

## BOOK REVIEW

***Magyarok és szlovákok (Hungarians and Slovaks).* Zsuzsanna Lampl, Nostra Tempora 17. Forum Minority Research Institute, Samorin, 2008. 190 oldal. ISBN 978-80-8924-925-1**

Scientific ambitiousness and consistence and the felt ability that is connected with Zsuzsanna Lampl's attitude towards her research subjects results a high standard specialized literature that can be an etalon for both of the Hungarian and Slovak literature of Sociology.

The last book of Zsuzsanna Lampl shows us the results of two (independent but interconnected) sociological researches. The first part deals with the Hungarian university students in Slovakia, the second one analyzes the symbiosis of Hungarians and Slovaks in southern regions of Slovakia.

In the first part („Does the Slovak intelligence of the future meet the picture of intelligence created by itself?") can be read those answer analyses that were given by students of the Selye János University and the Faculty of Central European Studies of the Constantine the Philosopher University on the turn of years 2007/2008. The age group of 19-24-year-old students is meant here, who are mostly first generation intelligence and as teachers in the future „will play an important role by their profession and career in forming national identity of those delegated to them" (11.).

Part of the answers of Hungarian university students in Slovakia seems to be a sad evidence. The basis of their culture consumption is given by the commercial media. The biggest joy they find in mass entertainment. They have chosen their university to be allowed to study in Hungarian. But a very high percentage they watch television – three hours a day. Their reading habits are rankling: just a 20-23% reads regularly and the rest reads rarely a low quality reading. So: what kind of is the *future* intellectual elite of the Hungarians in Slovakia *today* according to the questionnaire results? It is sad but unavoidable: their collective lifestyle is walking in the shopping malls and a big part of them is laying in front of the TV the whole day (Zsuzsanna Lampl writes it in a nicer way: „sits" in front of the TV.).

In her previous sociological works (e.g. Mozaik (Mosaic) 2001 Gyorsjelentés (Fast Report) [2002] and Magyarinak lenni (Being Hungarian) [2007]) we already know what kind of patience with is Zsuzsanna Lampl able to hunt out details of the examined phenomenon.

This time we are not disappointed, too. In this book unique and exciting details and nuances are given about phenomena that are discussed by politics, too. She points on the processes: „The nation as a value has not lost anything from its importance in the last seven years” (48.). She emphasizes trifles that may not be seen by the university managements, as e.g.: 24% of the Selye University students and 35% of the students from Nitra come from further than 100 km distance (17.) and this factor influences the organization of the university life. The research confirms some tendencies. Such an example is the intensive feeling of disadvantageous discrimination because of the nationality (picture no. 24). It comes clear that according to the view of Hungarian students in the background of the negative discrimination of Hungarians are not in each case the language causes but the prejudice: they are Hungarians. Surprising facts are the statements concerning the level of speaking Hungarian among Slovaks in South-Slovakia. On one hand e.g. 84% of Slovaks speak Hungarian in the Komárno region but in the worst region more than 40% speak this language, too (93.). On the other hand it is worth to think through that Hungarian „is forgotten by those who are of Hungarian origin and those have learnt this language who do not have any direct Hungarian background” (95.). Could it be possible that these two groups are the main objectives of the language law? The sociologist writes about such warning phenomena that are closer to prejudice and the hunted categories of social discrimination in whole Europe more than to the national (minority) rights. On the other hand these are such „nuances” which the populist politician catches his eye from.

Zsuzsanna Lampl’s theses are so valid that *there is a room* to debate about them. Those who define the role of the national identity in education are not surprised that in contrast with the Slovaks whom ”national identity is a much less value” for (47.), the future Hungarian intelligence has the (in my opinion untrue) feeling of consciousness that being Hungarian is a pride (80-88%) and responsibility (77-78%) (p. 62). There is also an answer that ”each Hungarian is a hero”. Does now follow the fact that in a Hungarian school in Slovakia there is a nation based education? If so, how long could this state be kept? The fact that in case of choosing school the existence of mixed marriage was important, can be understood that all the other factors (e.g. the quality of the school) does not influence the choice of the school (100.).

The second part of the book: „Magyarok és szlovákok Dél-Szlovákiában” (”Hungarians and Slovaks in South-Slovakia”) clearly and unmistakably refutes the manipulative statement that in this region the hungarianizing of Slovaks is being made. The opposite is true. As it is written by Zsuzsanna Lampl: ”Almost every tenth (asked) Slovak was grown up in a

Hungarian language environment and we deduce from it that their parents were Hungarians or they were a mixed couple and none of the parents had problems with communication in Hungarian.” There is no danger that would threaten Slovaks in this region: neither their schools nor families, neither their public nor office language use (108.). Is the view of the total unconflictiness between Hungarians and Slovaks just a myth? According to the outstanding Slovak historian Elena Mannová: South-Slovakia never existed in historical meaning and nowadays it is a non-existing imaginary region where the confrontation of cultures happen in the form of symbolic area occupation. The sociologist faces here the net of 22: ”While the Hungarian adult feels to be Hungarian, cannot be the creator of the nation. Since he starts to feel on the national basis, starts losing his Hungarian identity” (53.).

I was distracted till the end due to the contradiction: how can the voluntary assimilation be seen in the civil society? And what kind of attitude has the Hungarian community towards those who ”slovakize”? The ”postmodern identity” (being without an identity) would have been worth of several sentences as well as the assessment of the sociologicistic measurability of consciousness of the language policy (e.g. nursery choice) of the Hungarians living in Slovakia. If there is an existence of such a policy what are the logic parametres in our *given* situation? The second part of the book puts the problem of identity on a strongly language base. I assume that such a linguistics (Gizella Szabó Mihály, István Lanstyák, Szabolcs Simon, Ildikó Vančo and other researchers) will be able to utilize Zsuzsanna Lampl’s data not just as a treasury but they will refine and polish further this valuable knowledge.

In a well-functioning civil society should not be a topic the fact that is a sad statement in this region: according to the Slovaks in South-Slovakia ”prevail” the Hungarians, according to the Hungarians ”prevail” the Slovaks (129.). These one-level, nation-based discriminations that have no space e.g. for proficiency or any other human quality gage, it shows us the picture of a primordial (low social consciousness and nationalist) society. But this society – both the young adults and the workers or pensioners – subsist their problems in a more complex way. It is shown by the interesting illustrations of the book, the graphics of Máté Csanda and András Cséfalvay. Their pictures both lighten tensions of the scientific text and excel with their graphical cleverness as the complexity of the modern society is presented by the two artists.

To sum up: the scientific value of this book is very high. Statements are the basis of take-off and comparative basis, the measuring. Zsuzsanna Lampl, the associate professor of the Faculty of Central European Studies of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and the research leader of the Forum Minority Research Institute in Samorin supports the

possibility of such a complex research of identity that may analyze Hungarians in Slovakia as a social group more scientifically and shadely than any time before.

Mgr. Barnabás Vajda, PhD.  
Selye János University, Komárno, Slovakia