím, že v súčasnosti biografická metóda ako spôsob získavania údajov, podobne ako prípadové štúdie, nevyvolávajú metodické, resp. metodologické pochybnosti o ich spoľahlivosti v etnologickom bádani. Medzinárodná aj naša literatúra o jej použití či využití sa stáva takmer neprehľadnou (BEŇUŠKOVÁ 1996, RAMŠAK 2003, VANĚK 2004, HLŔŠKOVÁ 1998, HERZÁNOVÁ 2004b).

Tento príspevok nemá teoretický charakter, ale chce na konkrétnom materiáli ukázať využitie biografickej metódy pri štúdiu „malých dejín“, resp. každodennosti. Autobiografické rozprávania obsahujú dve základné roviny: na jednej strane odrážajú historicko-spoločenskú skutočnosť, na druhej strane subjektivitu svojich tvorcov (HERZÁNOVÁ 2004a:2).

Cieľom tejto práce je na základe ženských biografických rozprávání ukázať, ako sa v priebehu života ženy stretávali a vyrovnávali so zložitými situáciami, resp. krízami, presnejšie, ako o týchto situáciách v autobiografických rozprávaniach hovoria (pozri tiež HLŔŠKOVÁ 1999).

Spôsoby riešenia kríz, ktoré narátorky opisujú v príbehoch, boli volené podľa konkrétnych situácií, zdanlivo „za pochodu“ a „ad hoc“. Predpokladám, že tieto spôsoby ženy vyhľadávali a nachádzali v intenciách kultúrnej výbavy, v zásobníku naučených, získaných postupov a hodnôt, ktoré boli výrazom ich kultúrnej výbavy, resp. spôsobu života.

Vyvstáva otázka – čo je kríza, ťažká situácia v živote? Predovšetkým budem za takú považovať situáciu, ktorú sama rozprávačka označila za krízovú (k tejto otázke pozri aj KUSÁ 1996). Až v druhom slede sa pozriem na situácie, ktoré sa zdajú z môjho „objektivistického“ pohľadu ťažké, tiesnivé, zmätočné, ohlasujúce poruchu fungovania akýchkoľvek procesov. V závere môžem porovnať, či bol medzi ich a mojím vnímaním rozdiel. Nepredpokladám veľmi významný rozdiel napriek tomu, že som mladšia ako moje informátorky a nemusela som riešiť podobné okolnosti, aké opisujú ony. Pochádzam z veľmi podobného, niekedy totožného kultúrneho prostredia ako moje spolubesedníčky, a tiež som si v procese socializácie osvojovala kultúrnu výbavu podobnú tej, o ktorú sa opierajú ony.

Cieľom predkladanej analýzy je ukázať aj rôznorodosť historickej epochy,