

Dissertation abstract

Stubborn Marie: life stories of the women of the "generation enchanted by science"

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The dissertation examines the life stories of important Czech scientists who completed their university studies mostly in the 1960s. The main part of the research is the analysis of ten biographical interviews conducted in accordance with the methodology of oral history. The central goal of the research was to answer the question of which key moments and preconditions led these women to successfully establish themselves in the male-dominated academic environment. The research examines the circumstances of origin, life strategies and turning points that influenced the careers of these important personalities of Czech science. The interviews provide an intimate insight into the lives of these women and thus take into account the personal lines of their stories, which have undoubtedly had a significant impact on their careers, but are often omitted in usually publicly published scientific biographies. The conclusions of the research include the following thesis: The support of the family and mentors on the way to higher education was essential for the successful scientific career of these women. The role of the supervisor of the dissertation and whether he helped the women to get their first academic job was absolutely crucial. Generations who watched space exploration experiments as children and graduated in the 1960s were more fascinated by science than any other. Women of this generation did not have the opportunity to fulfill their scientific potential during the period known as "normalization", after suppression of the democratization process in 1968 and the Velvet Revolution in 1989. However, they fully applied their diligent approach at lower scientific positions and after 1989 they started an international scientific careers on the basis of their previous work. Like a red line, the stories of scientists are intertwined with the story of the archetype of the woman scientist Marie Curie-Skłodowska, as a woman who sacrificed her life to science.