

**Radmila Švaříčková Slabáková**  
**Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic**

**“Women have always had harder lives”: Gender Roles and Representations of the Self in the Oral Recollections of Older Czech Women**

This paper seeks to understand the reasons for a rather conservative distribution of gender roles in the present-day Czech Republic by examining the oral recollections of ten older women. The paper identifies three themes emerging in the course of the recollections (obedience and silent suffering, care and self-sacrifice, and the ability to endure hard work) and argues that these can be understood as the guiding norms for the different roles the women have had through their lives. The paper shows that regardless of a strong emancipatory rhetoric of state socialism, the identities of the older women continue to be shaped by pre-war patriarchal discourses