“100 Kilometers to Freedom: Women’s Stories of Escape During the 1956 Hungarian Revolution” looks at the way people fled Hungary after the uprising against the Soviet rulers, specifically through the lens of Hungarian women. The paper follows the process of escape through resettlement and analyzes the various ways people escaped and resettled. In this paper I argue that, though escape routes and methods were wildly varied and resettlement went differently for everyone, those fleeing were often motivated to do so for political reasons.

This paper relies on a variety of primary source materials, including a collection of oral histories in 56 Stories: Personal Recollections of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, A Hungarian American Perspective. Many of the women in the book detail how their families escaped and how they went on to resettle in their new countries. In addition, James A. Michner’s The Bridge at Andau describes Michner’s own experiences waiting at the Austrian border to welcome refugees from Hungary.

The paper seeks to expand the base of knowledge in the United States about the Hungarian Revolution; there is a dearth of work in this country on the revolution. The paper is also unique in the fact that it focuses strictly on women instead of men or a mix of genders. Most of the previous work either focuses on fighters (which were typically men) or a mix of genders (such as in 56 Stories). The paper also seeks to work as a lesson from the past. By studying refugee cases such as the one that resulted from the Hungarian Revolution, people can learn to better handle future and current refugee problems.