

MECHANISMS OF INVISIBILIZATION OF WOMEN IN THE VELVET REVOLUTION

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Abstract

The thesis introduces mechanisms of invisibilization of women in the Velvet Revolution. Based on narrative fields that emerged in the oral history interviews with sixteen women active in the revolution I trace how they understood their own activities and the influence of the revolution on their later lives. At the same time these narrative fields offer a look at those mechanisms that have contributed to invisibility to women in these historical events. These processes operate in two time levels - at the time of the revolution and later when creating history. I focus on the first level and based on the research findings I argue that the main mechanisms of invisibilization of women were: infrapolitics, professional occupation, geographical location, attributing charisma to people and the process of distribution of public offices. In the broader context these findings challenge understanding of private, public and alternative public sphere and contribute to the discussion about a lack of women in the post-state socialist countries.

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Where Have Women of the Velvet Revolution Gone?

Options are fifty-fifty. I will keep quiet and not only the 30th anniversary of the revolution will not be celebrated at all, moreover nobody would ask this question again. I will not keep quiet and Mária Filková, who besides other things provided for instance the roof above new democracy fighters' heads, will end up on non-recyclable history dump; Soňa Szomolányi will remind of her knowledge, that contributed to creation of ideas' basis and university, with me - if we survive - on a bench at Danube, if such benches survive as well. And me? Sure, guys like to forget that when there was a need to fight, manage, establish, solve, delegate, write, they needed to find the last but one anarchist who independently of them not only thought about back-wheels but for instance established independent trade unions and built up independent third sector or publishing house, or a magazine, or independent law advisory service for poor people.

Zuzana Szatmáry (2009)

Introduction

Images of women and men standing together on tribunes of the Velvet Revolution, like the one above presents, is hard to find. Stories about female and male colleagues leading the revolution together is almost impossible to find as well. At least in the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia. Images, books, articles, documentaries talk about "men of November" and present the change of the regime as men-made historical events.

It was the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution when these stories about the male revolutionaries accumulated and provoked a reaction from an author Inge Hrubaničová (2009) who wrote an open letter to all "potential women of November" and asked them to speak up. Her letter, published in one of the Slovak daily newspapers, made me think about the question "Where are women of November 1989?" and I provided a brief media analysis which suggested that there were almost no women involved in the revolutionary activities. But media were wrong. It has become obvious after the feminist publishing and educational project *Aspekt* adopted Hrubaničová's initiative and published reconstructed experiences of 28 women from November 1989¹ (*Aspekt*, 2009). It has become more obvious after I was looking for women active in the Velvet Revolution and number of names from different cities has been increasing. I realized this is only the beginning.

While interviewing sixteen women from various parts of Slovakia, in different age, with different education, profession and occupation in the revolutionary social movements², I found out women were active from the beginning of the revolution. From the first meeting in Bratislava on November 19, 1989 where police brutality at the student demonstration in Prague on November 17 was discussed. (Antalová, 1998; Žatkuliak, 1999) On this meeting the movement Public against Violence (*Verejnost' proti násiliu*, later in the text VPN) was established, the same movement that

1 Two of them have participated also in this research.

2 There were women from the student, environmental, Hungarian-minority, punk, theatrical movements and the movement Public against Violence that was later transformed into a political party.

was officially registered by Mária Filková who provided also permissions for all the famous meetings on Bratislava squares to increase security of attending people. Among first people speaking at public meetings were former actress Magda Vášáryová in Bratislava, Ľuba Balškovičová in Košice and other women in different cities. It was a woman - Zuzana Szatmáry - who initiated the independent trade unions and provided her colleagues with information from abroad. It was Katarína Šimončíčová who talked to all the people calling to Bratislava VPN center and asked for help. But the Velvet Revolution went further from the borders of Prague and Bratislava, though this fact is usually overlooked. In Nitra Darina Kárová and Lujza Bakošová established the first independent newspaper in the Slovak part of the country, Júlia Krpelanová from Prievidza was among those who founded Teachers' Forum aimed to develop new educational programs and standards. On November 18, in the town called Šal'a Eleonóra Sándorová participated in the meeting where Independent Hungarian Initiative (Nezávislá maďarská iniciatíva, later in the text MNI) was established, later registered as the first political party after the revolution. In other cities and towns, villages, factories women participated in foundation of local VPN centers, in those places where the connection with Prague was better than with Bratislava they founded centers of Civic Forum (Občanské Fórum, later in the text OF) - the Czech revolutionary movement.

So, where have all these women gone? With the thesis I want to contribute to answering this question. As a method I have chosen oral history "because it creates new material about women, validates women's experience, enhances communication among women, discovers women's roots, and develops a previously denied sense of continuity" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 126). But to claim that women were historical subjects in the Velvet Revolution is not enough. My aim is to go further "to a reevaluation of established standards of historical significance" (Scott, 1998, p. 17). So the objective of the thesis goes beyond looking for "women of the revolution" with understanding how their "invisibilization" has worked on different levels. Interviewees in this research are not token women but those who shaped the events and my objective is to restore their agency that have been faded away by mechanisms I describe in the analytical part.

Significance of this research lies in (at least) four levels. The first one is very simple though important - those women who contributed to establishment of democratic regime of the country deserve to be part of history equally as their male colleagues. The second one plays role in creation of identities of girls and women in the country, because as Gerda Lerner (1993) says, when women recognize their history, they go through change. The last two reasons overpass borders of the country because I argue that findings of this research can contribute to two ongoing feminist discussions - the discussion about public and private and the discussion about a lack of women in politics in post-state socialist countries.

Therefore I start the thesis with theoretical chapter which provides brief introduction to the discussion about a lack of women politicians in post-state socialist countries, focusing on Slovak situation. Then I present different concepts of private, public and alternative public sphere which will serve as a basis for placing activities of my interviewees in the broader context and help me to explain how the findings challenge some of these concepts. The last part of the theoretical chapter explains the concepts of infrapolitics and charisma used in the thesis.

The second chapter explains methodology chosen for the research, from preparations for the interviews to analyzing and interpreting. It introduces ethical dilemmas brought by the method and my position as a researcher-insider. The third part of the thesis is the analytical chapter which presents narrative analysis of the interviews and focus on how women present their activities in the revolution, how they see the impact of the revolution on their lives and their activities after the revolution.

1. Theoretical Chapter

Contribution to ongoing feminist discussion about a lack of female politicians in post-state socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe is one of the outcomes of this research. In the beginning of this chapter I introduce some general explanations of emergence of so called 'male democracies', or 'masculinism' (Einhorn, 2006, p. 146) in these countries and then I focus particularly on the situation in Slovakia. On the basis of presented discussions I suggest where is the place for my research and how its outcomes can contribute to explanations of a lack of women in politics in post-state socialist countries.

The next part of the chapter presents various concepts of public and private spheres. It provides a base for the analytical chapter and helps me to place interviewee's activities into broader context of private, public and alternative public sphere. However, this is not only one way process and analysis shows how some concepts are challenged in the interviewee's narratives. The last part of the theoretical chapter focuses on various concepts of charisma stressing Scott's understanding of this phenomena which I find most suitable for this research.

1.1 Why 'Male Democracies'?

After change of the regime in post-state socialist countries increase of social uncertainties and inequalities caused reinforcement of traditional gender regimes' ideas with assumptions about politics and public sphere as a place of/for men and private sphere as a realm of/for women. Right after the change of state socialist regime political representation of women sharply decreased. (Einhorn, 2006) It did not mean a big change in power relations because though higher representation in politics there was a lack of women in decision making positions (Šiklová, 1993; Wagnerová, 2009; Waylen, 2003), however it has become one of the barriers in achieving full citizenship of women (Einhorn, 2006).

There have been more issues discussed when looking at under-representation of women in

politics in post-state socialist countries. From general disappointment with politics caused by oppressive regime and its practices (Šiklová, 1993) to understanding of politics as male domain and internalization of traditional gender roles (Einhorn, 2006; Filadelfiová, 2002; Šiklová, 1993). Other explanations discuss too narrow understanding of politics and ask for redefinition of what is understood as 'political space' "in order to measure the true level of women's political participation" (Einhorn, 2006, p. 141). Another discussed reason is disinterest of women to be involved in 'feminist issues', disinterest or antipathy to ideas presented by Western feminists (Cerwonka, 2008; Einhorn, 2006; Funk, 2004; Kiczková, 1997; Waylen, 2003; Watson, 2000).

In the local context of Slovakia there was also a decrease in women's enhancement in politics after the change of the regime. In the national parliament³ during the state socialism there was between 20 and 30 percent of women as a consequence of quotas. But women often constituted a supplementary group and fulfill more quotas at the same time, for instance for age, education or social status. (Filadelfiová, 2002) After the first democratic election the rate of women in the parliament decreased to 12 percent (Filadelfiová, 2002) and after the parliamentary election in 2006 this rate was 16 percent, what is approximately half of the representation from the state socialist period (Kobová, 2006).

Jana Cviková (2009) adds to the lack of women in the parliament in the period of changing regime emergence of two other social phenomena - a new "revolutionary" public that was predominantly male but was understood as gender neutral, and the lack of women on tribunes during the Velvet Revolution. Sociologist Zora Bútorová explains these phenomena by existence of particular women's mode of "learned hopelessness" characteristic for the most of the population in socialist regime and caused by absurd and threatening state control. This phenomena has been mirrored also in the metaphor "Sleeping Beauty" used for the society waken up by princes on tribunes. (cited in Cviková, 2009) This stereotypical understanding of active man and passive woman was present during as well as after the revolution and according to Cviková (2009) should

3 In Czechoslovakia there were two national parliaments and one federal parliament.

have been caused by socialist model of women's emancipation. Therefore the first gender-based reflection of the revolution was provided yet in 1992 by Irena Brežná, the Slovak emigrant living in Switzerland (Cviková, 2009).

Based on the findings of this research I argue later in the text that among other causes of the lack of women in politics in Slovakia was using "old boys networks" when choosing the first democratic politicians in the country. And then invisibility of women in the revolution itself and later on lack of roles models for girls and young women could be other factors.

1.2 Between Private and Public Space

The character of private and public spheres and their (blurring, shifting, (non)existing) boundaries have been central to feminist discourse in the North America and Western European countries since the seventeenth century (Pateman, 1989). Here are some of the concepts of private, public and politics that are relevant for situating this research in the broader context. None of them understands private and public as two opposite spheres without anything in common, though their understanding differs and therefore offers various types of basis for understanding history.

Public and private are seen as two parallel spheres with "infiltrations" between each other by the philosopher Zuzana Kiczková (1997, 2001). According to the author the character of the public sphere is changing and influenced by characteristics of private sphere and vice versa (1997). This can be seen in her concept of socialist state⁴ as "the only provider of care" in the public sphere (distribution of benefits, resources ...) and increasing importance of relations among people when requesting social benefits, applying to new job or any other official position. This admits the role of informal structure and personal relations within official structure and therefore penetration of traditional private sphere's characteristics into public sphere. Kiczková uses placement of private sphere into the public sphere to explain social and political reproduction of the state.

While neither Kiczková 's concept of penetration of two spheres, nor Susan Gal's and Gail

4 She is writing particularly about the Slovak society before 1989.

Kligman's (2000) description of fractal pattern - possibility to create new public within private realm and new public within private - challenged the very base of public/private dichotomy and its gendered character. Gal's and Kligman's concept is based on Habermas' (1989) writing about possibility to distinguish in private realm between private and public (civil society as a public within private). On the one hand Gal and Kligman assume that in every public space there is something private and vice versa so neither of these spaces is absolute. But on the other hand this fractal process does not necessary challenge the assumption that one phenomenon is either private or public, that it is possible to attach it to one or another side. Moreover this multiple distinguishing can deepen discrimination and invisibility of women because it enables to forget that, in history repeatedly emerging, private - domestic and public - social excluded women (Pateman 1989).

About mutual dependance of public and private sphere writes Susan Moller Okin (1998) when according to her argument, personal and political is mixed in a way that "confounds the separate categories of public and domestic" (p. 29). In her approach, she does not speak about penetration but rather non-existence of one sphere without another. For her privacy is important for developing intimate relations with others though she admits that private sphere does not offer the same opportunity "to unmask " for men as for women. Though Okin understands private sphere as more personal and relational space, she sees it as political at the same time because it is not "immune from the dynamic of *power*, which has been typically seen as a distinguishing feature of the political" (p. 124). Foucauldian (1990) notion that no relations are free of power because power is everywhere, therefore helps to broaden the notion of politics and as Joan Wallach Scott (1998) writes, broadly defined gender and politics can "dissolve distinctions between public and private and avoid arguments about the separate and distinctive qualities of women's character and experience" (p. 26).

To have a look particularly on the Slovak context, as a part of the official state socialist emancipatory politics women were incorporated into the labor field with an argument about achievement of equality between men and women. But though their new paid jobs they remained

responsible for the households and care of their families. This tension between public and private spheres should have been improved by transformation of domestic work into the paid employment - canteens, kindergartens, nurseries, etc., but the lack of quality, quantity and availability of these services contributed to the double and sometimes triple load of women. (Jancar, 1978; Kiczková 1997; Kiczková, 2001; Šiklová, 1993; Zimmerman, 2010) Their experiences therefore challenge the concept of two separated spheres of public and private and rather support Kiczková's (1997, 2001) argument about impossibility to achieve gender equality without transformation of both - public and private sphere.

So despite the fact that women entered the field of paid work, could have experienced some economic independence, had a chance to create networks of friends and freed themselves from the closed environment of the households, it brought them only little equality with men (Zimmerman, 2010). Private sphere was still considered as their primary field and there was almost no discussion about equal division of domestic work between men and women. Women were understood as workers and mothers, men were understood as workers but not as fathers at the same time (Kiczková, 1997).

Therefore privacy had different meanings for men and women.⁵ For women it constituted a realm of responsibilities and, as Susan Moller Okin (1998) argues, it did not offer the same opportunity "to unmask" as it did for men. Except of this gender difference it is important to notice that the character of private sphere had been changing. As I mentioned above, Gal and Kligman (2000) describe this as a creation of a public sphere within a private. This should have been a space in households where dissent activities took place but according to the authors it was "an implicitly male realm in which men could exercise political authority and imagination" (p. 52). Since I agree with the argument about invisibility, at the same time I find it important to acknowledge existence of women dissidents also active in this "new sphere".

Whether acknowledging gender inequalities or not, private realm in state socialism has been

5 I am aware of the fact that this claim did not necessarily include all women and all men but to make my argument this generalization is needed.

often understood as a refuge from the state control (Nikolchina, 2002). Nikolchina problematizes this approach when saying that family contributed to duplicity, reproduced totalitarian conditions and therefore supported the regime. At the same time she challenges also the notion of public sphere which was according to her more "theatrical" than really public. James C. Scott (1990) calls this "theater" *public transcript* - "shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate" (p. 2). Public used here refers to "action that is openly avowed to the other party in the power relationship" (p. 2). What is usually understood as public sphere in socialist Czechoslovakia would be described by Scott and Nikolchina as not authentic public space where perpetrators as well as subjects of power only perform.

While I agree with understanding public transcript as a performance of actors, I don't think this should be applied only to public sphere. Later in the texts I will argue that this performance was a part of a space called by Scott *hidden transcript* - "discourse that takes place 'offstage', beyond direct observations by powerholders" (p. 4). In the context of Czechoslovakia hidden transcript took place not only in households but in other spaces of informal political and social activities as well, places like pubs, schools or theaters, places called by Andrea Petö and Judith Szapor (2004) "alternative public sphere" (p. 175). This sphere played an important role in dissident activities in state socialism as well as after the beginning of the Velvet Revolution in November 1989.

Based on descriptions explained above in this research I understand public, private and alternative public as mutually dependent, unstable spheres, changing in change and time. However, it is necessarily at this moment to use these terms to understand where the place of women was and why they have been invisible in the revolution.

1.3 Charisma - between Biology and Social Construction

Charismatic leaders of the social movements, particularly the Public against Violence and the student movement, were often mentioned in the interviews. Therefore I decided to have a look in this part to the concept of charisma in social movement theories.

Philosopher Max Weber understands charismatic people as people with extraordinary characteristics that go beyond everyday routine. According to Weber (1968), "[t]he natural leaders in distress have been holders of specific gifts of the body and spirit; and these gifts have been believed to be supernatural, not accessible to everybody. The concept of 'charisma' is used here in a completely 'value-neutral' sense" (p. 19). According to him, it is a duty of people who are addressed by the leaders to recognize and follow them.

Though I cannot say that people called leaders of the Velvet Revolution haven't had some impressive biological characteristics like for instance voice, behavior, temperament or others, I argue that it is not enough to be chosen and remembered as a leader of the revolution. Here I agree with James C. Scott (1990) and his claim that "it is the cultural and social expectations of followers that exercise a controlling or at least limiting influence over the would-be charismatic figure" (p. 222). As he concludes, charisma can be attributed to somebody who as the first one openly declares the hidden transcript what is the case of many of those called leaders of the revolution.

This concept of charisma understood as social construction opens space for a question why in the Velvet Revolution was charisma predominantly male? When taken into account social expectations, gender stereotypes attributed to men and women some particular characteristics and situation of men and women described above, it is not so surprising that leadership characteristics were attributed to men more than to women.

In the context of the November 1989, public meetings and people on tribunes, attribution of charisma to some revolutionary actors I come back to Weber and come to Emile Durkheim and "collective effervescence" - "periods of history when, under the influence of some great collective shock, social interactions have become much more frequent and active" (as cited in Tiryakian, 1995, p. 273). As Tiryakian (1995) concludes, Durkheim's discussion opens a space to Weber's charismatic authority, therefore charisma and collective effervescence are overlapping.

According to this, it is possible to say that most of men considered charismatic leaders of the Velvet Revolution in the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia were constructed predominantly on the

squares during collective effervescence and were based on social expectations of people.

Behind this leadership which is the most visible part of the revolution there is a space where most of the revolutionary work is done. I use the James C. Scott's concept of *infrapolitics* that is usually omitted from descriptions of social movements in mainstream history. According to Scott (1990), *infrapolitics* "provides much of the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action on which our attention has generally been focused" (p. 184). *Infrapolitics* is "the realm of informal leadership and nonelites, of conversation and oral discourse, and of surreptitious resistance" (p. 200) and I would add that it is the realm of invisible women's work.

2. Methodological Chapter

In the frame of feminist qualitative research I use oral history as a method that "acknowledges the value of women's lives" (Sangster, 1998, p. 135). At the same time it causes several methodological problems and ethical dilemmas that I address in this chapter. The process of preparations, conducting interviews, their analysis and interpretations are addressed here, as well as the theoretical paradigms and research strategies.

2.1 The Researcher and the Interviewees

The research is based on combined narrative and semi-structured in-depth interviews. I talked to women from different class, geographical locations, with various level of education (Appendix 2). Narratives have been compared with each other, and with the official part of the history reproduced as the true story without mentioning that is men-made. I had contacts of some of the women since the beginning and later I used "snowball method" to find other ones. It means that in the end of our meetings I asked interviewees if they know other women that could be involved in the research. When selecting partners it was important for me to talk to women from different horizontal and vertical levels of the movements. There were various groups of resistance against communist regime in Slovakia, some of them more and some of them less known (Antalová, 1998; Žatkuliak 1999). In this research I will focus on six groups - movement Public against Violence, student movement, Hungarian-minority dissent, environmentalists, punks, intellectuals and theatrical groups. Though this effort it is necessary to say women never belonged to only one group but rather they were involved in activities of more groups at the same time or one after another. Together I spoke to 16 women from seven places in the Slovak part of the former Czechoslovakia.

Another important aspect of selection interviewees was their experience after the change of the regime. A part of the analysis focuses on how un/satisfaction with their lives in democratic regime has influenced interviewee's narrative. It means that I look at their narratives also through

the lens of their current position, professional occupation or social status.

In this research I speak from the position of white Slovak middle class feminist woman. I am aware of the fact that all those categories have influenced my way of thinking, standpoint of my research, the way of analyzing narratives as well as the way how interviewees saw me, and relationship between them and myself. Power is important aspect of this relationship because interview cannot create equality. (Portelli, 1995) It creates hierarchy because the researcher experiences advanced position, and extent of this hierarchy depends on the external status (social, economic, political status) of the interviewees as well.

The relation between interviewer and interviewee is one of three relationships that is included into the analysis. The second relationship stresses the fact that the interviewee speaks through the researcher to the larger community. It contains two aspects: one is relationship between the historian and the informant, and second one is interviewee's historical consciousness. The third relationship in oral history is unlike previous two internal and it unites "the word of sign to all others in the interview". (Grele, 1998, p. 44) As Grele concludes, it is grammatical, linguistic, and literary structure of the interview.

One of the important aspects of my research will be my self-reflection. Interview usually influences both sides - participants. (Kiczková, 2006) Therefore I will also analyze potential changes in my opinions and attitudes during the research.

2.2 Theoretical Paradigms

This qualitative research has been shaped mostly by feminist-poststructural paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). By introducing women's narratives I do not want to present "real" history nor I am able to represent fully their lived experiences. Chosen paradigm includes intersectional approach⁶ and is based on lived experiences of women. Here I apply Scott's (1992) concept of experience that is already an interpretation and is in need of interpretation. Experience is always contested and

⁶ I analyze how these categories - gender, age, professional occupation and geographical location intersect.

political and it is never separated from language. It is impossible to understand interviewees as fixed individuals who have lived experiences but rather as subjects that are constructed through the experiences. Therefore I need to acknowledge that identities of women I talked to have been constructed through experiences they will describe as well as through other experiences they've gone through in their lives. Everything they've lived influences their narratives and for me as a researcher is important to see these (articulated or silenced) connections and implications.

2.3 Research Strategies and Narrative Analyzing

In this project I create mostly intrinsic case study with some aspects of instrumental case study. (Stake, 2003) I want to focus on the particular case of the social movements in Slovakia in 1989 but because of some similarities between the character of the movements in other countries in the region in the same time I suppose that it is possible to make some generalizations.

The case study has been based on combined narrative and semi-structured in-depth interviews that last maximum two hours and were taped. I met each of the participants of the project once in a place they had suggested. After I explained the character and goal of the project I asked a question: *I am interested in finding out how women remember the Velvet Revolution. Could you, please, tell me more about your experiences at that time?* I tried not to interrupt the speaker unless necessary. Sometimes it happened that the participant was surprised that I wanted to hear about these experiences and thought about it as uninteresting. In this case I tried to encourage the interviewee to talk. In the end I asked additional questions - at first focused on explanations of some unclear aspects of the narrative, and then focused on the phenomena I am particularly interested in. (Appendix 2)

After the interviews that were conducted in Slovak language, I made a rough transcript that got words and other aspects of the conversation on paper. Then I focused on specific parts and retranscribed them for detailed analyzes and for translation.

As Riessman writes (1993), analysis cannot be easily distinguished from transcription. In the

beginning I focus on organization of the narrative, why it was told in this particular way. This step should avoid reading the narratives only for the content and should prevent me from understanding experiences as facts. Later I focus on thematic analysis of the narrative. Besides the form and the content of the narrative I pay attention also to non-verbal communication that can tell me more about the context, emotions and experiences of the interviewee.

I compare the stories of various women between each other, compare them with the official part of the history that is broadly known and reproduced as the true history. One of the features of my qualitative research is thick description, that "presents details, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another". (Denzin, 2001, p. 100) Thick description as a methodological tool help to present women's experiences more deeply. My description should be on the border between the situational and interactional one, because it will bring descriptions of the situations, events, meetings that would locate the woman in them. And at the same time it is also interactional thick description because it is about relations between more people (not only) within the social movement.

2.4 Interpretation and Ethics

Shared experiences are in need of interpretation what is the next task of the research. While conducting, analyzing and interpreting the interviews the researcher is in privileged position which cannot be masked. (Sangster, 1998) I am aware of this aspect of my work and will try not to abuse this position. It means that I explain interviewees how I am going to use their narratives, that they will be part of the thesis available on the CEU website and in the CEU library, if necessary I have consent form prepared for a signature. And as Katherine Borland (1998) suggested, it is possible to narrow a little bit the unequal position by "extending the conversation we initiate while collecting oral narratives to the later stage of interpretation, we might more sensitively negotiate issues of interpretive authority in our research" (p. 330).

Though acknowledging my privileged position as a research, it cannot prevent me from critical conclusion about interviewee's narratives. I need to prevent heroization of women I interviewed. The image of men-made historical events leads me to produce an image of positive role models - heroines of the November 1989 within the same structure in which men heroes have been produced. But while I criticize canonization of male-interpreted history, I want to avoid the same canonization of women's histories and representation of their narratives as the only truth. This produces ethical dilemma because though I want to present this analysis as one possible interpretation of historical events, the interviewees could consider their narrative as the only true one.

Considering ethics there is one more important aspect that needs to be taken into account and that is anonymity. One of the interviewees wants to stay anonymous so name of Eva Lietavska is pseudonym. Besides her name all the other names and places in her narrative and her brief bibliography have been changed. Other interviewees are called by their real names.

3. Analytical Chapter

He was so smart that everything I told him he carried in his head. And really, in 1991 it (the Department of Nursing) was opened. So in this sense I was the one who figured it out but then my colleague in the Faculty told me: do not tell to anybody because the dean likes to present this as his idea. (Alžběta Hanzlíková, Martin)

To be a silent adviser of men, stay beyond men in public positions, like this example shows, was one of the roles of women in the revolution, but for sure not the only one. Women established coordination centers of Public against Violence, organized and lead meetings, traveled around the country. So why their contribution to the Velvet Revolution has been unknown or omitted?

I argue that mechanisms that have made women invisible in these historical events operate in two levels: the first one in 1989 and 1990 - from the beginning of the revolution till the first democratic elections in Czechoslovakia; the second one has come later and considers the way of producing mainstream history, as Foucault says a production of knowledge (1990). In this chapter I follow those five mechanisms that have emerged as narrative fields from the interviews and operated on the first mentioned level: infrapolitics, professional occupation of women, geographical location, the way of attributing charisma to people and the process of distribution public offices. I argue that women made infrapolitics - managerial, organizational, manual work - that was not considered "revolutionary" enough and remained invisible. Devaluation of women's paid and unpaid work in the society was mirrored in the movements and contributed to devaluation of work of women activists. They also stayed in this infrapolitical part because they were primarily responsible for their families and unlike their male revolutionaries women needed to manage not only the revolution but their family lives as well. Another mechanism - professional occupation is obvious in

interviewees who were teachers and established national or local Teacher's Forum that was a part of the Public against Violence. But focus on economic issues and omission of educational or health problems after the revolution contributed to the fact that their activities were not considered important and strategic issues. At the same time geographical location operated as another mechanism that disadvantaged women living out of the capitals. As is it understood from the interviewees as well as from written sources (Antalová, 1998; Hrabko, 2005; Tatár, 2009) there was a kind of hierarchization of power during and after the revolution and on the top of the hierarchy there was Prague and then Bratislava. Another mechanism that operated in both levels is the process of attributing charisma to some people and I argue that this process was not spontaneous consequence of intrinsic individual traits but it was pragmatic, gendered and sometimes also coincidental process. The last mechanism is important to explain how the public and political seats were distributed during and after the revolution, in the process of creating new political subjects. I will show that the use of "old boys' network" plays important part in this process and therefore excluded many women.

This chapter is divided chronologically into two main parts based on two narrative fields emerged in the interviews. The first one starts with how women see the beginning of their involvement in November 1989 and how they describe their activities before and during the revolution. The second narrative field is based on how women present the Velvet Revolution itself now and their activities after it has finished. In both fields I distinguish several narrative strategies used by interviewees and on this background I trace how intersection of infrapolitics, professional occupation, geographical location, charisma and distribution of seats in political and other public offices contributed to invisibility of women in the Velvet Revolution.

3.1 *Paths to the Revolution*

It has been risky for women to present their activities as influential because they could easily become "a burden" in eyes of male revolutionaries. But they got into a trap because when they make their activities non-substantial, they contribute to their invisibility in historical canon.

I trace intersection of infrapolitics, professional occupation, geographical location, attribution of charisma and distributing of public offices in two different narrative strategies used by interviewees when describing the beginning of the revolution and their involvement. The first narrative strategy is *normalization of the revolution* described as a fluent continuation of interviewee's previous activities and a kind of "natural" process. It has been chosen by women who were active in alternative sphere (for instance environmentalist movement) before November 1989, as well as by two punk women who understand the Velvet Revolution as a beginning of disintegration of a punk movement they were involved in. The second narrative strategy is a *story of conversion*, when the beginning of the revolution is understood as an "absolute" change and time of "awakening". This narrative type has been used mostly by women who did not participate in any movement or dissent activities.

3.1.1 Normalization of the Revolution

"Every time there was a meeting I needed to renew it (permission). And when speakers came, all their speeches went through my hands and we needed to cut them, some things we released, some not." Environmentalist and one of the founding members of the Public against Violence in Bratislava Mária Filková recognizes here her important position in the movement. She registered VPN as an official organization what enabled her to provide a bank account, she asked for permissions for public meetings and she gained from the authorities a building

for VPN. Her activities can be understood as infrapolitics that provides structural "underpinning of the more visible political action" (Scott, 1990, p. 184) of VPN. The roots of Filková's involvement in infrapolitics can be found in the environmentalist organization Slovak Association of Protectors of Nature and Landscape before November 1989, what she stresses using the narrative strategy of normalization and continuation.

Because I used to go to those offices (...) it gave me an excellent experience to get know people and suddenly in 1989, in that November, I was the most experienced person that knew about people who had changed their views. (...) Others were either academics or doctors and they just came to a meeting or came like environmentalists but they did not have experiences with authorities. I did have. (Mária Filková, Bratislava)

While before November 1989 Mária Filková organized discussions in SZOPK, after the beginning of the revolution she organized meetings for VPN. Though, or just because she was more experienced than many of her colleagues, she remained in infrapolitics and therefore invisible. Her activities in both periods could be placed into alternative public sphere but as Petö and Szapor (2004) as well as Einhorn (1993) argue that the character of public and private spheres has been changing in place and time, the same can be said about alternative sphere before and during the revolution. What was till November 1989 space for some people involved in environmental issues, for students and intellectuals, after beginning of the revolution became an opened space for most of the citizens. This can be illustrated on an example of the VPN center in Bratislava (as well as in other cities) where thousands of people were coming every day and others were calling to ask for help. The place where activists were living, eating, sleeping and therefore consider it a part of their private sphere, was understood by others as public (though not state) sphere where they could seek help. Another aspect that problematize boundaries between alternative and public sphere is the path of the revolutionaries to negotiations with the government and the process of negotiations. In

this situation of "clashes" between public and alternative sphere, when "alternative character" of activists was stressed even by their clothes⁷, but when their negotiations have had an impact on the situation of the country and its citizens, is very difficult, if even possible, to trace the boundaries between two spheres.

One of the examples of blurred boundaries between private and alternative sphere is an experience of another interviewee Katarína Šimončíčová, who gave birth in the end of December 1989. She was a part of the environmental movement but could not have actively participated in meetings in November because of her pregnancy. After VPN moved to the new building, her colleague Mária Filková called her to become a temporary telephone operator. There she stayed till the expected date of delivery.

It was an amazing work, many people say after some time, that the revolution was velvet because women managed these things. Because our men stayed behind a closed door and in front of it Peter Tatár was staying and he did not let anybody in, because the center mustn't have been disturbed, they had to solve big things there, I don't know ... change of the regime, new government and things like this, and it was very important. And women provided everything else. For instance we answered phone calls, because the whole Slovakia did not know what to do, so they called. And I was picking up the phones but none of these men behind the closed door told me what to say, just tell what you want. They did not say even this, it was up to me. (Katarína Šimončíčová, Bratislava)

This experience of Katarína Šimončíčová shows various aspects of how the movement worked. At first those closed guarded door in her narrative suggests big distance between the closed leadership of VPN and other members of the movement and power relations among them. While the leadership usually sees VPN as opened, people from (at least partially) "outside" speak about its closed character (Antalová, 1998) that can be understood as an "old boys' network". This meaning of VPN has wider implications when comparing to Havel's ideas about civil activism "without the power struggles" (Whipple, 1991, p. 56). Meaning of

7 Revolutionaries went to negotiate with the government in their sweaters. Television discussions between revolutionaries and representatives of the Communist Party has been also known as sweaters against suits and therefore sweaters have become one of the symbols of the Velvet Revolution.(Balogh, 2009)

power as repressive phenomena captured in the hands of the Communist Party and understood by dissidents as a common enemy is challenged by looking deeper into the structures and everyday work of the oppositional movements (whether it is VPN, student, artistic, environmental or any other movement). This brings me closer to the Foucauldian sense of decentralized power present in every level of everyday life (Foucault, 1990) and deconstruction of dichotomies of public/private or state/family that according to Joan Wallach Scott this understanding of power enables (1998). The notion of power that "comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1990, p. 93) deconstructs the vision of binaries bad communists/good revolutionaries and helps to understand existed social movements as living within the society and therefore reproducing some of the stereotypes (particularly gender stereotypes).

Coming back to Šimončičová's quotation, another important aspect is her (d)evaluation of work. Though this interviewee spoke in a name of the movement and she was the one in charge of advices to everybody in need - from personal to political things, replacements of factory directors and other staff issues of different institutions, she does not see her position as important. By contraries, she has accepted the opinion that those important people were the leaders of the revolution who were solving "big issues" like "change of the regime". This could be a consequence of general tendencies in the society to devalue women's work or tendencies to understand "politics" as something influential, important but distanced from everyday life. In this sense it is difficult to see phone-operating as something political and influential. This is not the only case when women devalue their own work and therefore contribute to their own invisibility in history. Here it can be also connected with the chosen narrative strategy which enables to present interviewees activities "normal" and not very important. But why would somebody do this? One possible answer can be found in another interview.

I was there with my former colleagues like Peter Zajac and so, they were a little bit nervous because of me. And, actually, it is logical that they were nervous because I already knew that factories. For instance I knew that there are weapons in every big factory. So the first thing we did in our workplace was that we went to take keys from weapons. (Zuzana Szatmáry, Bratislava)

Many times Zuzana Szatmáry says that she was "a burden" in eye of her male colleagues because she as a former dissident was more experienced, as a worker in the factory she knew the working conditions better and thanks to her cooperation with "the West" she had more information what to do, for instance how to establish independent trade union. Szatmáry did not devalue her work and she stresses how much she paid for it: "I needed to be harder, bolder, and more cheeky, to go my own way, because I would not achieve anything alongside that men of the revolution." In this sense both approaches have been peculiar - if women have presented their positions as important and special, they have been exposed to a risk of condemnation but at the same time if they have presented their position and activities as "normal" they have been in a risk of invisibility.

Zuzana Szatmáry has chosen the first option and she uses the narrative strategy of normalization to stress that her opinions have not been changed and she has remained the head of the Foundation Charter 77 since the revolution. To present this stability of attitudes and activities has its particular meaning in the context of the Velvet Revolution at first because many people in November "changed their clothes" and shifted from communists to democrats. Another "opinion instability" came in 1990 when VPN separated and a nationalist Movement for Democratic Slovakia was established. Therefore stressing unchanging ideas has its moral and political credit.

In this frame of stability Szatmáry presents work of some women in the revolution as particularly important. It is necessary to stress "some women" because in her narrative there is a sharp distinction between women who "really" participated in the revolutionary activities

and "brides of the revolution" who, as she said, emerged around the male leaders of the revolution. This phenomenon she explains as women who emerged around leaders of the revolution and were expected to be their potential (often temporary) lovers. These phenomena could be considered as bargaining patriarchy but it has two aspects - in case "brides of the revolution" reproduced gender stereotypes playing a role of the lovers and carers of their strong revolutionary partners, they can be understood as bargaining patriarchy. But on the other hand seeing in women close to the leadership of the movements only "lovers" or "brides" of the male leaders can be understood as their devaluation and sometimes invisibilization of their work and therefore as bargaining patriarchy as well.

This strategy also strengthen the position of Szatmáry as well as other women she finds important: "There would not be anything without Mária (Filková)," she says about one of the interviewees and her position in Bratislava's VPN center⁸. Zuzana Szatmáry also stresses that women in the revolution were those with practical thinking and skills and put them into opposition with irrational and idealistic men. Together with Katarína Šimončíčová they challenge stereotypes about emotional women and rational men and present male revolutionaries in positions of predominantly charismatic people representing the revolution, which is the situation presented by mainstream history as well. (Gál & Zajac, 2004; Mikloško, 1996; Wheaton & Kavan, 1992; Žatkuliak, 1999).

Situation in Hungarian minority dissent in the Slovak part of the country was influenced by connections with dissidents from the southern neighbor state. Hungarian dissent was a source of information and samizdats that were then carried to Czechoslovakia. A member of the Hungarian minority movement Eleonóra Sándorová uses the narrative strategy of normalization to underline her long-lasting interest in politics and dissatisfaction

8 At this moment of the interview she did not know that Mária Filková has been participating in the research.

with the state-socialist regime. She describes the meeting with her friends on November 18 in their home in Šaľa and their decision to establish a political party Hungarian Independent Initiative (MNI). This activity is presented as independent from the demonstrations in Prague and the beginning of the revolution is in Eleonóra Sándorová's narrative described as something that jumped into their plans. The most important part of the narrative is when Sándorová became a member of the Federal Parliament. In this description the function of "old boy networks" can be traced.

There were some objections towards me and some other chosen PMs that people from VPN and I don't know who else sent there their friends. Yes, it was like that and it couldn't have been otherwise. Because there was one common goal, there were old MPs, not all of them were replaced so there was a need to send there people who were trustful for new "leaders". (Eleonóra Sándorová, Šaľa)

Eleonóra Sándorová generalizes a process of choosing members of the federal and two national parliaments as well as other political seats. It is possible to say that this process use "old boys' network" when the relationships between people (predominantly men) became the base for their nomination to high positions. The selection of people based on old boys' network has showed disadvantages for women in politics as well as companies (Acker, 1991) and therefore it is possible to assume that the similar thing happened in cases in the Velvet Revolution. If the first democratic political subjects in the country were selected according to their relationship towards male "revolutionary leaders", then it is not a big surprise that most of them were men and the number of women in first democratic parliaments was so low.

3.1.2 Stories of Conversion

Interviewees who started their civil and political activities in November 1989 have chosen narratives called stories of conversion to present a sudden change in their life.

For me it was a real breaking point, probably the strongest point in my life, even till today, including later years that have come. Because it was absolute, also absolute inner change, but especially change in a sense of external liberation, in the society. (...) That time something burst, something fell down, not scruples but something like blinders and the new reality was totally different. Reactions of people were different, my reaction was active, I participated in everything. (Ľubica Trubíniová, Bratislava)

This active participation is characteristic for all the interviewees who decided to use this narrative, though the type of their activities and their reasons for choosing it differ. One of the reasons is for instance an effort to "payback" passivity during state-socialism expressed by Alžbeta Hanzlíková and Darina Kárová.

Before '89 I was not one of those who would say something against the regime, I even don't know why. Maybe because of deference or lack of an allied group of people not in Nitra but in the theatrical environment. So maybe one wanted to make amendment for something in 1989. Because feelings of collaboration must have had everybody. (Darina Kárová, Nitra)

The "feelings of collaboration" are underlined in different places where she deeply describes worries about potential loss of job, insufficient education for children and siblings or fear in other fields of life. Darina Kárová, as a dramaturgist in a theater, was monitored by the Party representatives and therefore she stresses the change that happened in November 1989 when she became one of the leaders of the revolution in Nitra. Though she and her colleague - another interviewee Lujza Bakošová⁹ were part of the leadership group in the city, they remained invisible because of intersection of their involvement in infrapolitics and their geographical location. That the gaze of media (local as well as international) focused mostly on Bratislava¹⁰ at time of the revolution as well as later can be illustrated by an example of the first "independent" newspaper in the Slovak Part of the country - Nitria's Public [Nitrianska verejnosť], lead by Darina Kárová and then Lujza Bakošová for one year. The

9 Lujza Bakošová was involved in activities of environmentalist group and theatrical group in Nitra and therefore she uses the narrative strategy of continuation of her activities.

10 When talking about Czechoslovakia even Prague, then Bratislava and then other cities.

first issue was published on December 9 1989, six days before the 'sister newspaper' Public [Verejnost'] was published in Bratislava. Despite its primacy, Nitria's Public is not known and usually is omitted from the mainstream history (e.g. Antalová, 1998, Žatkuliak, 1999).

But it is our fault that we did not let them know, that we did not remind them what was going on in Nitra. There were various books published, movies shot at this occasion last year (2009) I watched many things in Slovak and Czech televisions and many places were mentioned. There is also a good Czech documentary called *Něžná* (The Velvet), but in none of them Nitra was mentioned. Even Rimavská Sobota and Liptovský Mikuláš were discussed, and I do not want to offend anybody, but there was nothing about Nitra though it was obvious center, or one of the centers of the events. (Darina Kárová, Nitra)

Though Darina Kárová presents here the historical invisibility of Nitra as "their" fault and insufficiency of spreading information about their activities, other time in the interview she mentions disfavor and disinterest of Bratislava towards the local revolution in Nitra. Her position is balancing between local patriotism and wider satisfaction that the revolution as such took place. As a director of the theatrical non-governmental organization dependent on state funding though she does not want to be too critical and rather focuses on the project her organization prepared in 2009 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution and to highlight event that took place in Nitra.

Unequal power relations between Bratislava and other Slovak cities implied in this narrative have been explicitly said by another interviewees Ľubica Blaškovičová and Jana Oleárníková, both from Košice, and have been expressed also in some written sources regarding the revolution and the Slovak regions (Hrabko 2005, Tatár 2009). Blaškovičová as an actress was at the beginning of the theatrical revolutionary activities that she sees as a big change for her life, underlined by the narrative strategy of conversion. As a politician independent from any political party she feels free to criticize the leadership of the Public against Violence in Bratislava and their better coordination with Prague. "In Bratislava they

though we have to do what they say," she claims and illustrates an example how they were made to change their name from Civil Forum to Public against Violence. Look back at the relationship between Košice and Bratislava is however (in the interviews as well as in the books about the revolution the regions edited by Hrabko (2005) and Tatár (2009)) influenced by ongoing competition between these two cities in various fields. Whether it was because of disinterest or competition, focus on Bratislava omitted many activities all around the country and therefore many women active in regions.

Besides geographical location and involvement in infrapolitics, professional occupation has contributed to invisibility of women in the Velvet Revolution as well. As a part of Public against Violence there was established a specific organization Teacher's Forum with high participation of women caused by their high employment in education. (Hrabko, 2005) As Alžbeta Hanzlíková explains, members of the Forum were supposed to contribute to new content of study programs in their schools and later to cooperate with new state representatives in creation of new legislature regarding educational system. Alžbeta Hanzlíková has a combination of two predominantly women's profession - she was a teacher of nursery. I started this chapter with her quotation where she explains how the Department of Nursery at Jessenius Faculty of Comenius University was established in Martin and how she contributed to this process. To implement her idea and establish the first university department of this kind in Czechoslovakia she needed to find "a man in power" and introduce him the suggestion. Though this man later presented this as his idea, Hanzlíková does not see it as a problem, what has been influenced, as the whole narrative strategy, by her satisfaction with her career development. But this example shows not only that women needed to know somebody (man) in power to achieve some of their goals, but moreover that they have been omitted later in a process of realization and the fame was attributed to somebody else. This is

even more specific for the educational and health environment where most of the employees are women but chief positions are usually occupied by men (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic). Other activities of Alžbeta Hanzlíková, teacher Júlia Krpelanová and other women have been unmarked together with the Teacher's Forum itself. Focus on economical transformation and omission of fields like education or healthcare contributed to the fact that this organization has not been considered one of the crucial.

In young generation of women who have chosen the narratives of conversion, one of the reasons why they ended up in infrapolitics was the relationship between Public against Violence and the student movement what can be followed in interviews of Eva Lietavská from Bratislava and Jana Oleárníková from Košice. Both of them describe the beginning of the revolution as coming from outside, they just jumped in like into the boat at their universities. None of them were involved in anti-regime activities before the revolution but contribute to the student movement since November 1989. For Jana Oleárníková the revolution and never-ending work in the student movement and sleepless nights in VPN in Košice lead to the health problems and her hospitalization. She describes relations between dissidents in VPN as competing who was more proscribed by the government. Oleárníková sees herself in VPN as submissive female student providing services but not understood as a partner and not involved in decision making.

Probably the only person who treated us in a normal way was Havel, when he came. I do not know how his behavior towards women was in general, but he was polite at least towards us and he did not take us as cooks or cleaners. (Jana Oleárníková, Košice)

Jana Oleárníková compares the attitude of Havel to approaches of the member of VPN in Košice. Her current look at division of labor between men and women or relations between them is influenced by her work in the feminist organization providing help for women who

experienced gender based violence. At the same time critical approach towards male dissidents and in general men working in VPN that time has been influenced by the disappointment from the time when she was at hospital and nobody came to see her. Moreover when she came back and VPN had moved into another building she was not allowed to enter until one of the movement leaders let her in. This personal exclusion can represent what Eva Lietavská describes as general exclusion of the student movement from political activities of VPN in Bratislava.

I had a feeling that VPN wanted to have some students there, but only as something to use, not somebody to count on, somebody who understands what is going on, with his own opinion rather somebody who is publicly known, so we put him there to get some credit. (Eva Lietavská, Bratislava)

This description cannot be taken out of the context of her relationship with one of the leaders of the student movement with political ambitions. As she describes, he was also her way to the leadership of the movement, when she started to contribute, mostly using her privilege of having her own car and driving students wherever they needed to - to meetings in Prague or other parts of the country, to companies or schools. Though she became later a member of the Student Parliament, she considers this her biggest contribution to the revolution.

Here Lietavská's memories are connected with her partner and one of the student movement leaders, later member of the Federal Assembly who died in a car accident. As a result Lietavská omitted some part of her life, including time during the revolution. While some of the memories are missing, others are described very deeply, for instance those about personal relations within the movement.

One of the other leaders was also interested in me and it was very interesting to see how there is politics on the one hand and on the other hand I know those are purely personal things that are solved. And I know that what seemed as a political conflict between Adam and that another man only hid totally different

type of conflict. (Eva Lietavská, Bratislava)

The borders between personal and political relations are very fluid not only in everyday activities but in 'higher' politics in the meeting of the Slovak student movement as well. Moreover personal problems were sometimes solved as the political conflicts what is explicitly or implicitly claimed also in other narratives, whether it is on local, regional, national or federational level.

In that generation of interviewees who already had children, their family became another reason for their involvement in infrapolitics and exclusion from leadership positions. As it is described in the narratives of Ľubica Blaškovičová, November and December 1989 were very time-consuming months for those who participated in the revolutionary activities. Therefore for women who had children it was often time for decisions whether to stay at home with children or to continue with work, how to divide their time. Presence of gender stereotype that mother is supposed to be responsible for the family, particularly children, influenced who was going to have which managerial or political position, as it is mentioned in this narrative.

When the suggestion came - me or Peter, I had a serious argument with my husband. I understood that if I went, our marriage would have been wrecked. So it was my decision that there are two small children and one conceited man, so go. (Ľuba Blaškovičová, Košice)

Ľuba Blaškovičová's decision to sacrifice the political seat for her marriage and family was partially paid back when she became a member of city assembly, but from her narrative it is apparent that her expectations were bigger. There is a struggle between love towards dead husband and her own ambitions. Competitiveness between them has been present also when talking about leadership and charisma.

But it is an absolute truth, it was difficult to succeed as an only woman amongst so many men. They let me to prepare everything, do phone calls,

manage ... but it was also my fault or my decision and I think it was a good decision because he was famous, he addressed those people, he was charismatic, when he said something it was considered important. Sometimes we hosted together, he did some part, I did some part... We always stood on the tribune together, but he has been remembered as a tribune of Košice. I am remembered only by those who used to go to VPN. (Ľuba Blaškovičová, Košice)

For this interviewee the revolution is necessarily linked with her husband mentioned in this part of the narrative as a tribune of Košice. There is an ambiguity because on the one hand it was Ľubica, who suggested her husband to be the speaker of the movement in the city but on the other hand, she feels some injustice here, strengthened by the fact that after the revolution it was her husband who was coopted to the Federal Assembly instead of her. Blaškovičová's struggling with responsibility feelings for her children and political ambitions has been one of the reasons why she has become a local and not national (or federal) politician. Therefore in this case it is obvious that the person of a leader is not only constructed but gendered as well. The first level was here - who was suggested to be a speaker of the movement and the second level is that though Ľubica Blaškovičová was on tribunes with her husband, it is him who has been remembered. Because of women were expected to carry another responsibility - family and therefore were expected to be less devoted to the revolution, they were less probable to be acknowledged as leaders even when they became a part of the leadership of the movement.

That the charisma has been attributed additionally after the action of the person and was not as Weber claimed the base for an action, suggest also the narratives by male revolutionary leaders.

Student put that tube to Jano's (Budaj) hand. I remember that Jano (Budaj) did not really want it, because he did not know what to say. So he stood at some small wall and just said "hello" to students. They asked him: "Who are you?" And Jano said easily: "Budaj". And Jani (Budaj) was actually the first person who spoke to megaphone or some other tube and became a tribune speaker of VPN. (Milan Šimečka in Antalová, 1998, p. 35)

There has been apparent competitiveness between participants of the meeting what can be one of the reasons why they have chosen to talk about emerging leaders as about a coincidences. Another reason of the construction of this leadership of the man understood as one of the most charismatic leaders of that time in the Slovak part of the country could be his later accusation of cooperation with the Communist Party. This could revise the way how participants memorize this event and actually all the memories connected with Budaj.

What is also apparent from the discussion recorded in the book, there are almost no women mentioned when talking about the first revolutionary days and the first tribune speeches. One of the reasons could be that none of them were present in the discussion so the debate focuses predominantly on people who were there. So for instance former actress and current politician Magda Vášáryová has been omitted this way. During her interview she was in hurry and therefore did not mention details of her activities. But for a project Women of November where experiences of women were published she described how she emerged on the tribune.

In November 1989, in the beginning of the strike in the theaters Milan Kňažko asked me to read a letter on the SNP square. "I asked others as well, but they are still scared. You are not," he told me. I remember this strong experience even after 20 years. How I read the short text to the weak microphone, in snow and wind, in shimmering lights of street lamps. Of course, I was scared but this fear was not new one. (Vášáryová, 2009, para. 3)

As a politician that often needs to promote herself she is one of those women who are aware of their position and stresses her contribution and her activities. She presents her position as a partnership with her male colleagues, even when they traveled to other regions of the country to spread information about what was going on in Bratislava¹¹. This everyday

¹¹ It is interesting here to compare narratives of Magda Vášáryová and other women from the regions, the approach that can be easily generalized. While Magda Vášáryová describes how they came to "wake up" people from different companies, villages and small towns, in other narratives they places their activities before a visit from the capital. Actually not only in this research but for instance in the research November

traveling is according to her the reason why she left tribunes. Her name is usually connected with the Velvet Revolution, mostly because she became an ambassador of Czechoslovakia to Austria. (Osobnosti, 2010)

While one of the aspects of charisma can be the first public declaration of the hidden transcripts, there are some other aspects, for instance personal relations or similarity between life stories. The latter is expressed in Mária Filková's narrative and her approach towards Ján Budaj who was blamed after lustrations that he cooperated with the state police has been mentioned in many narratives as someone who is responsible for the break up of VPN and mistrust of people in the revolution. But negative and therefore similar experiences in Filková's surrounding after lustrations influence her positive understanding of Budaj, his personality and activities.

Except of the similar experience there is a strong personal relations linked to the charisma attribution. This can be seen in two ways - the first one is when a interviewee had a personal relationship with another person before he¹² was involved in the revolution, or the second one when an interviewee got know the person during the revolution and they developed personal relationship.¹³

The first case is obvious in a case of Eva Lietavská who was a partner of one of the leaders of the student movement. She characterized other people, their skills, potentials and credits according to the relationship they had with Lietavská's partner and according to (dis)agreement with his views. She considers Ivan 'the real leader' what she stresses by mentioning that she knows because she knew him and he thought about the future of the country a lot. On the other hand she uses the conflicts between him and other people to

1989 in the regions (2005, 2009) it is stated that many regional cities had better connection to Prague than to Bratislava. Therefore there are different meanings of cooperation and competition between them.

12 In this narratives I described there are only men discussed in this part.

13 By personal relationship I mean not only partnership but friendship, trust, deference, etc. as well.

express the relations between people in the student movement and to characterize other people. Though this was the same situation with Ľubica Blaškovičová whose husband has been considered a leader, there is a difference in the way they speak about their partner and the leaders of the revolution in general. One of the most important factors is that Eva Lietavská unlike Ľuba Blaškovičová did not have, as she presented it, any political ambitions and in the revolution focused mostly on the work behind the public eye. Without any competition and without a partnership relation as well was the personal approach of Zuzana Szatmáry towards Milan Šimečka who was for her the leader of the revolution. Though they know each other for a long time since Szatmáry's father Juraj Špitzer and Milan Šimečka were famous dissidents, there is one more aspect of not choosing anybody from VPN. Zuzana Szatmáry describes competitiveness between her and men from VPN, their problems with her as a woman not obeying stereotypes about submissive women. She describes herself and some other women (but not all of them) as practical and managerial people and therefore useful but not very appreciated by men in VPN.

The second case explained here can be illustrated on an interview with Alžbeta Hanzlíková and her approach towards dissident and former Interior Minister Ján Langoš who died in 2006. For this is the most charismatic person in the revolution what can be understood in the context of their good relationship which she describes in her interview in various places. In this case the charisma and leadership are attributed according to personal approach, Langoš's polite and decorous behavior towards the interviewee and trust he showed towards her. In other cases charisma and leadership were attributed to various men who are not considered leaders but in the narratives it is said that they for instance wrote all the speeches for so called leaders of the revolution. But those names vary from interview to interview and leadership or/and charisma is therefore attributed to many different people.

Most of these people are however men. There was only one woman mentioned among leaders of the revolution and that was Zuzana Mistríková, one of the student movement leaders in Bratislava. Most of my interviews mentioned men and only few of them consider themselves as leaders. But those two who do, made for instance a project for making their city visible in the mainstream history what can contribute to different interpretations of history and its broader context. This example suggests that it is important for women appreciate their activities and affirm their position.

What is though important as well is the connection between the society and norm of the society in 1989. Though political issues have been challenged in the revolution, charisma and leadership were attributed to people also according to gender stereotypes. It is suggested for instance in a case of Zuzana Szatmáry where she writes how women's assertion was proscribed while men's assertion was valued. In this case I think it is impossible to understand leadership of the revolution outside the context of the society that expected from women to take care of their families at the first place and then, if they have time, do other things. As I explained in the theoretical chapter, though women worked and were part of so called public sphere, they did not occupy leadership positions and they were not even expect to do that. At the same time researches (Bútorová 1993) conducted shortly after the revolution suggest that there was a strong internalization of these assumptions about men's and women's roles what was present also in the interviews.

3.2 The Influences of the Revolutions

Euphoria, frustration, sometimes indifference. Those are three basic narrative fields interviewees use when talking about the influences of the revolution on their life. These narrative fields are interconnected with those presented when tracing the paths to the

revolution and later activities of women. In this part I follow how women perceived the revolution in connection to their previous narrative strategies.

3.2.1 Frustration

Disappointment from political situation in interviewees narratives has started shortly after the revolution and usually (whether implicitly or explicitly stated) lasts till today. This frustration has been caused by various factors like social circumstances (lack of investment into health and educational system), disappointment with people in power (many people who were in Communist Party came back to political or other powerful functions), and revenge for the revolutionary activities. Frustration is in the narratives usually combined with positive experiences, the difference between interviewees is only in the extend. The frame of negative experiences does not mean that women regret that the revolution took place, rather it expresses their dissatisfaction positions with its results, their position after or during the revolution or later political situation. The most common frame interviewees use is the comeback of "communists"¹⁴ and regrets about the approach of the revolutionaries towards them.

I really do think that the revolution was too velvet. That we were decent even to those people who did not deserve it and that it turn back to us. Instead of being happy that we were decent and let them live their lives ... we felt this personally twice in a very cruel way. (Lubica Blaškovičová, Košice)

Luba Blaškovičová comes back often to the event when her and her husband were fired from the theater. Her feeling of injustice is expressed by deep description of the reasons, how the communist leadership of the theater was withdrawn, but then got into the head of

¹⁴ "Communists" are here used as an umbrella term which needs to be explained because apparently women do not use this term with the same meaning. For some those are members of the Communist Party, for some people who cooperated with CP, for others members of the state security service (STB) or people cooperating with STB.

another one, fused those two theaters and as revenge fired Blaškovičová and her husband Peter Rašev. Injustice is supported also by feeling that their colleagues were not supported them what she explains saying: "courage and success are never forgiven".

Connection between negative and positive experiences in bitter personal story is provided also by Zuzana Dzivjaková from Humenné. Though she focuses at first on euphoric atmosphere of the revolution and various activities, then she moves slowly towards first failures and ends with "a revenge" when she lost her job, stayed unemployed and was forced to move. "That was cruel. There I felt what it means to slip from euphoria to reluctance and human bitterness in full size. It was bad, I don't like to think about it," she comments on the period around 1991. This is the reason why she regrets that the revolution was "velvet" and did not withdraw people who were placed by the Communist Party during the state-socialism from their powerful positions. She understands this as a failure of the center of VPN in Bratislava which according to her should be "more radical".

Another opinions about communist who just came back to power was expressed by Júlia Krpelanová in Prievidza, Darina Kárová and Lujza Bakošová from Nitra or Mária Filková in Bratislava. This is one of the fields that goes through the narratives regardless interviewees' age, education, professional occupation during or after the revolution or the geographical region. I focus on this aspect because I argue that it has influenced later professional and potential political activities of women. All of the women I mentioned above were active in VPN and disappointment from the political attitudes of the VPN leadership, later separation of VPN and HZDS, nationalism and other problems within the movement were mentioned among reasons why they did or did not continue with their political activities¹⁵. Ľubica Blaškovičová as an independent candidate of local assembly in Košice

15 By political activities I mean here local, regional or national assemblies and activities in political parties.

expresses an effort to change local situation but at the same time there she refuses party politics. Zuzana Dzivjaková has, joined the right wing party OKS and though she did not explicitly stated it, one of the reason could be that one of the most important people of the Velvet Revolution Peter Zajac is in the leadership position in the party. Other mentioned women say that they left or did not enter politics what they understand as necessary connected with political parties or state offices. Because of this quite narrow meaning of politics they don't consider revolution as political activity. It has had an impact on the creation of historical canon - while women did not see their activities as political, they kept silent, did not write books, articles did not take part in creation of that canon. Of course this is only one side of the coins, only one influence of the canon. It is also important to stress the approach of the historians themselves or "old boys' networks" that just left out some women who do not fit into intended frames.

This refusal of political as activity connected with a political party or state is seen for instance in the narrative of Darina Kárová who explains her comeback to the theater in January 1990 as an end of the first phase of the revolution and supports it with the claim that she did not want to be involved in politics. However in her case doubts about the direction of the national politics, separation of Czechoslovakia and comeback of "communists" to the powerful positions are reasons why she thinks now she should have join politics. In a different direction the narrative of her colleague Lujza Bakošová was told when she sees as a reason of leaving politics after VPN was divided and transformed, it changed names and people. The change of ideas and disappointment with the political direction of VPN mentioned also Mária Filková as a reason why she was not a candidate of VPN in the first democratic parliamentary election. In her narrative frustration of lustrations, comeback of communists to positions of power and general disappointment with politics of VPN was expressed very clearly. Except of

this blaming strategy there is one more specificity for her narrative - she as the only interviewer described the Velvet Revolution in terms of conspiratory theory, as a action prepared by communists where revolutionaries were predominantly misused and where Václav Havel and communists agreed on political direction of Czechoslovakia. After her position as a secretary of a mayor Roman Hoffbauer, which she describes as: "he was there to represent and I was there to work", she established a Foundation Horsky park and she has been involved in environmental activities again.

Narrative strategy of predominantly negative experience uses also a member of the student movement active also in VPN Jana Oleárníková from Košice. She focuses on failures of the revolution from a lack of students involved in her school through bad relations within VPN, her hospitalization to the anger of separation of Czechoslovakia and current way of governmental politics in Slovakia. It is possible to trace interesting distinction between description of the student movement and VPN in her narrative. Those two are based on opposition and while the student movement is described as a place of intensive work, VPN where she was sent as a "spy" of the student movement was described as an arty place. Negative feelings towards VPN were caused also by an experience after she came back from the hospital and wanted to visit people in VPN but was not allowed to enter the building until one of the people that knew her let her go. As she explained, he was the only person from the former group that stayed in VPN. What I find interesting is that two women in VPN in Košice Ľubica Blaškovičová and Jana Oleárníková do not remember themselves. Though their two narratives offer another example of how meanings of the revolution have been created. Jana Oleárníková as one of the first members of the student movement in Košice stresses its importance, sees its activities as the first revolutionary activities in the city and blames VPN from a kind of colonization and stealing agenda of the student movement. On the other hand,

another part of the competitive story offers actress and VPN member Ľubica Blaškovičová who stresses that the first activities in the city took place in the theater and about the student movements she mentions that they have different aims focused predominantly on the academic field and were reluctant towards the situation in the society what was according to her also a case of the movement in the theater and what has contributed to some failures of the revolution. This case is an example how the student movement, VPN, movements in factories and other different groups (or member of the same group but in different regions) create different meanings of the same phenomena or an event. Difficulties with understanding this and often blaming who is right and which version should be written and remembered has been a source of various problems not only when talking about the Velvet Revolution.

Approach towards the revolution itself but also what she sees as a moment of understanding she is not a person who can express herself in a political manner (here understood more as public speeches and political correct language) has lead Jana Oleárníková to the nongovernmental sector where she works till today with women who have experienced violence. Because she believes that politics is a 'dirty game' and she is not suitable for it, she presents the third sector as a non-political but in a way powerful and suitable place for her.

3.2.2 Euphoria

The second narrative field presents predominantly positive approach towards the revolution. Though for Ľubica Trubíniová the beginning of the revolution was "an absolute change" and for Katarína Šimončíčová a continuation of her activities in environmental group, both of them express the revolution as something mostly positive. Another aspect they share was their activism and understanding of the revolution as something that brought them "a lot of work". Katarína Šimončíčová's chosen narrative field can be explained by the fact

that she spent in VPN only the first month and then she gave a birth so was not involved in the movement any more. And in comparison with other narratives this is usually described as "the happy period" while conflicts and disappointments came usually later. At the same time her current situation and her satisfaction with her environmentalist work also influenced the positive approach towards the revolution.

In Ľubica Trubíniová's case this can be explained her general satisfaction with her work in environmental field that began in the Velvet Revolution. This is the biggest influence she mentioned that the revolution has had on her life - her professional life, environmental activism, involvement in the Green Party when it was founded and where she came back in 2009 as a candidate to European Parliament. In 'green politics' has been active also Šimončíčová who is now retired but still traveling between Bratislava and Košice, she is a member of local assembly in Bratislava and active in environmental issues all over the country. Though not is environmental issues but in education is still active another retired woman Alžbeta Hanzlíková who uses grateful narrative as well and shares with two mentioned interviewees satisfaction with her career and an opinion that the revolution made her more active and brought her more work.

3.2.3. Indifference

The third narrative strategy where the revolution has been described in an indifferent way is used by punkers Barbara Lamoot and Lucia Bartošová, a member of the student movement in Bratislava Eva Lietavská, and former dissident and director of Charter 77 Foundation Zuzana Szatmáry. They have different reasons for the similar strategy.

Lucia Bartošová sees the revolution and change of the state regime through her work and changes she saw and felt there. For her the revolution was around her, was in outer world

but did not really interfere into her everyday life.

One I went home from work and so many people on a square and I did not understand what was going on. Then there was mentioned some revolution, some meetings and I said to myself God, where is police, if an army does not emerge on the corner or what. [laugh] So, it was strange, but I was about to go home, so I went home. (Lucia Bartošová, Bratislava)

For Lucia Bartošová more important than the revolutionary days were the consequences of the change of the regime in her everyday life. With this frame she sees the revolution as something that brought good and bad things at the same time, she is moving somewhere between 'safety' offered by previous regime and 'freedom' offered by new one. Interesting point in her narrative is also the influence of the revolution on the punk community which is mentioned in Barbara's narrative as well. Bartošová sees punker in two different ways: some of them have adapted and become successful (for instance businesspeople) and some of them who kept ideas that 'everything will be somehow' become wreck. In general Lucia and Barbara as well see the change of the regime as negative for the punk community itself because of flow of commerce, some of the places they used to go, for instance music market disappeared since they were not needed any more and it has become common to buy punk music in shops. Another 'attacked' level was the one about ideas of punk as resistance and rebellion against society and politics which needed to be rethink as many oppositions after any political or social change (Szemere, 1996).

Professional path of Lucia Bartošová and Barbara Lamoot after the change of regime has not changed and both of them work in art. But since Bartošová sees the change of regime mostly in her work, Lamoot describes also the possibility to move to "the West" (she has been living in Germany) and also 'everyday freedom' when her appearance was not a reason for police to check her on streets any more. Because as she stresses in the end of the interview: "it was a real psycho-terror. Really, if someone is checking you every day, if you want or not

hardness overcome you" (Barbara Lamoot, Bratislava).

'Hardness despite her will' plays an important (though implicit) role also in the narrative of dissident Zuzana Szatmáry. She presents herself as practical and tough woman but this toughness has an ambiguity in itself. On the one hand she thinks it has enabled her to do her job, work what she likes and achieve her goals. On the other hand she mentions several time in the interview that she did not want to be "like what". One of the reasons may be what she calls 'a cost for the revolution' - her divorce. "A wife flew out, I was not only a housewife any more, so he did not bear it and we got divorced". Though this was mentioned in the interview Zuzana Szatmáry did not want to claim that the revolution has somehow changed her life rather she prefers to stress that her opinions and attitudes have not been changed.

Zuzana Szatmáry as a person influenced also by experiences from 1968 sees the revolution in 'a practical' way - what was (not) done and should have been done. In this way she criticizes a lot those 'revolutionary leaders' who are seen here as unpractical representatives and women are seen as those who did all the 'real work'. She understands for instance her activities as one step ahead of 'these men' what she uses as an explanation for some of their conflicts. "Then you are a thorn in their eyes," she explains the consequences of some of her pioneering activities enabled also by cooperation with the Western European working partners.

Overall Szatmáry's notion of the revolution is ambiguous told in a way focused on work and relations between her and other people where an important role has her father and some other dissidents like Milan Šimečka. During the revolution she became a director of the Charter 77 Foundation where has work till today.

A big change caused by the revolution sees in her life also Eva Lietavská who is living abroad now. As she concludes the change of regime enabled her to travel and work abroad

where she met her husband and stayed till today. Though when talking about the revolution there are some 'black spots' caused by a trauma she experienced later and which lead her to omit some of her memories. This is one of the reasons of her indifferent understanding of the revolution.

Meanings that interviewees attributed to the revolution, respectively those meanings that they present in their narratives are more negative than I expect in the beginning of the research. Though skepticism in the society. Though many of the interviewees perceived the beginning of the revolution as a "big change", later on in their narratives they present strong frustration, regardless they age, geographical position. What matters the most here is their professional occupation and satisfaction with their professional life, whether it was environmental activist, university teacher or politician. Among the most often narrative strategies there were blaming strategies that were used by interviewees with bitter personal stories, by those who feel victimized for their revolutionary activism. Another key factor here is the limitation those narrative fields that are applicable for successful women. Either is used masculinist narrative field stressing how simple and obvious was to achieve some goals or narratives that undermine interviewees' agency and devalue their activities. In this research the second narrative was used more often.

Conclusion

"Women need to hear and know about the stories of other women, about their survival strategies in the diverse forms of the patriarchal system: from adaptation, obedience, passivity, to efforts made to escape the expected roles and tasks." (Kiczková, 2006, p. 18) As one of my findings I can say that this claim works for me. In the Methodological Chapter I wrote that besides mechanisms of invisibilization of women in the Velvet Revolution I will also analyze my reactions to the process and findings of this research. And one of my reactions is the very skepticism to historical books I (will) read. I just have a feeling that there is always something left. Like in this research.

So, when this is the first step to broader and longer research about not only the Velvet Revolution but various forms of resistance (and re-negotiation of the meaning of dissent) of women in socialist Czechoslovakia, let me summarize the basic findings of the thesis.

The discussion about the lack of women in politics in post-state socialist countries could include two more fields that is worth to focus on. The first one is the place and work of women in the revolutions, respectively in the time of turbulent changes of the state regimes. The second one is closely connected and that is the way how the free public offices are distributed. In the case of the Slovak part of the country in the Velvet Revolution the "old boys network" spreading from few men considered the leaders of the revolution in Slovakia to their friends. In the time when except of members of the Communist Party nobody had experiences with public offices, this process is easy to defend. But my objective is not to blame, rather show that the building of the democratic country was gender blind from the first moment and that civil society celebrated by dissent was not a place of equality for all even in the theoretical level. This is also enabled by taking Foucault concepts of decentralized power, as it was showed in the analytical part, and applying it into the social movements themselves.

Than it will be more obvious that alternative public sphere of these social movements was a place of men's work with higher potential to become "charismatic" when comes to tribune and women's work that usually remained invisible together with most of infrapolitics.

Another finding challenges the notions of private, public and alternative public sphere and shows that not only it is hard to distinguish between them but also that to understand the process of invisibilization of women in the Velvet Revolution it is necessary to change concepts and sometimes use infiltrations of spheres, sometimes their fractal character. This is for sure one of the aspects of this research where it is important to go further and maybe come with new concepts and theories that would be useful in practice (would go beyond saying that it "challenge" the current used concepts) and at the same time would omitted hierarchical notion public and private that is undermining concepts used nowadays.

Not only hierarchization of public and private and continuous attribution men to public and women to private sphere, but also gender segregation of paid work has contributed to (in)visibility of women. Initiatives of teachers were invisible but while actresses and their skills to talk to public were more used in the meetings on squares and therefore more publicly visible. Important role has geographical location and power relations between Bratislava and Prague and other cities. Focusing on those two cities, as it is usually done in the mainstream history, omits many activities and many women from history. The same omission is done by focusing on "the leaders of the revolution" and leaving out many people around them without whom the revolution would not be possible. And as it was shown in the analytical chapter, who will be considered "charismatic leaders" is highly influenced by gender of this person and gender stereotypes in the society.

Describing these factors is not enough and there should be much more done in this field of research. These mechanisms should be taken into account when writing about history

not only of the Velvet Revolution. And maybe after talking about women in history more new narrative field emerge, will be constructed or produced, narrative of successful woman who does not need to neither devalue her contribution nor use superficial masculine narrative field. „Experience of women, recorded and stored as a memory, can be inspiring for individual, social and political activities of further generations of women, and can also be a source of their confidence and necessary solidarity.” (Kiczková, 2006, p. 12)

Appendix 1

Brief biographical information about interviewees

Lujza Bakošová (1957) finished the Faculty of Pedagogy at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. Till the revolution she worked for the Trade Institute of Board of the Trade (Inštitút obchody Ministerstva obchodu) in Nitra. In the revolution she became a head of the County Council of VPN in Nitra and she was one of the founders of the first independent newspapers in the Slovak part of the country which she lead for one year. Nowadays she is a freelancer and besides other things she works in Association Theatrical Nitra (Divadelná Nitra).

Lucia Bartošová (1968) was a member of punk community during the revolution and she worked in the House of the Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship (Dom Československo-Sovietskeho priateľstva) as a photographer. Nowadays she works in the Foundation of Current Fine Arts (Nadácia súčasného výtvarného umenia).

Ľuba Blaškovičová (1955) finished the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in Bratislava. Since 1978 she has been an actress in the State Theater in Košice and in 1989 she became a part of the theatrical revolutionary movement. Since 1990 she has been a member of the Local Assembly in Košice and since 2002 she has been a member of the City Assembly of Košice. She is not a candidate of any political party. Blaškovičová is a manager and coordinator of NGO Old-City Theater (Staromestské divadlo) and the director of the festival European Independent Theaters (Európske nezávislé divadlá).

Zuzana Dzivjaková (1956) finished Economic University in Bratislava. During the revolution she worked in the factory Chemkostav Humenné where she was one of the founders of the VPN center. From 1990 she worked as a head of the City Council in Humenné. In 1992 she started to work in the Ministry of labor and social affairs in Bratislava where she stayed for one year. Since 2000 she

has been working in the financial institution founded by the Department of the Exchequer. She is a candidate in 2010 election to the Slovak National Parliament for a political party OKS.

Alžbeta Hanzlíková (1935) is a prelector in the field of nursery. In the state socialism she worked as a teacher in the High School of Nursery (Stredná zdravotnícka škola) in Martin, after the Velvet Revolution she became a teacher at Jessenius Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University.

Nowadays she lives in the village Necpaly close to the town Martin, she is retired and still has part-time jobs at College of nursery and social work of st. Alžbeta in Bratislava and Faculty of nursery of Catholic University in Ružomberok.

Darina Kárová finished the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (Vysoká škola múzických umení - VŠMU) in Bratislava. From 1975 till 1998 worked as a dramaturgist in A. Bagar Theater in Nitra and also as a teacher at VŠMU. In the revolution she was one of the founders of the first independent newspapers in the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia and one of the revolutionary leaders in Nitra. She was a part of the theatrical movement. After she left the theater she became a director of the art section in the Ministry of Culture. Nowadays she is a director of the festival Theatrical Nitra (Divadelná Nitra).

Júlia Krpelanová has been a teacher in secondary school in Prievidza. During the revolution she was one of the founders of the Teachers' Forum that was a part of the movement Public against Violence.

Barbara Lamoot (1970) was a high school student before the revolution and a member of punk community. After the change of the regime she left the country and nowadays she has been living between Slovakia and Germany. She has been working as an a fine artist and finishing her PhD in the university in Banská Bystrica.

Eva Lietavská was a university student in the revolution and she became a part of the student movement in Bratislava. After the revolution she has left the country and nowadays she is living in the Germany.

Jana Oleárníková (1969) studied medicine in the university in Košice and when the Velvet Revolution started she became a part of the student movement. After the change of the regime she finished her last year at school and worked as a doctor for four years. Nowadays she is living in Košice and works as a head of the feminist organization Fenestra providing help for women who experienced gender based violence.

Eleonóra Sándorová (1959) was living in Šal'a and working in a museum in Galanta in the state socialism. She was a part of the Hungarian-minority movement. In 1990 she became a member of the Czechoslovak Federal Parliament and has left ethnographic field of science. Nowadays she is living in Šamorín and working in the office of the Slovak National Parliament.

Zuzana Szatmáry (1947) studied architecture, sociology and informatics. In the state-socialism as a former dissident worked in a detention home, as a cleaning lady or a translator. Since 1990 she is a director of the Foundation Charter 77. In 1993 she received the Woman of Europe Award.

Katarína Šimončíčová (1948) finished The Technical University of Košice. In the state-socialism she was a part of the environmental movement and a member of the organization SZOPK. Before the revolution she worked in the Slovak Academy of Science and from the summer 1989 she was on the maternal leave. Nowadays she has been retired but still has been working for SZOPK. She is also a member of the committee for environment in the City Assembly in Bratislava (as a non-member of the Assembly).

Ľubica Trubíniová (1958) worked in the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava where she also finished her university degree. In 1990 she became a member of the City Assembly of Bratislava as a representative of the Green Party. In the revolution she started her environmentalist activism, became a member of SZOPK and almost three years later she was one of the founders of the Greenpeace in Czechoslovakia. In 2009 she was a candidate to European Parliament. Nowadays she is working in NGO Citizen and Democracy (Občan a demokracia).

Magdaléna Vášáryová (1948) finished Faculty of Arts at Comenius University in Bratislava. Till the Velvet Revolution she worked as an actress and she was involved in the theatrical movement, but in 1990 she became an ambassador in Austria. She was one of the founders and the director of the Slovak Society for foreign politics (Slovenská spoločnosť pre zahraničnú politiku). Nowadays she is a member the Slovak National Parliament and she is also a candidate in the 2010 election to the parliament for the political party SDKU-DS.

Biographical information have been gained from the interviewees and from the website www.osobnosti.sk.

Appendix 2

The first open question asked in the beginning of every interview:

I am interested in finding out how women remember the Velvet Revolution 1989. Could you, please, tell me more about your experiences at that time?

Potential Interview Questions

These questions were or were not asked during the interview, depending on the previous interviewee's answer. If some of them were not answered in partner's talk, I raised them in the last part of the interview.

How did your life look like before the Velvet Revolution?

How have you been involved in (christian, punk, Hungarian, environmental, other) dissent group?

What did you do within the group?

How did the group work? What were your activities?

How did meetings of the group members look like? Where did they take place?

Who were members of the group? How were the relations within the group?

How was the group lead?

How were relations with other groups of resistance?

How has the group contributed to the regime change?

What were your goals? What did you achieve?

How did you personally participate in the revolution? What did you do in November 1989? How did you participate in negotiations with the communist government, respectively in establishing new government?

Have you become a member of any new political party at that time? Why?

How has your life changed after the Velvet Revolution? How did the Velvet Revolution and your activities influence your life?

What are your best experiences from that period?

What you would change from that period? Tell me about disappointments you experienced at that time.

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