

Ildikó Asztalos Morell: Collectivization and the transfer of soft capital in two life stories from Hungary

Introduction

State socialist societies experienced transitions first from a post-feudal capitalist society to state socialism and later to capitalism. Path dependency theories argue that transitions do not occur in an empty space and we can rather talk about transformations than about shifts from one system to the other (Stark, 1992). Similarly, institutional theories emphasize the inertia of institutions (Nord). The point of gravitation for system changes in transition countries circled around the issue of property rights over the means of production and around the forms of their appropriation. Transformations were accompanied with the shift of property rights between private and public forms. While the accumulation of economic capital is crucial for the reproduction of production systems, Bourdieconomics (Svendssen, 2003) emphasizes that other, soft forms of capital are also needed for the operation and accumulation of economic assets (Svendssen, 2004, 2006, Coleman, 1988, Putman, 2000). System changes challenged not only the validity of economic but even of soft forms of capital. Considering, that control over the means of production is the heart of power in societies, this power was exercised by control over property under capitalism, while by control over the operation of the means of production under state socialism. It is shown that large sections of the state socialist technocratic and teleological ruling elite (Szelényi and Konrád, 1979) succeeded to transfer its power positions within the state socialist system to economic assets in the capitalist system (Szelényi, et. al. 1988, Kovács, 1994). In contrast, the transformation from post feudal capitalism to state socialism was accompanied with the discrediting of the former ruling class as legitimate controller over the means of production (Závada, 1985). Taken the case of agriculture, it was argued that despite of the repressions of the fifties, a certain continuity of the middle-range of the pre-socialist farmer strata occurred into the emerging collective managerial strata from the collectivization vogue of the sixties (Juhász, 1983, Szelényi, et. al., 1988). Meanwhile, the majority of the former peasantry was forced into collective frames and could not reclaim positions of power in the state socialist system.

Seen from the perspective of individual life experiences transitions released traumas. Collectivisation implied the personal loss of property (ownership and operation) rights over the means of production. Stripped from identity forming assets, the chances of individual farmers to find positions in the emerging system were not only structurally determined by the obtrusive, totalitarian system, but also by individual and collective strategies of resistance. With the help of Bourdieconomics, we can argue that the accumulation of soft form of capital were essential assets that could be mobilized in the transformation process. Irrespective of the way how individual lives surpassed the shift, collectivization was enacted against the will of the peasantry causing surmountable trauma. Being a peasant/farmer at the down of collectivization was described as an existence on the verge between the traditional ways rooted in post-feudal mores and being a rational minded farmer. The peasantry was also deeply divided socially, where the overwhelming majority vegetated on the verge of existence (Erdei, 1988). Despite of these differences, not counting those on the verge of agrar-proletarian existence, peasants/farmers shared in common a desire to realize a self-determinant way

of being. These desires materialized in the self-reproducing family farm. Autonomy is considered as the essence of being one's own lord. Collectivization took not only the material assets from the peasantry but annihilated the foundations of a way of being. Szelényi et. al. (1988) argued that the middle peasantry could transubstantiate this disembodied from its material conditions detached energy to expand the iron cage of collectivization in the household based production tolerated on the small household lots. Others managed to find loopholes in the new structures of the state socialist production apparatus.

Opportunity structures that opened in the new system varied in terms of gender. These structures were gendered both on the societal level due to the intentions of the totalitarian regime, which placed dual expectations on women's bodies (Asztalos Morell, 1999). On the one hand they were to be integrated into the wage labour regime serving its resource limited demand for labour (Kornai, 1985) to serve in the building of the new production apparatus. On the other hand women were to render their reproductive bodies to the pro-natalist desires of the state (Gál, 1997, Goven, 1993). Women's primary responsibility for care prevailed, even if the paternal state's provision (economic and institutional) was to ease women's reproductive burdens (Haney, 2002). Meanwhile, while men's abilities to realize the role as the main breadwinner were shortened, it was none-the-less not suspended; rather a modified male breadwinner model emerged. This duality was all the stronger in case of agriculture, where the seasonally varying demand of cultivation under conditions of early mechanization had excessive demand for raw physical labour reserves (Asztalos Morell, 1999, Goven, 1993). Opportunity structures varied also due to the inevitable impact of human factors specific to local production and ruling regimes. The evolving gender segregation of labour set institutional frames for the transubstantiation of power from one system to the other. While the emancipation ideology of the fifties aimed at radically transforming women's roles in the labour force shape after men, the sixties, the period of resolute collectivization, pleaded for jobs suitable for women (Asztalos Morell, 2007) and reinstalling the natural gender order (Gál, 1997).

Looked at it from the point of the individual the peasant ways of life led to the accumulation of not only material but even immaterial assets. These immaterial assets could be mobilized in the transition. While previous research, such as Szelényi et.al.'s (1988) model of parking orbits, showed potential opportunity paths from one system to the other we are still short in exploring the ways how trauma in connection to system changes were made sense of by the agents of these transitions. Individual paths from one system to the other unavoidably faced the confrontation with the totalitarian challenge. In case of collectivization, portraying the peasantry as a passive victim comes short of showing the creative energies that immaterial resources meant for reinstating personal harmony with life within the obtrusive conditions. People faced life choices, which, although determined by the conditions created by collectivization, nonetheless offered the opportunity for individual agency. The life paths surmounting as a result of these choices had to be made sensible by the agents of doing and had to be resolved in ways which allowed the maintenance of personal self-respect (Skeggs, 1997). Respectability for one self and in the eye of relevant others implies viewing one-self as an honorable person with integrity, being an agent, doing best one can, being in charge over one's own life in line with the prevailing respected norms. Becoming a winner or loser in the new system opened for diverse dissonances. Being the winner, implied making a pact with the offender, and while being the loser offered the solidarity with those in the similar stance. My ambition in this paper is to explore in light of two life stories (Bertaux, 1981 Foss, 2004, s 82) how individual agents made sense of experiencing and resolving life choices that emerged in the context

of traumatic events of collectivization. Furthermore, I intend to elucidate ways of transubstantiating resources from one system to the other and how these are made sense of by my informants.

Life-history method

Life histories emerged to bring voices of those who otherwise would not be heard (Thompson). There is a tension between those who would like to see life-histories as kind of archives of the past and make claims on them as realistic reflections on past events. In contrast, others argue that life histories are identity constructions. Through reflecting on past events the narrator positions oneself in a social, institutional context (Portelli, 1991). Constructionists make important reservation towards the interpretation of life stories, which concerns the ways of their coming to being. According to Bruner (1987) autobiographies are products of ongoing reinterpretation of past events. Thus they are products of selective remembering (Foss, 2004), which is narrated to the interviewer. Hence, they are a dialogical in their nature and are co-produced with an audience. Bertaux (1981) suggest the term of life story instead of life history to mark the subjective, self-reflecting features of memories of the past. Another invention points out that life stories are told within narrative conventions. According to Gergen (1994) life stories commonly have two elements: the plot and the event. The event is the real life feature of the story. Meanwhile stories contain a plot, through which the identities of the narrator become expressed. One can e.g. position oneself as a victim of atrocities or as a hero of resistance.

Some argue that there are distinctive gender patterns in telling life stories. Female life histories indicate an “interdependent” self-construal, while male scripts construct a more “independent” self-construal (Cross et.al. 1997, p5). Bertaux-Wiane (1981, see Öberg, 1999, p 20) differentiates between a male subject, where the story telling I is “goal-oriented, makes independent decisions and has an independent life” and a female subject, where life-story is not consistent, and the central is the relation of the story teller to other people. “The central is not to tell what one has achieved, but what has happened in relation to the other, close-by people” (p20). Women use more often “we” and men “I”. In literary self biographies men typically describe life in a chronological way where the achievements of the adult men could be elucidated by previous life events. In contrast women’s stories are more anecdotic in form and have the focus on important others, such as their husbands (Fahlgren, 1987, p 113). Intersectional aspects in story telling are explored newly in life story research (Wang, 2001, p 230, Prins, Reese-Fivush, 2008) indicating that gender is constructed in articulation with other traits of differentiation.

Critical life events often provoke the reassessment of the self-perception (Foss, 2004). Foss (2004) argues along others (Ardelaid-Tart, 2006) that critical life events, traumas challenge the perception of the self and offer opportunities to (re)formulate the perceptions about the self. Experiences, when the self and society, ideals and realities cross (Riesman, 1993) necessitate formulating who we really are. Traumatic events may emerge along happenings of more personal nature and can be shared by larger collectives. While observing the characteristic features of life stories as self-reflections it is important to recognize that these reflections emerge from experiencing real life events. The traumas that collectivization triggered in people’s life cannot be simply considered the artifact of intentional mind constructions. Therefore, I plead here along Öberg (1999) for the possibility to take a middle of the way approach between the realistic and the constructionist view.

Above I elaborated along a theoretical and a methodological framework for exploring how the trauma of collectivization has impacted on the peasantry. Collectivization was perceived as a trauma that ripped the peasantry from the ownership of assets, but even challenged fundamental ways of existence based on autonomous action. Below I attempt to elaborate how this trauma was experienced, understood and remembered and narrated in life story accounts. Based on these two frameworks two life story accounts are to be interpreted from the following aspects: a) the description of collectivization and surrounding events; b) how is the personal engagement positioned in the plot and how is personal respectability restored in the event; c) what kind of resources are mobilized in the effort to reinstall respectability? d) How is gender done in these life stories?

Two life stories

József Daróczy

“This village has been occupied with gardening since the 1930’s. ... We were going up to Pest market with horse and cart. ... I was little, a little kid at that time. Then this life took an end in 1960, we were collectivized. We entered freely [smile] to the cooperative. If you are interested I tell you a few episodes about how freely [smile] we joined the cooperative. We had a very large luck here in G. Only the priest and the bell-ringer were not cooperative members. Everybody entered the cooperative. There was a very large production here, and they gave us the possibility to a family lot. And then we started to go to the market in Budapest again.” (Senior József Daróczy)

The collectivization trauma

József describes collectivization on various levels: an event for the peasantry at large, an event for the local community and as an event affecting his own life.

In József’s life collectivization meant a fundamental change. József was 20 when he got married in 1950. He married the daughter of one of the local war widow with a sizeable land (20 holds, ca 10 hectares). He moved in to their home as a son-in-law and took over the farm. They soon had two sons, one of which is Dávid and the other János. József’s parents started to come to an age, his father reached 60 and now, that József’s future (who was to inherit the farm) was bound with his wife, László did not manage alone with the farm. He divided his mark: all the children received 5 holds, he kept 5. The rest was taken by the state, during the purges against the kulaks in the fifties. József and the siblings helped out their father: “my father had a horse left. The big things, we had a very good relation, I fixed for him. My brother-in-law helped also, but he did not have to do the heavy things. He [László] was sixty years old, and I was a young man full of my power. I did it all, since I loved him; we had a very good relation.” József expected to take over the farm, when his father would no longer manage on his own. However, collectivization in 1960 put an end to their plans: “the cooperative took everything, from the last pair of horses”. First in the fifties, they took the best part of the land for the state farm, than in 1960, they took the rest. Everything got confused. They did not bother to register what they took and where. At collectivization only the gold crown (arany korona) value of the land got registered.

On a national level József argues that the villages were destroyed three times: during the war, in the various vogues of collectivization and finally following the post-socialist privatization. He sees these

three processes leading to the “annihilation of the peasantry” in which process “the land was taken below the feet of the village”. In the war the tangible assets were annihilated: “the Russian lived up everything. There was not even a hen left in the village”. The loss of the battle in Stalingrad took the toll of 12 men from the village leaving widows after with families. Collectivisation proceeded in vagues. At first the best lands were taken from the farmers without compensation. A state farm and a co-operative were formed from agrarian worker families. The peasants were pressured with high taxes. Despite of worsened conditions the peasants did not give up their land. The final rendering came by in 1960. However, early collectivization offered those who joined a household plot, which became gradually the base of increasing consumption standards for the villagers. The destruction of the cooperatives following 1992 cut the navel of livelihood from the majority of villagers. According József, restitution of former property rights was only partially realized. New “barons” emerged from outside the village, which captured much of the land that belonged to villagers prior to collectivization.

In the life of his village collectivisation was accomplished during a week’s time according to József. It started with a general meeting called by the district party committee:

They called the peasants to understand the “demand of the new times and the promise of a new life [smile]. The day after this the inaugurated quilted jacket secret police in civil clothing (“beavatott pufajkások civilben”) started to go from house to house asking people to sign. They started kindly, asking people to sign. They waited one-two days. And then they started to call in those who did not sign to their headquarters in the City Hall at 6-8 p.m. They had a room there. And they crushed the people there, smashed and everything.”

A dark history turning to light

József had a narrow escape due to a friend who was working at the City Hall. He tried to warn József to sign to avoid the beat up. József said he would sign if the others sign. His friend promised the “pufajkás” (quilted jacket) agitators to convince his friend to sign; only they left him alone. One day he came and said that all the other have signed and he could not keep the agitators longer. He agreed first then:

“‘My Jozsi, there is a big problem! The time has come! Almost everybody signed. Either I come with your signature before noon, or they come and take you tonight.’ And then I signed it. The family was crying. This was not a little thing to sign it. A brutal thing.... It was in december 1959. And we stared year 1960 already like that.”

In József’s account, his village was rather exceptional, since everybody joined. In many villages the so called kulaks were not only excluded, but they were made the victims of harsh anti-propaganda. But in the village they held together, something that József considered giving strength for the newly found cooperative:

“As I said, everybody joined. They took everybody. Nobody was excluded at us; no one was prohibited to join. Because, where they could, they excluded the kulaks, by purpose. They [took first their mark and then they] were assigned a lot for them in abandoned places. They did not care for those 4-5 people and they reached their goal by it. But for us everyone counted, because, at us they could not divide the village. They could not paint them [the kulaks] in those ways, as they made them look for the simple people, those they could feed with such ideas.”

For József, the *village spirit*, this *solidarity* of the village members with each-other facing the evil gave them the strength to face the new conditions with joint power. This gave them the power to turn the page and start from base A:

“By the time the sunshine rose in February, we went to farm, as if it was ours. Everybody started, everybody bare the seed, the carts came. Everything was measured out, how much. We could not even harvest the wheat that we have sown in 1959. That wheat was harvested by the coop in 1960. And the cooperative started. We could organize us within the cooperative. We bought machines, we made advantage of state subsidies, we bought lorries.”

József became first brigade leader, in 1963 branch leader and in 1975 leader for a larger branch. “In general those became the leaders who were acknowledged even before in the private era.” The cooperative did very well, and people could soon make a good living. The leadership worked for the membership and there was a brotherly division of the benefits: “There was no differentiation that the leaders get this much and the workers this much... The leaders did not take away the money as later.” Not only were the members satisfied, but the cooperative could show up results that reached the double of the neighboring cooperative.

József draws a multifaceted plot of himself in the context of collectivization. On the one hand he shows the cruelties collectivization's by depicting the systematic way how peasants were pressurized both psychologically and physically. However, while admitting to the horrors of the event, he escaped these. Escaping the horrors of the terror could plot one as a collaborator, especially with fact in hand of having become a leader in the new system. He meets this challenge in his story by several side plots. Firstly, he depicts himself as a respected man in the local community, one with allies even among the lies of the “enemy”. Secondly, he plots himself as an operator keeping the initiative and holding the upper hand over events of life with the ability to turn bad things good not only for his own but even for others benefit. Thirdly, he circumvents being seen as collaborator by waiting out the moment of no turn. Passing this moment he takes a pragmatic stance and work to make the best of it. Fourthly, he attributes the benefits of this to the joint effort of the villagers and depicts himself as a leader among equals.

Personal resources and transitions

József identifies the origins of his knowhow originating from the pre-collective period. József depicts himself and his clan as a respected one, where soft forms of capital (“attitude to the economy”) and family solidarity were crucial. Despite of the value that land had, József argued that land alone did not contribute to the wealth of the farming family. His parental family was among the richest in the village. As he expressed “our was a world in its own right”. Despite of it he argued that even if one had half of the size of the land, but had a *family that held together* and knew *how to run the farm* (“if one had the right attitude to the economy”) could live just as good from half of the size of land since “...the market solved everything. If one *knew* what to produce, what kind of product, and when someone comes to the market, than the *good quality* product is what matters. One can make money only from that”. Another way József explained the necessary ingredients of family success were to find a balance between leadership “one being the clever” and obedience following the advice of the clever one. “If everybody is clever in a family, there is big trouble. But if it is the opposite, that is trouble, too.” Leaving the era of family farming behind József found these soft assets working for his and the cooperatives benefit.

József's account attributes the good results of the cooperative to two crucial factors: the cooperative utilized the knowhow of those farmers who were successful prior to collectivization instead of excluding them as class enemies. In this meaning, József himself could transubstantiate his experience, *know-how* and entrepreneurial *habitus* to leading positions in the cooperative. This position in turn benefited the cooperative. For the other, József saw an added value in the *social capital* accumulated in the solidarity shown by the villagers. It was this spirit of solidarity that was transubstantiated into sheer mental and physical energy making the cooperative function, since "everybody worked as if they worked in their own". There was a spirit of mutual trust both between workers all working for the common: "nobody was stealing", and between workers and the leaders: "the leaders did not take advantage", there was a transparency: "the results came, the money was coming, and everybody knew, the members knew, how much money we have". There were no complaints that someone would not have been paid for his work. Thus, the mutual trust between the leadership and its members became a *social capital* vested in the combined sum of qualitative relations in the organization, bringing profits to the cooperative as a whole.

The leaders in the village cooperative realized also that the success of the unit depended on utilizing the system: "the leadership, these peasant people realized, where from the wind is blowing". The internal bonding of the village had to be complemented external contacts to the centers of power. The cooperative had to be integrated in the economic system at large and its conditions: "They came here to have fun from the party committee, as friends. I say this seriously, since they had nothing to do here. Everything worked smoothly here. They did not have to say here when one should be harvesting and sawing. Here, everybody knew everything." Thus, the necessary requirement was to harbor *bridging capital* with those in power. The "others", i.e. the regional party leaders are ripped from the attributes of brutality. József plots fraternization as acceptable, since the comrades are to ensure the good quality of production and since keeping good terms with the power is seen as beneficial for the local cooperative. Running well the cooperative kept also the party leaders away from wanting to interfere and showed also József as a leader in control, able to steward a ship in risky waters.

However, this decade of recovery and development took soon an end, when the thriving local cooperative was forced to merge with neighbor cooperatives ran with large losses. This cooperative was double the double the size of the local one, yet produced less. The leaders were party appointed, and they became the leaders for the united cooperative. József's cooperative got the work, and the neighbor unit gave the leaders. The trust built up during the past period was broken. The gap between the leadership and the membership widened:

"Later [after the cooperative joined with a larger cooperative] it was different. I and the cooperative president, we together earned 200.000 Ft at the end of the year. He took 150.000 of this, and I received 50.000. I used to say, that we were the same age, had the same education, and he got three times as me. The people were exploited very much. It was much more just here."

The mergers destroyed the social capital that was built up among villagers and it dragged down the moral and production of the old cooperative.

József makes early collectivization into a success story, where the advances are attributed to the solidarity of villagers and to diligent leaders standing as one among equals. The horrors of

collectivization were turned into success. Concerning himself, he plots himself utilizing his soft capital resources: a) social capital, both in terms of bonding with the villagers and bridging in terms of being able to form alliances over, if necessary, “enemy lines” and b) cultural capital, in terms keeping the *modus Vivendi* in events having “habitus” of mastering events.

Fraternity and transitions

József’s life story is clearly told from the position of a man with good social and economic standing. He took over a farm as a head, where although his wife was the inheritor, lacking a son, he became the son-in-law farmer. He was socialized into this role from childhood. Through his (and his father’s) merits the family, represented primarily by its male heads, had a good standing in the village. This privileged position and the fraternity between villagers saved him from the fate of less lucky brothers. Being the leader among equal brothers he could be one of the leaders creating a new life within the unavoidable frames created by the system. József’s first wife died early. Remarried they soon created a new home. József’s wife Anna had a seasonal work in the cooperative. Beyond this she labored mostly in the home both carrying duties and small scale agricultural production for the household needs. She contributed also to the family’s sourkraut fermenting enterprise that József initiated. She sold the products on the city markets. József drove up the sourkraut in large barrels two mornings in the week, and Anna stayed there selling. Even in the family, József was the one creating the frames for the venture, while Anna and later the children worked actively in realizing it. In this sense the household’s production functions were reinstated, as well as the gender contract of the peasant family, where the wife’s primary duties contain both caring and productive activities, while the husband’s is the leader and venturer establishing the context for the work.

Katalin Varga

“The co-operative started at that time. I am never going to forget it. How horrible it was. I was taken home from the hospital, and they were there, we called them the agitators, they were already there. Her name was Mrs Bözsi M.. She was a big captain. I went to her to cry. I said: ‘They took me home with the little babies. Here is Magdi, she is just to turn two in July. What should I do?’ ‘We solve it!’ she said. We could not take her to day-care. There was no crèche. We could not do anything. I should join with the whole property into the co-operative, and my husband should go and take a job, so he can supply for the family, since there was no money from the co-operative, despite of the fact that we handed over everything!”

The event of collectivization

Katalin originates from a neighboring village, where the conditions of collectivization were different as well as Katalin’s and her family’s resources to meet the events. According to Katalin, by the time collectivization came they were already severed by deliveries. “we used the land, but when we were harvesting, by that time, everything was sent away according to, how much wheat, mice, everything should be delivered”. When I asked, whether collectivization was achieved by physical force in 1959 she answered: “They did not have to beat up. We were so crossed [mentally and economically] by that time, that we did not know what we should do.” The forced delivery system deprived the family from disposition over the yield, yet the farm could function the traditional way.

Collectivization deprived the family not only from its yields, but also from equipment and land, and consequently from their ability to provide for the subsistence of the family autonomously. Upon collectivization all productive assets and even yields, due to purging delivery quotas, of the previous season were taken away depriving the family even from basic staples.

“We had a cow. Even that we bought already with my husband [after buying out Katalin’s sister-in-laws]. Since we had two children, it would have been very good. We had to deliver even that, since they took away everything, the yield, the hay. There were big stacks, lucerne stacks We thought that we deliver the half of the lucerne stacks, and sell the other half, to get some money, in order to be able to eat, since we had no other source of money. But they took even that. They came with the tractor and packed up everything on earth, the cornstalk cutter, what only existed, harrow, everything-everything. We could have built a house for that. They took it, and we received absolutely nothing in the world. Not even an advance payment, so that our life would be easier.”

Beyond the economic drudgery attached to collectivization, Katalin highlights the involuntary nature of the process depriving them from personal autonomy in the process. They had a strategy, in which they planned to join leaving means for the coming season for the family: “we thought that we deliver the half of the lucerne stacks and sell the other half”. But collectivization was carried through in a merciless fashion leaving no space for individual maneuvering.

As told by Katalin the very event of collectivization coincided with the time when Ilona returned with her second baby. Thus, she is plotting herself in the position of a young mother facing the trauma of collectivization. By collectivization not only the production base, but even the traditional ways of organizing care were challenged. The farm family opened autonomous ways for organizing care along the collaboration between generations, a system that collectivization impinged upon.

Plotting deprivation

Katalin, in contrast to József, plots herself not as an individual, but as a mother and responsible for her family. Rather than an operator she depicts herself as a victim of ruthless brutality directed against her family at large and herself as a mother in specific. Her narrative accentuates the drudgery of the experience as a woman coming home from the delivery of her second child, not knowing how she could solve working on the fields and the care for her two small children: “I went to her to cry, I said: ‘They took me home with the little baby. ... What should I do?’”. Mrs Bözsi came to their home and drove through the forced collectivization:

“Question: Did they try to convince people forcefully? Answer: Very forcefully. I was crying so badly. You can imagine. Two little children, and this big, powerful communist woman, Mrs Bözsi, did not leave me alone. She did not have pardon for anybody, workers, nobody in this world.”

Thus, in Katalin’s narrative, the inhuman nature of Mrs Bözsi is strengthened. Seeking help in a vulnerable situation as a mother she searched help at her as another woman. The victimization of the experience is accentuated by this refusal to meet her outcry. Her outcry nonetheless helps to show her agency in the desperate situation. She did voice her anxiety, she did cry for the sake of her children’s fate.

One of the hardest experiences was to become subordinated into the co-operative command system. The order of command was experienced as brutal, inhuman and insensitive. Katalin remembers especially one leader “Bözsike” that has treated her unjustly:

“If we were capable of picking it or not did not interest them. If we were not ready with the picking they were screaming. Mrs Bözsi was screaming and cursing. Puh! She was a very rude person. Despite of the fact that I had a very *able bodied father*, he was decisive and hard working, everything. But *nobody* could deal with them. It had to be as they commended. If they were commanding rudely, it would have led only to trouble. Everybody got accustomed that it had to be as they said.”

In contrast to her outcry upon collectivization, she depicts the loss of meaning in voicing concerns: “it would have led only to trouble. Everybody got accustomed that it had to be as they said”. Thus, acceptance was a strategy which rose out of experience. Collectivization meant for Katalin not only a deprivation from the land, but even the deprivation from respectable labour conditions and the lack of human respect from those commanding over her labor.

She restores respectability in her narrative, despite of victimizing herself, by positioning herself as one of the villagers. Keeping silence, not rebelling was one of the major strategies applied. Showing her fate as a common one restores her own self-respect in the narrative. Beyond positioning herself among villagers in general, she also associates her faith with other fellow women. However, she finds her own position favorable in some aspects compared to them. Work duties were all demanding hard manual physical labor, including field work, manual gathering of yield, lasting manure, fertilizers, laying grass.... Women were to help with all kinds of manual labor beyond the responsibility of cultivating a certain area for a certain product. The work load was experienced so hard that it was dangerous for the *health*. Katalin saw herself as lucky compared to women who had not family resources who could assist them with help: “there were women, who were already 50-55 years old, and their children left the family, and all had their own families, and could not go and help them. The unfortunate ones, how much they worked. All of them are handicapped today. There is not a healthy woman in the village.” The system did not allow for sick leaves, since deliveries had to be made on an individual basis: “The fate has been hard on us. Even if he had problems, we could not take sick-leave. We could go to a doctor, but it was in vain that he gave an injection or anything. Whatever happened, we had to do go out, since the cucumbers had to be picked, whether we had the capability or not.”

While work conditions in the cooperative were so severe, the question emerges why she chose to stay. Katalin explains her “choice” of staying in the cooperative as a result of lacking alternatives. As mother of three children, she had to see the children’s needs in the first instance:

“Question: Could you not leave the coop? Answer: Listen to me! I could not leave it, since I had three children! I could not go and work in a factory, or in Pest. My husband was commuting. I had to stay at home, since they had to get ready for school, everything. Pay attention to them, so they should fix their homework and everything.”

Her responsibility for care duties was assumed: “they knew that everything is waiting for me, the childcare, cleaning, cooking, everything. We had to arrange everything even at home”. Being a caring mother was her major source of self-respect, a duty that she found difficult to fulfill if she had left

the cooperative. Facing the dissolution of traditional patterns of mutual aid usually rendered by grandparents and lacking daycare services lead to the deterioration of culturally acceptable standards of childcare. This deterioration was seen to have two aspects. On the one hand children were forced to follow out to the fields with their working mothers: "Therefore, they were out a lot, jaj, how many *children grew up on the fields.*" This, together with the heavy work burden involved often that children were obliged to help with the work:

"Once, I never forget. We had half a hectar of cucumbers, as always. Then the children became a bit bigger. And we got a third one, a daughter. He carried the cucumbers with us from five years of age."

On the other hand the help of distant relatives were also called upon for help, who could not provide a regular and reliable assistance, since even they were bound in diverse ways to their own duties. One of the relatives was herself a ten years old sister, who, may be as a result of these duties have never finished school, as Katalin commented in the description of her assistance:

"Question: At that time, did you not have any relatives to help with care? Answer: the truth is that, as I said, my sister was *ten year old*, when we joined. The one, who has not finished the grade eight at the public school, she went home from the school, [and took care of my children]. Then my husband has a sister. She is small in growth. She was a seamstress. But, poor she, she could not do otherwise. She saw that we were in trouble, that we do not have any place to leave them. 'Leave them here!', she said 'until Marika [ten year old sister] comes and fetches them'."

Another important source of self-respect came from her relation to her husband. While, this care duty was expected from her, her husband was aware of the burdens falling on her due to the double burden of paid employment in the coop and helped her on the field: "When my poor husband came home from his work, oh, and how many sleepless nights! He came home and went directly to hoeing, evening, everything!" Thus, the solidarity of the family was juxtaposed by the brutality of the cooperative's insensible treatment of the care problems of women. Katalin, depicts herself being surrounded by the warmth and help of her family which is juxtaposed by the collective.

Finally, an additional motivation for her to stay was the household lot that cooperative members were assigned. This lot contributed to the consumption needs of the family and surplus could be sold on the city market. The heritage of the know-how from the period of family farming could be kept vital here.

Personal Resources meeting transition

In opposite to József's life, collectivization brought with the deterioration of life conditions for Katalin. Her soft capital resources lost meaning or became circumscribed within the new structures. Her human energies in creating the conditions for the independent farm were anchored in the habitus of autonomous action, even if this entailed the role of a farm wife. It was most importantly her ability to decide over her own labour and creative capacities that was curtailed. As a mother even her ability to provide for her children according to the respected social standards were infringed upon. Launching the independent farm assumed a varied human capital. Entering the collective labour force implied a deskilling, becoming manual labour machine ordered into the demands of the

collective production organization. For Katalin, her most important resource proved to be the social capital vested in her family, especially into her relation with her husband and kin networks. These networks helped her to solve dire situations with childcare. Furthermore, her husband helped her out with the hard labour in the collective allowing her to spend more time with care duties. Her knowhow from family farming contributed to raise family standards by maintaining household based production on the 2 acre lot the collective rendered to the use of members.

Gender relations and collectivization

Katalin plots her integration into the collective as a victimization process. IN this, she associates her fate clearly with the women sharing her fate. Women were the foot folk of collectivization, rendered to hard physical labour on the fields, while men were either advised to take jobs outside the collective, as Katalin's husband or were offered jobs with more regular occupation. Nonetheless, even men are depicted as victims, such as her father who she describes as "very able bodied" yet not even he could stand up against the oppressive leaders. Katalin argues that she chose staying in the collective since she could not leave the village due to her responsibilities to look after the children. Thus, she makes a personal sacrifice by staying in the obtrusive grip of the collective. By forming the acceptance of the cruelty of the collective as a choice as a mother, she reinstalls her self-respect. In contrast, in the private she depicts an idyllic relation to her husband. He could hold a better paid job in the city. However, he did not misuse his position. Rather he helped Katalin on the fields with her collective work after returning from the job in the city. Thus, rather than helping with care duties, he made her free for caring for children. By this, they reinforced the gender contract, according to which care duties should be women's sphere. Her husband obtained a position in the labour force (the public patriarchal system) that is beneficial compared to the one that Katalin was allotted. They found, nonetheless, that Katalin's incomes and produce from the household lot were also needed in order to provide for the family's needs. He proved to be a benevolent head of the household, rendering incomes to the family and using his energies even after normal work hours to strengthen his contribution as the main breadwinner of the family. Returning from work he helped Katalin with her collective chores.

Summary

Above, two life histories were analyzed. These reflect two distinct fates impacted by the trauma of collectivization. The two fates differ, since the subjects are of different sex; originate from different strata of the peasantry and from two villages implanting collectivization with partly divergent methods. These two life stories can be considered to lie on opposite poles. Collectivization trauma could have been experienced in different ways, yet the two positions occupied by Katalin and József allow us to problematise key issues of interest for this paper. Four questions were posed. Firstly, I analyzed how collectivization trauma was accounted for. Both Katalin and József saw collectivization as both a collective and personal trauma. However, József entered an upward carrier following it, while for Katalin it caused a deprivation of autonomy. Secondly, I intended to recon in which way they are plotting their position in the narrative about collectivization. While József's account is centred on his own character, Katalin plots herself as member of family and mother. József plots himself as an operator in charge both under the act of deprivations caused by collectivization and in establishing the new organization. József circumvents to be seen as a collaborator with the enemy, by plotting himself as part of the villagers and working for the villagers. In contrast, Katalin plots

herself as a victim, with limited abilities to manipulate her faith. Nonetheless, she plots herself as an agent. She restores her respectability, claiming that she endured the obtrusions to sacrifice herself for her children.. She also posits herself as one of the villagers adopting the strategy of silent resistance. Thirdly, József succeeded in transubstantiating his soft capital resources to position of power in the collective. Furthermore, the social cohesion of the villagers, the tactic of being leader among equals led the village collective to good economic results in production. In contrast, Katalin's integration into the collective meant for her a deskilling of her abilities as well as loss of autonomy over organizing the care of her children. For her, the social capital of sisterhood of her kin and a feeling of solidarity with other women and men in the collective gave support in enduring. Her greatest support was, however her husband. Finally, József's life story exemplifies how his upbringing and finalized position as head of farming gave him transferable assets lifting him to a leadership position in the collective. Nonetheless, his fate is not generalisable to all men from his origin. Most of men of peasant origin went through a demasculinisation including deskilling. However, just like Katalin's husband, men's main breadwinner role was weakened, yet not superseded following their integration into the labour force. József, just like Katalin's husband was freed from responsibilities of care. Yet both of them acted as benevolent heads of the household, working for the well-being of their families rendering their favorable positions in the public to the best of the family. In contrast, Katalin was integrated into the collective as marginal labour category, contributing the foot-army of the collective. Her deskilling was combined with unrespectable work conditions. For her the family offered the rescue. Despite of the patriarchal gender contract, where her husband is the main breadwinner and is exempted from care duties, she finds respectability in her role as mother. This respect becomes restored by her husband's divine intervention easing her burdens of physical labour in the collective.

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