Univerzita Karlova v Praze

Filozofická fakulta

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Hana Synková

Legitimizace a profesionalizace romské nevládní organizace v České Republice

Legitimation and professionalization of a Romani NGO in the Czech Republic

Disertační práce

vedoucí práce – Doc. PhDr. František Vrhel, CSc.

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„Prohlašuji, že jsem disertační práci napsala samostatně s využitím pouze uvedených a řádně citovaných pramenů a literatury a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.“ …….

Abstrakt

Disertační práce mapuje strategie legitimizace a přežití nevládních organizací pracujících s lidmi, kteří bývají kategorizováni jako "sociálně vyloučení" či "Romové". Snaží se odpovědět na otázku, co nevládní organizace dělají, aby vypadaly "úspěšně", byly schopné získávat prostředky a vytvářet organizační renomé. Práce nepojímá organizace jako "věci", ale přibližuje je jako "procesy" a sociální sítě ovlivněné státní a evropskou politikou, systémy financování i vnitřními konkurenčními boji. I přesto, že jsou organizace diskursivně rozděleny na ty, které preferují spíše etnickou nebo sociální definici svých klientů, musejí se vyrovnávat se stejnými tlaky v podobě zákona o sociálních službách, standardů kvality či kontrolních systémů přicházejících s projekty. Organizace nevěnují svůj čas zdaleka jen "práci s klienty", ale i zvyšování sociálního kapitálu svých členů a produkování "textů", které slouží k jejich legitimizaci v očích kontrolních orgánů, ostatních organizací i veřejnosti.

Aby bylo možné tyto pro veřejnost "špatně viditelné" procesy výzkumně zachytit, využívá autorka metod organizační antropologie – terénního výzkumu uvnitř organizace a na mnoha místech, které s fungováním organizace kontextuálně souvisejí (vládní orgány, expertní kruhy, apod.). Skrze pětiletý výzkum spojený s dobrovolnou prací v organizaci, která se považuje za "romskou", ilustruje autorka působení organizačních tlaků na konkrétním příkladu. Malá a převážně dobrovolnická organizace prodělala za dobu výzkumu transformaci v "profesionální" instituci zaměstnávající několik desítek lidí. Autorka popisuje fungování organizace v raných fázích, které bylo založené na propojenosti členů organizace, kteří, ačkoliv "navenek" zastávali určité pozice, ve skutečnosti kompenzovali své nedostatky úzkou spoluprací, vzájemnou podporou, "učili se" ze zkušeností a úzce se vzájemně kontrolovali. Prvotní legitimizační strategie byla založena na unikátním rodinném způsobu fungování organizace a zdůrazňování "romskosti organizace" – specifických metod a členské základny. I když se "strategické romství" udrželo i v pozdějších letech, profesionalizační strategie získávaly na významu společně s probíhající reformou a komercionalizací sociálních služeb a ustavování sociální práce jako profese. Společně s těmito procesy sílí tendence mluvit o klientech spíše než v termínech "romství" v termínech "sociálního vyloučení".

Autorka odhaluje profesionalizaci jako proces "oddělování" – jednotlivých pozic a kompetencí v rámci organizace, klientů od zaměstnanců organizace, času pracovního od času

nepracovního – “soukromého”. Nejsilnějším impulsem k profesionalizaci se neukázala ani tak nutnost fungovat podle standardů kvality sociálních služeb, jako spíše tlak na zacházení “s penězi” podle pravidel donorů a nutnost produkce textů, které sloužily ke kontrole organizace. Oddělování a profesionalizaci podporovali především noví, univerzitně vzdělaní pracovníci, kteří nejvíce těžili ze své schopnosti dostát kontrolním požadavkům a získávali silnější pozici v organizaci skrze “psaní grantů”. Výzkum tedy v neposlední řadě ilustruje vznik vnitřních organizačních nerovností, při kterých strategie méně vzdělaných pracovníků, kteří častěji stáli u zrodu organizace, ztrácejí na přesvědčivosti. Přítomnost rodinných příslušníků a “přátel zakladatelky” v rámci organizace je jedním z faktorů, které znesnadňují legitimizaci organizace. Překvapivě ale, ne všechny “soukromé vztahy” jsou v rámci organizace diskvalifikující. Příchod nových vzdělaných zaměstnanců propojených přátelskými vazbami není výjimkou, vzdělání se však zdá neutralizovat možnou “problematičnost” soukromých vazeb. Legitimizace založená na profesionalitě organizace tedy často soukromé vazby neruší, jen dává prostor jiným sociálním sítím. V závěru autorka zasazuje popsané procesy do kontextu všeobecných proměn organizační sféry.

Klíčová slova: nevládní organizace, legitimizace, profesionalizace, antropologie organizací, sociální sítě, Romové, sociální služby v České republice

Abstract

This PhD. thesis maps strategies of legitimation and survival of non-governmental organizations working with people that use to be categorized as "socially excluded" or "Roma". It attempts to answer the question: "What NGOs do to be able to look successful, gain resources, and create organizational reputation?" This work does not treat organizations as "things", but as processes and social networks influenced by state and European policies, funding mechanisms and internal competition. Despite the organizations being discursively divided into those preferring more ethnic or social definition of their clients, they have to cope with the same pressures in the shape of social services law, standards of quality or control systems that come with projects. Organizations are far from devoting their time to "work with clients"; they are also involved in enlarging social capital of their members and in production of "texts" that serve their legitimation claims towards control bodies, other organizations and public.

In order to research these publicly less visible processes, the authoress uses methods of organizational anthropology – fieldwork inside organization and at many places which are contextually linked to the functioning of an organization (e.g. government bodies and expert circles). Workings of organizational pressures are illustrated on a case study based on five-years-long research connected with volunteering for one organization that identifies itself as "a Romani one". In this period, the small and largely volunteer-based organization had transformed to a "professional" institution employing several dozens of people. The author describes functioning of the organization in the early stages based on the interconnectedness of members. Although they were officially holding certain positions, they in fact compensated their incompetencies through close cooperation, mutual support, learning through experience and performing intensive mutual control. The first legitimation strategy was based on a unique family way of organizational functioning and on stressing the "Romaniness" of the organization – its specific methods and membership base. Although the "strategic Romaniness" was retained also in the following years, professionalization strategies gained importance together with the social services reform, their commercialization and constitution of social work as a profession. Together with these processes there is a tendency to speak about clients rather in terms of "social exclusion" than in terms of "Romaniness".

The author uncovers professionalization as a process of “separating” – different positions and competencies inside organization, clients from organizational employees, the working hours from non-working, private time. The strongest impulse to professionalize was not so much the necessity to function according to the standards of quality of social services, as the pressure to “handle money” according to donors’ rules and the necessity to produce texts for the purpose of organizational control. The separation and professionalization was supported primarily by new, university educated employees that could get the most from their abilities to fulfil control requirements and get stronger positions through “writing grants”. Last but not least, the research illustrates the birth of the inner organizational inequalities, when the strategies of the less educated employees lose their convincingness. The presence of family members and “friends of the founder” are one of the factors that make the organizational legitimation more difficult. Surprisingly, not all the “private connections” are disqualifying. The arrival of new educated employees connected by friendship ties is not an exception, but the education seems to neutralize the “problematic” potential of the private links. Legitimation based on the organizational professionalism thus does not cancel the private links, just favours different social networks. The author concludes by placing the described processes within the context of general changes in the organizational sphere.

Key words: non-governmental organizations, legitimation, professionalization, organizational anthropology, social networks, Roma, social services in the Czech Republic

Contents

Introduction

Since the turn of the century, scores of men and women have penetrated deep forests, lived in hostile climates, and weathered hostility, boredom, and disease in order to gather the remnants of so-called primitive societies. By contrast to the frequency of these anthropological excursions, relatively few attempts have been made to penetrate the intimacy of life among tribes, which are much nearer at hand. (Latour – Woolgar 1986 [1979]:17)

The text I am presenting describes one such attempt to penetrate the intimacy of the Czech non-governmental sector. Far from being one "tribe", it is rather a number of groups and networks that exist under its label, construct it and fight within it. This sector is very much influenced by what goes on "around it", in the general society, in the government politics or academia. William Fisher (1997:450) suggests that the "*unpacking the micropolitics of NGOs is dependent upon placing these associations within larger contexts*." The NGOs are just one of the arenas where different ideas about organization, professionalism or society are negotiated and the battles inside them are a replication of larger conflicts concerning establishment of credible and legitimate interpretations of the world around us.

From the beginning of my PhD research I was sure that I do not want to do the research "on Roma"[1] but on organizations, their politics and survival. This decision was motivated by the

[1] The term "Roma" is used in the Czech political and NGO discourse as a general term to designate several different groups of Roma (Slovak, which is the most numerous, Hungarian, Czech/Moravian and Vlach) and a few Sinti families living in the Czech Republic. Different actors invest the designation with different meanings, but in this context the term "Roma" is usually contrasted with the term "Gypsy", which carries more derogatory meaning. Roma get essentialized in the struggle of the activists for unification of different groups, in the discussion of the censuses (why only 11 000 Roma registered "their nationality" if "their" number is assumed to be around more than quarter of a million) or in the policy recommendations that want to be "targeted". Danger of using the term as an objective category was discussed in detail in Simhandl (2009), especially in the context of European Union policies. When I speak in this text about "Romani organizations", I speak more about the "Romaniness" as a label that is created in the context of the Czech NGO sector, a label that is assumed as unproblematic, fought for or criticized. Part of the construction of this label is usually the act of identification of an organizational representative as a "Rom" plus a diverse range of organizational strategies that support this interpretation. Similar constructions of group allegiance are not used (and not "needed") by "majority" organizations for which I use an imperfect term "non-Romani organizations". In Romani

experience of what happened around my MA research and by the mounting focus of Czech social scientists funded by different donors to do research "on Roma". Researching Romani migration from Slovakia to the Czech Republic and segregation mechanisms, trying to find out how local people actively cope with them and divert them, I felt the topic is important, but I was also becoming interested in what goes on "around Romani topics". My MA research was hugely facilitated by the local mayor's office in terms of access to documents, help with finding a place to stay or possibility of participant observation "inside the office". After the mayor asked me about my findings, I made a "light version" of the text and I found out that he had picked up the worst looking pictures of the Romani houses in order to show to other actors like state officials, NGOs and different donors how "bad" the situation in his village was. He wanted to get some money for an "integration project" and in order to get it, he presented the situation as little more desperate than how it actually was.

At the same time, I had inevitably became considered "a Roma expert" immediately after having started my research – so strong was the general interest in "doing something" with this category. The mayor, friends and employees of different institutions started to ask me (sometimes with a certain irony), what to do with "them", when I know them so well. Only recently I found a text of Krista Hegburg (2005:2) that describes similar feelings about her research in the Czech Republic: *"It was even harder to ignore the arm's-length fascination that educated Czechs have with Roma. Many Czechs immediately assumed that, because I am an anthropologist, I worked on Roma, who seem to offer themselves up as the proper subjects of the anthropological gaze in the Czech Republic. Even though I work equally in communities of Jews and former political prisoners, I am still introduced by Czechs as 'an anthropologist who works on Roma.'"* What goes on "around" this topic then started to be more and more interesting to explore. The discussions were far from being "about Roma", they revealed people's ideas about citizenship, race, difference, moral behaviour, limits of the state and solidarity, and about the desired institutional approaches towards this essentialized "category".

Many Czech social scientists perform "expert roles" for different institutions and a lot of my graduated colleagues got their position in governmental and non-governmental organizations

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organizations these are sometimes designated as "Czech organizations" or "gadje's (non-Romani) organizations".

that in some way target Roma (if not foreigners). The state demand for researches and numerous institutional possibilities for counselling on and studying "Roma" have in my opinion contributed to the establishment of the Czech social and cultural anthropology as a "science" that has some kind of very useful expertise for the political establishment and for the "Czech society". This interest brought some possibilities to finance even student's researches, moreover Roma ideally fitted to the image of what should be anthropologically researched – all the classical anthropological topics were present to "learn from" – complicated kinship system and issues of identity, alternative economic systems, conflicts of "tradition and modernity" or linguistic questions,[2] not to mention the topic being located in everybody's backyard, which is not an irrelevant thing for an "under-resourced" anthropologist. Many of the researches were however restricted by the short-term deadlines and donor agendas, and in such descriptions Roma were seldom given agency. The presence of institutions in this field is overwhelming, and different integration (and segregation) discourses sustained by organizational actors are what each researcher encounters and has to negotiate with. It is astonishing how few researches deal with this organizational milieu and analyse what these actors do and how their functioning is regulated and influenced by their organizational contexts.[3]

If organizations are ever researched, the focus is mainly on the successes and failures of their individual projects or workings of general "discourses of change" (Hurrle 2005, Kobes 2009). While the assessments often find that the projects were not entirely successful or were even failures and the results of the different "integration policies" are almost invisible, how is it possible that the organizations behind these projects often continue to be trusted and get resources for further projects? In short, there are lots of "successful" organizations with many projects that in the end do not bring the announced "change". The success of an organization seems to be constructed more on the basis of different "rules" than just on the high number of people that improved their lives thanks to its projects. The organization is able to look successful also through the ways it manages its projects, uses discourses, provides expertise or gains resources. My research attempts to cover this "research gap" and

[2] I wrote about the influence of this topic for an establishment of Czech anthropology more extensively in Synková (2008).

[3] The few exceptions being Kobes (2009) writing about Slovakian "development" NGOs or partly Grygar – Stöckelová (2007), who describe developments in municipality housing policies; past policies are mapped by Sokolová (2008), who describes institutionalization of communist discourses on Roma.

looks into ways in which an organization produces its successes, invents its legitimation and survival strategies. The main question that inspired the research thus could be formulated as "What NGOs do to be able to look successful, gain resources, and create organizational reputation?" The role of the process of professionalization in creating this success is of particular attention.

This research should bring a deeper look at the organizations working with people that were differently essentialized, stereotyped and labelled as "socially excluded", "Roma" or even "inadjustable". It looks as a sector that some Romani activists criticizing non-Romani organizations describe derogatively as a "Gypsy business" and some critiques of Romani organizations as "ethnopolitical entrepreneurship". Even though the research touches the existing tensions around ethnic definitions of the situation, it tries to go further to look at what these organizations have in common and how they are constructed, regulated and criss-crossed by different social networks. I argue that despite the organizational "ideological" differences, there are significant common pressures that affect the organizational functioning coming not only from official state regulations of social services, but also from the simple fact that an organization sustains itself through projects.

The institutions "around" should be as much subjects of critical research as the groups they target. Czech Roma are one of the most "watched" groups in the Czech Republic, if not *the* most watched one – not only by different researchers but traditionally also by different officials and social workers. Their private lives and appropriateness of such lives are subject of discussion of large number of people. My decision to "study up" a bit (if we can ever determine the "directions" of our studies) led me to the world of NGOs, which are not only the most visible institutions functioning as mediators between people and state institutions but, according to a rough estimate of one government official I met during the research, in reality provide around 70 per cent of social services in the still growing enclaves of substandard living conditions, where people recognized as Roma form a significant part of the population. These people were "left to NGOs" that depend on annual fight for grants from the state and the European Structural Fund, are often understaffed and not an equal partner for municipal and state institutions. The NGO sector has been deeply affected by new regulation of social services and reorientation towards project funding. My work maps the "uneven geography" (Wolch 1990) of the Czech NGO "landscape" affected by these changes. Organizations of different size, structure and membership vary in responses to these

changes and acquire different capacities to influence state policy. Even though anthropological studies tend to favour "microscale" approaches, the study of such processes requires changes in research methods and strategies. It needs to shift towards multi-sitedness and bigger attention to the context influencing actors and discursive struggles.

One organization that works with Roma and presents itself as "a Romani one" was taken as a starting point. While the institutional space is largely imagined as "non-Romani" (or without any apparent ethnic label as ethnicity is inscribed on minority institutions) with Roma as targets or clients, such dichotomy is challenged by the presence of a small number of organizations that claim Romani organizational identity. I try to show how this organization can survive and legitimate its existence *as an NGO* and as a "Romani NGO" through navigating the changes in the social services sector. Looking at professionalization and projectization which occurred in this NGO helps to reveal the "normativities" of these processes that are present with different intensities in many other organizations. The research perspective that starts "from the office" has limitations in terms of understanding the perspectives of "clients" (in the Czech Republic this important perspective is only rarely touched, e.g. in a research by Dvořáková, 2009), but opens up to the perspective of employees and of organizations that work in the same field.

The first section of the text contains an explanation how NGOs were thought of as subjects of study especially in anthropology and asks why they are still relatively "understudied". It shows how their study was inhibited by their moral reasoning that they are "doing good" and by the anthropology's image of what a "fieldwork" should look like. Critical accounts of NGOs disclose them as being far from "non-governmental" and deconstruct them as objects or "things". In line with a general processual trend in anthropological theorizing, NGOs are differently imagined as webs of relationships and processes that function in an unequal environment and that try to sustain their image as NGOs in order to legitimate their existence. Looking at what NGOs *do* there is a caution in considering them necessarily the "best solutions" for certain environments. Researchers rather tend to show how they bring with them different politically laden concepts of development, civil society, or "standard of living", how they exacerbate local hierarchies, but also how they provide resources that people can use to further their own distinct life strategies. NGOs were discovered as far from being uniquely flexible, non-bureaucratic, open or even transparent, as the standards of disclosing organizational information still hide what is "really" happening inside and how an

organization strategizes. The NGO world sustained by “projects” and specific language also creates a rather closed milieu, into which one has to socialize. Much of what NGOs really do is not “working with clients” or “changing the world” (however, this is the main topic of their legitimation strategies), but rather creating their social capital in this milieu and trying to survive as organizations.

In the second section an evolution of the research, ethical questions connected to it and methodology is described. It deals with problems of gaining access to the organization, of getting behind the presentation prepared for outsiders and the public, and explains why I have chosen to volunteer in the organization. Questions of access showed to be connected to the possibilities a newcomer can have in the organizational structure, the more stratified and bigger organizations providing less opportunities to get an overall picture of what is going on or how decision-making works. Even though “the office” was a starting point, the quality of data would be poor if I would ignore the multisitedness of this topic – conferences of social workers, visits of government bodies, contacts with my former colleagues from the university that work in different positions... I quickly found out that my pre-fieldwork social networks were going to overlap with my fieldwork networks, and this “fieldwork through home” provided insights into e.g. the role of experts, but also brought some conflicts when some of my colleagues became “the enemies” of the organization I have studied. Such events brought many questions about my positioning in the field.

Looking at the methodologies for studying (in) organizations, I explain how methodologies offered by organizational sciences often differ from the anthropological ones in the way they treat culture, and how even many anthropological accounts are missing the contextual and power dimensions that are present in this field. Ethical issues about what and how to publish become stronger in competitive environment with crisscrossing networks and when one finds out that one of the foremost preoccupations of NGOs is to maintain their image of credibility in the eyes of the public, funders and other NGOs. I criticize also the view that the “true” data can be obtained mainly thanks to amity, and bring other concepts like “exchange of services” to the fore. Field friendships, while indeed bringing some data, necessitated also some caution over privileging the views of the “closest people”. The issue of participation in the office also brought the need to question my deeply entrenched ideas about how an office should function, and I have realized my research can proceed only with deep self-reflection.

The third section was written in order to describe and theorize this organizational milieu in the Czech Republic. I touch the debate on the dependence on funding from abroad and show how the ability to get it (albeit through the Czech ministries) is one of the fundamental factors creating organizational distinctions in size, professionalization and partly also prestige (the prestige however depends also on the "issues" organization works on). The expertise, which is developed also through the necessity to interact with the government, shows to be a powerful strategy that facilitates the transfer of employees between the two seemingly separate sectors. The NGO sector still has a tendency to police its boundaries defining what can be considered a "civic" involvement and what is appropriate for an NGO, and apart from donor's evaluations; it is performing a kind of self-checking. Structurally, the position of NGOs is rather weak as the sector largely depends on state funds and has to be careful with how it will voice its critiques. Organizations providing social services are even more bound up by the state, which regulates how such services should look like and who can get the license to provide them. The legitimation is thus oriented towards both NGO and the state actors.

It is shown how much the social services, by defining categories they work with, propagate certain kinds of discourses which are targeted at different categories of "problem groups". Although such categories often do not state "Roma" explicitly, and linguistic strategies employed by social workers or politicians often serve to hide that one actually speaks about Roma, however, the message is quickly deciphered by the public. Some organizations try to fight any ethnicization trend and claim that their use of terms like "people threatened by social exclusion" includes equally some poor Roma and non-Roma. However, erasing the "ethnic" category is unacceptable for many Romani activists that consider it an erasure of focus on problems of Roma comparable to practices during socialism. They build their legitimacy mainly on "helping Roma". These tensions were elevated even to the government level. It seems that despite the discursive battles and changes in terminology (like recent favouring of inclusion over integration) the policies which are present in different municipalities change much less, and it is sometimes also difficult to see how a change in the organizational discourse affects the actual change in organizational practice. Posing as a Romani organization means the need to navigate between different discursive fields, and slightly different pressures are faced by organizations that devote themselves to activism and those that focus mainly on providing services.

Sections four to six form the core of the text. The fourth section describes the situation during the first year of my presence in the organization I call Amaro, when it was very small and partly volunteer-based. The founder of the organization, a middle-aged Romani woman, had her son working there and a couple of female students working part-time and volunteering. The size of the office, the relative inexperience of members and the treatment of the organization as almost a "family environment" contributed to the creation of specific ways of functioning, when work was not so distinct from "private life" and roles were not much defined as people did what suited them the most and helped each other with tasks. I present the concept of "togetherness" as a way of mutual learning and as a control mechanism, through which the founder, Anna, wanted to check what the others are doing, and the others trying to intervene in Anna's decision-making, requiring a deeper mutual discussion and negotiation of the plans. Still there was an inside hierarchy – Anna had an undeniable role of the founder and served as the "face" of the organization. The organization was constructed and designated as Romani, but the opinions about what "makes" it Romani differed among organizational members ranging from the "presence of Roma", doing "cultural programmes for Roma", to special ways of organizing and approach to clients, that were considered "Romani". The Romaniness of the organization was accommodated by each member to suit his or her ideas about "the organization" or "social work". However, the concept functioned as an important collective "sense-making" device. Anna also based the legitimation of the social work with Roma on an assumption that Roma are most qualified for it. Similar legitimation strategies and investing in the Romani label are common for other organizations that network with Amaro. I call these strategies "strategic Romaniness" using the Herzfeld's (1997) concept of strategic essentialism which can be "used" in different ways, even to attract some attention of politicians and media. The intensity of organizational life, difficult coordination, "family-like" functioning and the fact of spending also non-working time together was too much for some members who hoped that Amaro would "go professional".

Fifth section is a step back from Amaro office, showing how the situation was evolving in other organizations, which often have implemented hierarchical bureaucratic structures and were designating other organizational forms as "amateurish". The language of these organizations and their managerial structures are derived from the private and business sectors – the clients are designated as "service users" working on their "contracts". Neoliberal techniques of governance have been promoted also through the reform of social

services, "terrain social work"[4] included. These changes are illustrated by the discussion about the required competencies and educational levels of terrain social workers, where the university educated and university-based social workers finally pushed ahead the rise in educational levels in the name of quality. Organizations with lower-educated employee body, Romani ones included, were disappointed. I also identify the danger of establishing this kind of social work only as individually directed service which does not challenge structural inequalities. Social science academics did not stand far from these discussions and supported social work academics with some theoretical concepts that challenged the essentializing assumptions about "ethnicity as qualification" and supplied them with theories deriving from "culture of poverty" concept and "social exclusion" mechanisms.

What could Amaro do in an environment favouring strategies based on professionalism, which supports separation of clients from social workers, work from home, etc. is a subject of the sixth section. It focuses on how different sorts of separations were introduced into the organization, brought by the necessity to create "standards" of service, official organizational hierarchies or positions with matching job descriptions. Most of the changes were not "forced" on the organization by some "personalized" external actor, some were embraced quite enthusiastically by its members themselves and many were brought by the need to oblige to laws and most notably to the requirements of larger European grants. I attempt to show how the fact of "money" coming with these grants and audit requirements were the strongest incentives of change (compared to the simple threat of the "law"). New measures brought with them not only directed the creation of certain structure and strategies towards public presentation of "professionalism", but made people more easily replaceable. In such environment the amount of time employees spent on administration rose considerably and put those who had problems with "writing" at a disadvantage. Educated newcomers strengthened their position through becoming those who "write grants"; writing is thus identified as one of the important sources of organizational power and hierarchical device. They also preferred merit-based over friends/family-based forms of hiring that was common in the Amaro's first years. Given that people in the organization knew about the general criticism of the "private" networks and their danger for legitimation strategies, the

[4] "Terrain social work" or sometimes "field social work", in Czech *terénní sociální práce*, is a newly established social service, where social workers consult outside the office, often at clients' homes. I prefer to use "terrain social work" mainly for the purposes of distinguishing it from fieldwork in the anthropological sense.

issue was rather “hidden” and not much discussed. However, the research reveals that even the merit-hiring often also brought “friends” into the organization, and it tries to theorise how merit-based networks criticize other networks, while in fact they are also often functioning on the basis of “private links”.

This study presents a partial attempt to show how organizing is done in the Czech non-governmental sector, and reveals stronger and weaker legitimation strategies and inequalities brought by the introduction of administrative procedures. I conclude with putting parallels between the mechanisms described in the “Czech case” and the ways organizing and professionalization processes work in general and in other contexts. Organizations are created by different and competing social networks that are not often evident at first sight.

1. Researching NGOs

1.1 Defining NGOs

This section deals with how NGOs can be thought about as "something to study". NGOs in the Czech Republic are one of the institutional actors that increasingly deal with topics and projects addressed to "Roma": In most Czech cities with higher concentration of Romani population[5], there is at least one NGO present that works with "Romani population". The types of organizations involved range from church-related charities to human-rights advocates, agencies previously oriented at "development and humanitarian" initiative abroad or small Roma-led organizations. The proliferation of NGOs after 1989 in the Czech Republic was paralleled by the growth of NGOs in the 80s and 90s worldwide[6]. Some authors (Wedel 2004; Mosse – Lewis 2006) claim that this growth and the increased visibility of NGOs was connected to the rise of neoliberalism, that supported offering funds to NGOs to take over some services provided by the state or to support the ideal of "civil society". Neoliberalism lessened the direct power of the state to the extent some theoreticians started to talk about the retreat of the state (Strange 1996).

This process opened up access to power to different intermediary networks and brokers. In the field of social services and development these organizations and networks started to be not only powerful but they began to capture significant resources that were channelled formerly by state structures. They also changed the structure of accountability towards "citizens" and were criticized for blurring this accountability. They are described as weakening worker's movements, movements of poor, parties and governments whose accountability has been greater. On the other hand weaker ties with "represented people" and other actors have been described by some researchers (DeMars 2005) as facilitating

[5] Roma living in the Czech Republic are told to be the most urbanised Romani population thanks to their post-war work migration from Slovakia to the Czech industrial centres. Sources of their exclusion connected to the municipal and socialist policies will be mentioned further on.

[6] However, the origins of NGOs have been traced already to the anti-slavery movement that relied heavily on the message of the Bible about equality of mankind. According to some authors, the space for NGOs has been prepared by the tradition of the critique and improvement of society since Antiquity and by the idea of moral improvement brought by Protestantism. The idea of autonomy of society from the state is an important prerogative (DeMars 2005:64-89).

flexibility and sometimes innovativeness. Powerful NGOs have so many partners that they can try to neutralize hidden agendas of each of them and create some space for manoeuvring. They can create ties on different levels and have been developing contacts on a transnational scale. NGOs started to work in the fields in which governments don't have such experience or possibilities to "test" what can be done. To have an unsuccessful project is considered less dangerous than having a misguided government policy. This vision obviously does not satisfy researchers who claim NGOs and especially those targeting subaltern people should not lose their grassroots connection (Sigona – Trehan, eds. 2009), or those who claim that actually NGOs are just a new instrument for better governing people rather than focusing on elimination of poverty (Townsend – Townsend 2004:271).

Other authors like Hilhorst (2003) are more careful to describe the rise of NGOs exclusively through the concept of neoliberalism or through an explanation of their political role in the context of globalization. The rise of NGOs is motivated by national policies, donor agendas, international trends, local contexts and goals of individuals that founded them. NGOs that arise from these processes are themselves incredibly varied. There are so many answers to the question "What is an NGO?" as there are NGOs and people involved with them. Hilhorst invites us to see NGOs not as a certain type of a player in the world politics but as an entity that is differently imagined, lived and invested with meanings. NGOs can serve as projectors of many visions that can collide not only between the organizations but within them as well. Some of these visions become more powerful than others and these contestation processes are much more interesting to research than just to try to create a "theory of NGOs". I found this detailed look at the imagining of NGOs anthropologically appealing as it captures the individual experience, but I hold necessary the retention of the effort to show that there are ways of imagining and managing NGOs that are considered more "proper" than others, which creates some inequalities between or even inside organizations.

However, the NGO form of organizing did not receive any substantial anthropological attention (in contrast with studies in political science, economy or development studies – but many of these studies were "donor driven" and did not present the complex picture about what an organization means and does) and in many fieldworks, although NGOs were present, they were not at the centre of attention. On the other hand, organizational studies or sociology of work that use some ethnographic approaches were more focused on research inside corporations and businesses. NGOs frequently worked in places where people did

their researches, but often appeared in anthropological texts only when they intervened significantly in the life of the "studied people". They were omitted in the similar way "the state" was omitted from the earlier anthropological accounts that concentrated on bounded populations. As entities of study, they might have been too distant, complex or diffuse to be made the main topic of research. I would argue that anthropology, at certain time and level of theoretical development and focus, just was not able to "see" these entities and discovered them only later.

NGOs are increasingly important for the study of "Romani (or any other) topics" not only because they are present in the field and work with people, but because they produce a huge amount of texts about the situation of these people that are widely accessible on the Internet. Other kinds of material produced by (and for) NGOs in large quantities belong to the genre of the so-called "grey literature", which is used to draft policies and develop institutional procedures. NGOs themselves are thus important actors not only through their projects, but they influence images about their "target groups" by their rhetoric, representation of reality and a way of functioning. The description of Roma and the context they are living in provides a powerful argument for the support of NGOs in their project of "improving the reality". Some NGOs obviously prefer the description of the worst cases of poverty etc., as their claim is thus stronger (Helbig 2007: 82-83). The issue of what an NGO presents and how it presents it is an inseparable part of its existence.

1.2 NGOs and anthropological enquiry

How can we think about NGOs as an integral object of anthropological enquiry and how we can think about them in connection to Romani issues?

One of the first anthropologists who tried to critically summarize the analysis of NGOs in anthropology was William F. Fisher. In 1997 he pointed out that the study of NGOs is connected to and inspirational for the issues that are vital to anthropology – *"understanding local and translocal connections, that enable and constrain flows of ideas, knowledge, funding and people*," but as well reconsider notions of governance, governmentality and technologies of control (Fisher 1997:441). Ten years from Fisher's article, anthropological texts on what is happening in a particular place and within an organization, how power is

dealt with and discourses and legitimacy produced are still quite rare. Organizational anthropology in general did not receive much attention either, which might be caused by the fact that the office is often still not imagined as "The site" of research. Stories of physical hardships and what one has to "endure" are a frequent part of anthropological narratives, notwithstanding the prestige that some sites are generating more easily than the others.

This omission might have also been caused by the common essentialist image of NGOs as apolitical actors trying to help people. This vision is currently changing, but the way NGOs were imagined in the past had inhibited their critical research. On the one hand, NGOs at the international level were imagined being above politics speaking from some general moral position of defending the rights and needs of people, protecting the environment, etc. On the other hand, they were imagined to be an unproblematic ally just helping the local people, reacting to their needs. The term "non-governmental" indicates that these organizations are designated as alternatives to government structures. The reality is much more complicated. NGOs are frequently interconnected with government policies and funding, many became controlled in the process of transformation from activist organizations to "service providers", and some were created even by people already working in the state sector. Creating categories of service providers and advocates/activists does not mean that an organization of the first type cannot challenge how the government functions, and being an "activist" organization does not mean that the activism cannot actually suit some government purposes. So NGOs don't have to always present "an alternative to the mainstream", and researches should be careful in using the "typology" of the NGOs uncritically[7]. NGO rhetoric might be competing with as well as supporting the one of government, public and media. The label of an "NGO" does not correspond to the reality of funding, regulation by laws and networking. NGOs always function in a specific state and political environment. NGOs can be created for different purposes that don't have to match the "official" ones. Even the "non-profit" label could be questioned as there are certainly "profits" from this kind of work that actors in the field speak about. These profits can range from financial ones (When there is generous funding of some project, the salaries can get higher. In some countries an NGO job is very attractive and one of the few that offers middle-class status.), to symbolic ones (using cars, mobile-phones, computers and technology that is not

[7] Political scientist DeMars (2005) warns against the typologies dichotomizing Western international NGOs versus local grassroots organizations or looking at NGOs through narrow "issue-areas": "*Research confined within issue-area boundaries will legitimate an NGO program.*" (2005:18)

accessible to other people), to gaining many sorts of social and cultural capital (networking with people working on the topics and in the state sector, learning how to "do projects"). The NGO sphere has not attracted only "idealists" that started to fight for some cause, but increasingly also "professionals" that see it as an interesting opportunity in their careers.

Looking at definitions of "what NGOs are", we can see several tendencies. First, there has been a considerable effort to deconstruct NGOs as objective facts, things or institutions, pointing out to their status as processes and fragmented sites. NGOs are "*evolving processes of associating*" (Fisher 1997:442), "*fluid web of relationships*" through which "*funding, knowledge, ideas and people*" flow (Appadurai 1991, Lash & Ury 1994 in Fisher 1997:450; Sampson 2002a) or "*open-ended processes*" without fixed boundaries (Hilhorst 2003:4-5). The study of NGOs then is very close to the documentation of how these things pass through organizations and how these "passages" construct it. Authors with this approach have frequently focused on how people function as actors initiating and influencing these processes. The analysis thus should not be focused only on the leaders that are the most visible representatives of NGOs and often a kind of "hero figures", but are far from being the only ones who influence how NGOs work.

Other definitions stress that NGOs are networks and establish contacts at different levels. NGOs fit well the description of new objects of anthropological study defined by George Marcus in 1995: they are not bounded; they cannot be understood by doing research in one place. Connections are crucial for the existence of organization as they search for funding from municipalities, state or transnational institutions, NGOs tend to or are forced to network around topics or groups they work with. NGOs that "work on/with Roma" are just one of many examples. I would stress that not only the official institutional connections are important for functioning of NGOs and its research, but personal contacts and at times kinship can play an important role in obtaining resources and "getting things done". Moreover most NGOs started as a project of a rather small circle of people that knew each other well and obtained membership through informal contacts. Institutions in general regardless of level of their "professionalism" are composed of people with their own social networks. In describing these less visible connections anthropology can play an important role. Finally NGOs need to somehow connect to people that they claim to represent or help. Although an image of a network has been criticized as just another "construct", it can still provide a good base for analysis.

In networks, tensions are often present. NGOs are connected to and influenced by broader discourses and topics, but at the same time they are influenced by their particular local contexts that can at times conflict with one another. Katherine Pinnock in her study of Bulgarian Romani and non-Romani NGOs (Pinnock 2002) showed how NGOs had to fit local situation into the language of international actors and grant providers. However, the concepts of international actors were not embraced totally, and especially Romani NGOs were searching for the ways to circumvent the official and very general discourses and directly and materially help as much people as they could.

The fact that networks do not constitute themselves from the players on the same level, and that connections do not always happen among equals, brings us to the last set of definitions, which looks at NGOs through the concepts of power. NGOs are sites where definition of reality and its concepts are negotiated, NGOs are part of larger power structures that try to control them, and they are part of technologies of domination. These approaches draw a lot from Foucault's concepts of governmentality in which the government no longer works as a visible top-down execution of power by representatives of state (Paul Stubbs 2005 calls them "statist theories"), but as a more hidden process that concerns ways in which we function in everyday life. Good example of this approach in connection to Romani NGOs is given by Huub van Baar (2008; 2009). He tries to show that the control can be executed through bureaucratic structures or through the specific uses of language as well. In terms of NGOs these structures are represented by grant systems, ideas about social change, ways people subject to deadlines and timetables, ways they are evaluated and monitored, ways people write reports and think about the world. In the end this system of governance is very effective in controlling people because it makes them responsible for their self-control. The one that has influence over these structures has the real power. In some cases though, NGOs might become sites of resistance against these practices, fighting against overbureaucratization.

The last attempts at defining the NGOs have touched the fact that NGOs are actually "claims" or "labels" or acts of (self-)authorization that must be acknowledged by other actors. Hilhorst (2003:6-7) warns that researchers who adopt "folk" typologies differentiating between real and fake NGOs (that work for money, are political instruments or "family businesses") just reproduce the competitive discourse of the NGO sector. In this

discourse all the organizations claim they are people-interested, genuine, etc. and accuse their competitors of being not so good in attaining to the "NGO standard". Organizational existence depends on others respecting this claim. What is more important for Hilhorst is that an organization itself wants to be an NGO (and can survive as such). In this definition, the claim of actors themselves is taken as something that should be seriously studied, because they are the ones who constantly create an "image" of the organization through everything they do.

In the context of the Czech Republic and my research this fourth definition opens up a possibility to look at important conflicts on the NGO scene, where debates about legitimacy are very frequent. Competing sides use different discourses about what it means to do social work, and then build their "legitimacy claims" on the basis of these discourses. However, claims about illegitimacy of an organization on the same discursive "side" are also frequent. Organizations are vigilant and point at any organization that harms their publicly promoted image about what an NGO is and should be. The use of the same discourse thus does not negate critique of other organizations.

I will not pick only one of these above-mentioned definitions as "the best one", because each of them illuminates a certain part of an NGO existence, and in practice they very much combine. An NGO with large vertical networks could have more power to "catch" and influence the more powerful discourse, it could attract more people and resources and thus make a more successful claim for its existence. When researching legitimacy, the extent, power and orientation of "networks" is one of the essential research components.

1.3 Attempts at deconstruction

Depending on the contexts and on the position of actors towards them, NGOs can *be* many different things. It is a label differently imagined and lived. When trying to deconstruct how NGOs *function* and what they *do*, anthropologists attacked several kinds of myths that have been prevailing in public discourse and even in many writings about NGOs. The first myth has been that NGOs know best how to help (as they frequently claim), the second is the myth of neutrality of concepts used in NGOs, the third is the myth of their efficiency, transparency and cooperativeness, and the fourth is the myth of their openness to everyone. These ideas

rather seem to be part of the (self)legitimation project of NGOs as unproblematic and desirable actors. Most NGOs want to be seen as transparent, effective, "promoting democracy" or having innovative ideas. They invest (or are forced to invest) in maintaining this image, therefore from the research point of view it is more useful to see these topics not as "characteristics of NGOs" but rather in the dynamics of forming aspirations and expectations – "what is expected from NGOs and which forces are important in forming these expectations?"

A summary of the critique was provided by Steven Sampson who worked particularly in the Balkan context (Sampson 2002a; 2002b; 2005), many topics could be found already in Fisher's overview article (1997) or they circulate in the literature critical of development efforts[8]. Here the NGOs are often described as "failing" because of introducing concepts of social change that are guided by the donor's and "Western" imaginary, by the rhetoric of building of a civil society or democratic governance, but not being able to react adequately to the everyday lives of people that should be helped by those projects. Through their projects, they rather strengthen their own power positions and sometimes even the already established local social hierarchies – by the ways they distribute funds or choose their local partners. They discursively open whole areas of possible future interventions through pointing at some areas or topics "in need of development", and they also react at the donor's ideas about which issues are considered a priority. In this system they behave as competing businesses rather than apolitical and moral agents that they claim to be. It would seem that the critiques of the whole existence of NGOs were overly pessimistic, but they are frequently motivated by the response to what Fisher calls "*a narrowly progressive view of NGOs"* (1997:444).

NGOs have been frequently employing rhetoric of help. To promote their work they presented themselves as unique actors that can change local situation. This optimistic presentation led not only to high expectations of the target population, the general public and donors (donors being at the same time the ones who initiated this rhetoric of "solutions" by their grant systems), but it could sideline and ignore the existence of other local institutions or "informal structures". NGOs can present one of the resources, but not the only resource a

[8] One of the first was James Ferguson in his 1990 book *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

person from "target population" can use. The critical literature has only recently been acknowledging local possibilities of survival, manipulation and dissent with NGOs.

The second is a myth of the neutrality of concepts like "empowerment", "democracy" or "civil society". They come from a specific background, therefore their social power and underlying "ideologies" should be analyzed.[9] In connection with the "transformation" in Central and Eastern Europe Katherine Verdery called for the analysis of these topics already in the 90s (Verdery 1997:716). Overall the scholars were slower to adopt critical approaches to realities in this part of Europe (compared to anti-colonialist critique elsewhere) – especially when the local populations seemed to embrace democracy with such enthusiasm. In the Czech Republic the term "civil society" has been used almost as a synonym for what became the increasingly professionalized NGO sector. Under the name of the "civic sector" actors like former dissidents promoted it as an alternative or even as an opposition to the state corrupted by party politics. Outsourcing services from the state to this sector has been seen as a road to bigger diversification and freedom of choice. These plans were influenced by international organizations like the World Bank, US foundations and the European Social Fund, and at the same time, the "transition to democracy" often became an introduction to a "social economy".

Thus civil society, democracy etc. are moral terms which give power to some people and organizations to make statements and evaluation about "a state of civil society" in a particular region. If made into categories in grant proposals, the concepts are becoming more powerful, so local NGOs may attempt to write projects for example on "strengthening the civil society". William Fisher (1997:444) warns that the connection with a real process of democratization and empowerment is often just rhetorical, and William DeMars (2005) adds that the biggest effects created by NGOs are often "side effects" of their actions that stay hidden behind the language of their official goals. NGOs are using the language in a way that it manipulates people's imagination. They "'*make a better future* feel possible*' or even* present *and keep that imagination by infusing 'very small steps with very large meanings'"*

[9] Such concepts can again ignore significant parts of the social reality. In her comment on Poland (1998:22) Elisabeth Dunn suggests that what is left out by the concepts like civil society is equally important: *"What kinds of persons, associations and forms of social action does the concept obscure? Ties of gender, kinship, residence and religious belief – the kinds of ties we tend to think of as primordial rather than elective – are most often left out of considerations of civil society. Nonetheless, they can be potent bases for action."*

(DeMars 2005:3, original stress). As for any actor, what NGOs do tends to differ from what NGOs say. DeMars (2005:7) even says that "*NGOs must mislead in order to exist*", because they need to attract attention through making normative claims. That is why the language as a means of legitimation is so crucial for understanding the world of NGOs.

The third myth is the one of efficiency, transparency and cooperation. NGOs were imagined as "*everything that governments are not: unburdened with large bureaucracies, relatively flexible and open to innovation, more effective and faster at implementing development efforts, and able to identify and respond to grass-roots needs*" (Fisher 1997:444). These descriptions do not take into account that NGOs are far from being that perfect. Transparency does not mean that an organization would reveal everything about itself; this is not only impossible but also absurd in terms of how organizations function in negotiating and creating partnerships and coalitions. Every organization conceals some facts and makes them accessible only to selected groups of people. DeMars says (2005:56) that: *"No NGO tells all that it knows; hence "transparency" is a tactical option, not a fundamental ethical principle*." However, this tactical option is quite important in certain environments, and providing the image of transparency can become crucial.

This myth is extended by the idea that social realities can be transplanted somewhere else. Sampson (2002:3) warns that in many cases people involved in the NGO sector just copied their own society's functioning rather than developed the goals of the projects in cooperation with local people. Without deep understanding of local contexts these projects frequently failed, as for instance many projects targeting Roma described in more detail e.g. by Jakob Hurrle (2005), David Scheffel (2005) or Tomáš Kobes (2009). NGOs rather promote solutions that seem appropriate and legitimate for them and their donors. Even the participatory methods of work that have become fashionable in the last years sometimes do not yield expected results as those targeted have been in an uneven position to NGOs and were rather "made to be involved in the implementation of the project" by organizations than really supported to present their own ideas of change. In this situation, it is hard to work through "partnerships" and "empower" people, moreover when these concepts were thought out at the donor and management level and then applied. NGOs were criticized for co-opting people from local movements by making them more accountable to donors than to "their people". The language used by NGOs sometimes clearly serves to mask the channels of power.

The last myth is the openness of non-governmental sector. Not only are NGOs operating through unequal relationships, but also access to the world of NGOs itself is unequal. The ones that are successful are usually well socialized into the so-called "project society" (Sampson 2002a, 2002b). "*Project society is thus a field in which there is a contestation over scarce resources. People within and outside organisations compete for money, influence, access and knowledge; they distribute these resources among their own networks and try to prevent others from obtaining access. The successful actors in this competition become the project elites*" (Sampson 2002b:310). This society produces specific language, which some authors call NGO-speak (Wedel 1998). The use of appropriate words and concepts is important in connection to the ability of acquiring money through grants, public campaigns or lobbying. It is useful to know, which words generate resources with greater probability than others. Sampson further talks about producing a certain kind of ideology – projects are imagined as a successive chain of actions, although in reality they depend a lot on improvisation. Projects present their own construction of the causality of the ways things are happening and will happen in the actions of an NGO for the benefit of a "target population" (the chain between these two should not be too long). These "project projects" are just part of the process of control and legitimation. The project has to be well thought out and presented, only then it receives support. The project that would try to describe how things "really" happen would have much weaker arguments for the NGO efficiency. However, grant commissions have to evaluate something, so this linear construction remains crucial. The underlying assumption is that those who are able to write the project, will also be the best to implement it and make the change happen.

It should be stressed that certain practices of the project society, like monitoring and evaluation, further enlarge this concept of linearity and contribute to a certain inflexibility of projects. Mid-term monitoring reports and evaluation reports I have seen were always compared with the original project that could have been written in very different circumstances several years ago. The authority of the original text is so great that to change things is almost impossible and requires lengthy negotiations with controlling bodies even in relatively insignificant issues such as buying a slightly different type of equipment. Monitoring reports are written in such a way as to make an impression that the original project is actually being implemented. Areas in which things do not go as planned require very careful description and reasoning. The text of the project supported by the grant and by

the successive signing of a contract with the provider of money has to materialize. If it was not "well written", it could materialize with all the mistakes included. The only hope then is that the next project would be written better than the previous one.

Sampson also introduces a concept of "social life of projects" as if the project itself was a kind of creature that wants to survive. Project's social life is comprised of a set of resources, people and practices that create particular interests, and one of these is to make the project irreplaceable. This is frequently done by describing the situation in such a way that a need of an NGO's action is created. James Ferguson has eloquently shown how the World Bank constituted their object of development by describing the whole country, Lesotho, as a "*less developed country*", "*untouched by modern economic development*" (1990:25). The world of projects is influenced in a significant way by participation of NGO workers in a "project society". Ferguson (1990:18) describes it as a knowledge structure: *"The thoughts and actions of 'development' bureaucrats are powerfully shaped by the world of acceptable statements and utterances within which they live; and what they do and do not do is a product not only of the interests of various nations, classes, or international agencies, but also, and at the same time, of a working out of this complex structure of knowledge*."

The significant part of the work of NGOs thus does not lie in the field and in contact with the "target population", but is spent in a symbolic world that requires some very specific knowledge. People and their problems have to be, with the help of ideas about their "needs", fitted into these abstract categories. The world of projects is increasingly based on expertise, language and contacts one can make during his/her university studies, which makes participation of people directly from the "target population" more difficult. These issues have become important for my research as there are only few Romani NGOs in the Czech Republic, which can build on university educated people; organizations are rather set up as small local initiatives working usually with children. Some of these organizations have grown and become more skilful in participating in the project society, but most of them did not transcend the local level and getting resources from small municipal grants. The rules of the project society are set usually by donors and also by some stronger "non-Romani" organizations.

In the NGO research, it is thus essential to be aware that topics like efficiency, transparency, cooperation or democracy are rather part of an arsenal organizations use to survive and are

able to master with differing skills. The content of these survival kits can change over time depending on the developments of donors' discourses and policies, new sets of expectations from NGOs or changing trends in non-profit and increasingly also profit management. If an organization has a functional composition of its survival kit plus people that can write and manage projects, it has chances of being successful in the long run. The research description then, before looking at the organization itself, should be oriented towards sources of "what is expected" from organizations in particular contexts, how these expectations were formed or how the idea of NGOs fits (or does not fit) to local policies. The legitimation through well conducted projects (compared to simple "effects" of organizational involvement), control of knowledge or dealing with terms and texts comes out as an integral part of a research focus.

2. Research evolution

2.1 Access points

At the beginning of my research I had some comparative ambition of doing research in more sites with different NGOs. I have made interviews in several organizations, e.g. in Praha, Kladno, Liberec, Kutná Hora, Jihlava, Pardubice, Brno, Vsetín and Ostrava, and made a visit to an organization in Bruntál and some other places. In some of these localities I interviewed people from municipalities and social and labour offices to understand the position of NGOs in the whole institutional setting. At the beginning of the research I expected to find different environment and legitimation strategies in Romani organizations, in non-Romani ones, or in non-Romani church organizations. What interested me at first was how these organizations presented their mandate to do their work and how much "ethnicization" of people occurred in their presentations. As will be explained, some organizations in the Czech Republic have stopped using ethnic categorization of their clients and concentrated instead on the "social vocabulary" and reasoning: "we help the socially excluded", etc. On the other hand, the majority of Romani organizations were more prone to retain the "ethnic-specific" discourse: "we help Roma". From the outside point of view, the NGO scene was sharply divided. It showed very soon that the categories I had been thinking in were not so clear-cut and that the functioning of the whole non-governmental sector has many things in common. These organizations could apply for the same grant, so they all had to know how to succeed in the same system, the discourses they used reacted to the common broader context, and the social services law in 2006 applied to all of them. Conflicts and disagreements were present, but they could not be explained only by the fact of a discursive affiliation of an organization. If I wanted to proceed with my research I had to forget all the working typologies and explore them more as a tactical label used by the organizations.

Other thing had to be changed, and that was the scope of the research. Being an outsider in these organizations and visiting them for just a short time, I could not get deeper, behind their official presentation, behind facts and discourses presented to outsiders. Mainly I got to talk to organizational leaders or people that were assigned the representational task, not with the regular "office staff". Through assigning this representational task to leaders and spokespersons, organizations effectively manage their image by presenting a certain coherent image about what their organization is and does. These spokespersons are often

quite skilled in negotiations and present the best image they can. Janine Wedel (2004:223), who studied non-governmental organizations in Russia (which actually turned to be very governmental and for-profit), has a similar experience: "*The individuals interviewed typically gave me their organisations' statements of purpose, often nicely presented for westerners*." I was not "a westerner" but I was an outsider. I was disappointed for not being able to capture the "real life of an NGO" and find how these discourses are created, what influences them and how people invest them with meanings and purposes. Dorothea Hilhorst (2003:2) says that if ever NGOs were studied, they were studied much more from the outside, not from the inner organizational side. NGOs were indeed studied more as entities that somehow act in development, have some goals, issue statements and implement projects. Many authors writing about accountability or legitimacy issues of NGOs actually have not seen the process from the inside, have not seen everyday practices of NGOs. I needed to get inside an organization so that I could see and experience these processes.

I preferred to do some volunteer work for the organization myself and thus live through and participate in the organizational processes and negotiations. This was not motivated only by the wish to "give something back" or to minimize my being a "burden" (in one larger organization I was told that I would indeed be perceived as such); in this way I could better legitimate my presence in the office. The action in the office is also not an "event" that could be described as Geertze's "cockfight" with total involvement of many actors, these moments sometimes arise but "between" them there is an office life of sitting in front of computers, making calls, writing and chatting. Of course this "between" is important for the interpretation of what happens when there is some "event", for instance a meeting, coming of a guest, a presentation, or a conflict. Another reason for my participating in this way was that although things are said in the office and people "do" something that could be observed, the actual work can help seeing beyond these expressions and better understand how work is organized. Susanne Ådahl, who herself made a research while working as a farm girl in Finland, says (2007:35) that the issue of working had not been very much elaborated upon methodologically, and notes that in some contexts not having any apparent job can bring problems to the fieldworker. Her argument for a working fieldworker is that it: *"teaches you to mirror local behaviour, enabling you to engage in a kind of intensive form of participant observation and it places the anthropologist in clearly understood local roles... Employment is of course not the only way to gain information, but it is a different way and definitely a facilitating factor in the data collection process."* It is obvious that in some situations the

researcher might not have the qualification to do the job, or the job would restrict him/her at getting a multi-dimensional picture of some situation. I did not see many other options for an NGO office where people are/seem "busy" all the time, and "doing something" helped to legitimate my presence (even to myself[10]). As Hirsch and Gellner suggest (2001:5), the access issue is not present only at the beginning of the research, but it comes up during the whole fieldwork process and it is "continuously negotiated"; the legitimation of the research through work could be one way to solve the access issue.

My possibility to enter an organization in this way differed a lot. It depended not only on the approach of the leadership to my research, on the organizational structure and the time availability of people (some of my entering efforts were hampered by the fact that people apologized for not having "a minute" for me during certain time), but also on the extent an organization had some pre-formed role I could play there. Some organizations had clearly defined roles for volunteers – participating at certain campaigns or events, helping children to learn, supporting the organization financially as a member of a club, which did not promise many possibilities to change the researcher's position or to see "the office". This stage of the "access evaluation" already provided me with some data, as well as brought realization that the role I could play and methods I could use would be very influenced by my position in the organization and the extent to which I could get to certain levels of organizational hierarchy; "higher levels" would have been accessible mainly through formal interviews, as is the case with anthropologists trying to get to people "in power". An interview can be fitted to a schedule better than the idea of having someone roaming in the office – participant observation was found not to be always fit in travelling up the social structure. In some organizational roles then, the researcher would be more "restricted" in the interaction with all the people in the organization. Markowitz (2001:43) says that the reason we know so little for example about the negotiations between donors and organizations is that many interactions are done over the phone or in closed meetings. I deal with the methodological responses to this restriction in the following chapters.

The fact that I ended up in Amaro was to the large extent caused by the possibility to "be inside" and have access to all levels of organizational hierarchy. There was no desire to

[10] During my research I constantly struggled with feeling uneasy when I was distracting people from their work, sometimes actively creating small office "chats". On the other hand, people knew that I was the one that would listen when they wanted to have a break.

study specifically a "Romani" organization, other organizations would be similarly interesting from the organizational point of view, and other topics would just probably come up in my research. Gellner and Hirsch (2001:5) cite Buchanan et al. (1998:56) that "*negotiating access for the purposes of research is a game of chance, not skill*" and I would partly agree, as I had a chance to know and had some level of trust from one of the persons that later introduced me to the organization. Anthropologists, says Okely (2008), should not be so shy to admit the role of the "chance" in their researches and stop to cover it up by claiming how well they planned everything in the beginning of their research. I got to know Amaro through a young non-Romani social worker who belongs to my circle of friends. I would call her Lucie. She captured my attention by describing the way people in the organization were angry with practices of the "majority" organizations, especially those connected to anthropologists of the West-Bohemian University. In their view these organizations were calling Roma just "excluded people" and replacing Roma social workers with non-Roma. Amaro wants to fight this, prefers employing Romani social workers and is trying to find special way of working our way/*amaro drom* (the citation from web pages of the organization inspired me to use "Amaro" as a pseudonym for the organization). That opposition caught my attention by fitting into dichotomies I had been thinking about at that time and I decided to visit the organization, curious to find out what was the alternative to the "mainstream". I arranged a recorded interview with my friend, who presented to me what the organization was doing.

The organization was located on the first floor of a building in the noisy and smoggy city centre. I noticed that on doorbells, there was another name of an organization that sounded "Romani" as Romani organizations in the Czech Republic often do (e.g. Romani Jasnica, Lačhe Čhave or Aven Roma). Another name belonged to a printing company on the ground floor. The other Romani organization was a long-established one and its leader had sub-leased one room to Amaro. Four women sat in a small smoky office equipped with a couple of old computers. It was a difficult environment for recording anything and although other people seemed working, anyone could listen to what was said. There was a permanent control of interaction that I found disturbing, being used to interviews "in private". Although I knew Lucie for some time, the interview was actually quite formal, maybe also due to the fact of recording. Later I noticed that frequently, she was the person who acted as a kind of gatekeeper that was called, consulted or that wanted to be involved when some external actor would appear on the scene and some important decision about the organization would be

taken. She was also the third "longest serving" member of that organization after the founder Anna and her son Josef. In the context of Amaro, I was surprised to find out that to know the official position of a person is not enough to reveal the decision makers. This initial remark proved important for further thinking about how organizational hierarchy worked in Amaro.

Before my entering Amaro, I had only a vague idea about what "participation" or "observation" could mean in this situation and how to be present without being too intrusive. Each place requires a certain methodological reinvention, and indeed, organizations are new sites for which new methodologies are needed. Studying NGOs with all their connections and flows requires very much a multi-sited ethnography – not only staying inside, but going "out" with actors, tracing discourses and policy materials. Fisher (1997:459) also warns that to stay "in the office" would not capture the whole picture: "*Community-based organizations may be close to the traditional sites of anthropological concerns, but the networks and alliances they increasingly have come to form open up new sites for ethnographic research, and the wide cast of these networks, which may appear only through chaotic public spectacles of ritual performance like international conferences, call for innovative research methodologies. As researchers, we need to reconsider how to approach problems located in or flowing through multiple sites*." The idea of the field as a bounded place has been reconsidered also by other authors like Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997) or Janine Wedel and Cris Shore (2005:39-40): The field of today "*consists of loosely connected actors with varying degrees of institutional leverage located in multiple 'sites' that are not always even geographically fixed."*

These methodologies are searching for links between different levels of action, and some sort of "agency" is attributed not only to "people" but to policy documents as well. The direction of the study can become more blurred as well – e.g. am I studying "up" or "down" if I am interested in how the law regulating social services in the Czech Republic was influenced by consultations with some NGOs? To resolve these problems, it is advised to "study through" – to look at the interactions, power networks, discourses and intertwining of organizational and everyday worlds (Wedel – Shore 2005:40; former concept Reinhold 1994:477-479).

2.2 Studying through home

From the picture of "studying through" I cannot leave out myself. It was also *my* everyday world that became connected to the organizational one. Many questions that I had about my position in the field and the ethics of research can be partly answered by using reflexive methodologies, so first, I would like to examine "what was my fieldwork" and "how I was present in it". Ethnographic fieldwork has been theorized as having intrinsically autobiographical quality (Okely – Callaway 1992; Behar 1994). Researchers are research tools themselves with all their histories, thoughts and feelings. What we feel influences what we see and write about later on. Around the time I came to Amaro, I stopped writing my personal diary. Field and non-field situations became hardly distinguishable – not only my pre-fieldwork social networks had been overlapping with the fieldwork networks, but I was suddenly finding "field" in very unexpected places – when I was "an expert" giving advice about projects "on Roma" to a grant commission and had to evaluate which things make a project "trustful", when I met my current partner at a New Year's celebration of Amaro, when the conflict between organizations became a threat to my friendship with a colleague from studies who was employed in another organization, or when one of my students in a correspondence university programme actually turned up to be a policeman who knew "guys from Amaro" and wanted to make an interview with one of them for his coursework.

British anthropologist Judith Okely writes that through repatriated anthropology, contrary to the situation of "*classical fieldwork where the anthropologist crosses the globe to study a group of peoples with only secondary sources for wider context*" (apart from e.g. Orientalism), "*the anthropologists' own amorphous Culture became an ethnographic resource*" (2008:60). An anthropologist in this situation is able to use cultural knowledge that shows itself through his/her reactions and it is even possible to find "data" in the reactions of people from her/his social networks. The situation is more complicated as there is no extremely "other" culture to study, but the work lies more in finding interconnectedness, differences and reinterpretations. In this kind of research we actually often do not "leave the field" when not being in direct communication with "our subjects". This fieldwork escapes the usual bounded time and location, it can be more fragmentary, but it can be found in unexpected moments and places of one's own life. Such fieldwork has been more common recently not only because doctoral students (and especially in "my region") lack funding, but due to the rising interconnectedness of people, globalization of social processes and gradual dissolution of the field-home distinction.

Discussions about the possibilities and limits of closeness nourished by postmodernist paradigm shift and a turn towards reflexivity have continued to change the construction of a fieldwork. Which kind of closeness is still acceptable to maintain the proclaimed "critical distance"? Still in the nineties Joanne Passaro's (1997) colleague reacted to her research of New York's homeless with: "*You can't take the subway to the field*" and sleep at home and "*What kind of fieldwork can you do in such an uncontrolled environment*"? The colleague was surprised that she rather did not study a shelter where they would be nicely "put together". The expected risk, the epistemologically controlled unit and distance were "missing". Otherness and closeness are frequently not dependent on the physical distance of "the field". Passaro finds more surprising that people asked her how a research in the U.S. can be "distant enough", but did not ask whether she could actually be "close enough" to these people (1997:153).

Also those boundaries of an „adequate ethnography" which had to demonstrate that the data were not generated by an anthropologist but by the „people studied" have shifted with the discussion of the books like Michael Schwalbe's *Unlocking the Iron Cage* (1996). Schwalbe has studied the men's movement in the USA and used something Brooke Harrington (2002) called "*obtrusiveness as strategy*" by bringing into the men's meetings the points that were previously undiscussed by the movement, and by actively participating in the movement. However, at the time he felt a strong professional pressure from his colleagues to show a disinterested objectivity. Colleagues were expecting that he would describe the movement members as "Others", and he could not speak openly about what he actually experienced as the member of the movement. Since then the discussion shifted to the acknowledgement that anthropologists are obtrusive and are not an invisible "piece of furniture". Questions asked now are more about "*how to maximize the potential inherent in the situation*" (Harrington 2002:61) and how can data, which one is gathering as a response to what he or she did, illuminate the positions of the actors. In my position of a volunteer who was expected to contribute to the work and discussions in the organization, this type of gathering data was not uncommon. Today, former "impurities" are acknowledged as general attributes of the fieldwork.

What else fieldwork is than a part of one's own life that was earlier just "dissected" and transformed by legitimate means into a scientific narrative? The fieldwork does not present a

big break in my life and, on the other hand, remains quite an "ordinary business" and presents rather continuity. I was involved in the NGO sector for a long time through my membership and work in the Scouts' organization, I founded two anthropology/research focused NGOs with my colleagues and supported work of one ecological and gender-conscious organization. Some of my remarks might stem from the inevitable comparison with functioning of these institutions (ways of constructing their self-images, a structure of authority and a circulation of information). Such comparison sometimes helped formulate why I was surprised that something did not function in the expected way. The eagerness to find out how things work elsewhere is one of the reasons why I was attracted to the NGO field. The idea to volunteer in my research is definitely connected with my previous experiences. In the Scouts, there is a high dedication of voluntary work that is legitimated by the responsibility one has for "the world" or "the reform of the society". Social services and activist NGOs sometimes have similar explanations for their work – in my fieldwork I encountered just a new set of legitimacies, other variations on the "doing good" definition. Through the reflection, critique and assessment of my own position in the field, I was able to "get to the data", while being aware of at least some factors that influenced and limited my understanding.

2.3 Organizational anthropology?

Can organizational anthropology be of any help in this situation? As I already mentioned, studying in and through organizations requires a different repertoire of methods. The reified twenty-four-hours-a-day idea of fieldwork has to be accommodated to the organizational schedule (moving into my colleagues' homes for long periods of time was not an option). The repertoire needs to be broadened up. However, if we look for anthropological texts published about how to study (in) organizations, the resources are not abundant. Dan Rose (1989) warns that anthropologists were turning blind eye to the fact that the science itself was produced through organizations, and that the institutional structure "colonized" us to the extent we take it for granted. The modern world is "populated" by organizations which can no longer be left out in the same way colonies and missions were ignored in the time of Malinowski.

Texts on organizations can be found "outside anthropology", in disciplines that employed some kind of ethnography, like sociology of a workplace or many studies in management and organizational science (e.g. Kostera 2007). They are often not so inspiring theoretically, but offer some hints about which things can be interesting to look at in terms of organizational functioning. With some surprise we can see, how non-profit organizations are becoming increasingly similar in functioning to the for-profit ones, and how much neo-liberal pressures and "business" vocabulary are present in the whole NGO sector.

However, organizational disciplines and anthropology have remained quite separated, Bates (1997) even writes about a divide that exists between them. There is a rising interest in qualitative studies of organization from organizational science, some methods are even called "ethnography", but Bates shows that what is presented as ethnography could not be mostly considered as such by a trained anthropologist. The paradigms and ways of thinking that have been used in organizational science differed. A concept of culture was frequently adopted for management purposes as something implemented by leaders and for the sake of maintaining "consensus" and productivity in an organization. The concept was connected with the idea of bringing profit and creating better organizational environment. Anthropology on the contrary would go against the simplistic explanation of organizational milieu that can be found in some management texts. The results and concepts of organizational research are very much influenced by the fact that anthropology is expensive and expectations for producing "results" are stronger in this field. The concepts showed themselves to be frequently ahistorical, acontextual (not being able to show how many things that happen inside the organization or how the structuring processes are influenced by events from the „outside") and aprocessual (with having e.g. quite linear assumptions about an organizational change). Bates finds most organizational science lacking in methods as well, not spending enough time or not spending it with the same goal – wanting to desperately create "useful" materials or producing "quick description" rather than "thick description" (Bates 1997:50 using Wolcott 1995:90), or not reflecting the polyphony of ideas and approaches that exist in the institution. Last part of his critique shows how research might be qualitative, but not actor-centred, not interested in finding out how people understand their situation. Writing then lacks reflexivity and treatment of reality as produced through the writing process. Similar critique of adoption of culture rather for "political" purposes of institutions was voiced by Susan Wright (1998) or Jimenez (2007). They show how anthropology was reduced to "studying organizational cultures ethnographically" without

concept critiques. Jimenez warns that "'*culture' itself is a culturally situated category*" (2007:19).

This critique and the fact that "the culture" and "ethnography" have been domesticated in organizational science in another way than in anthropology does not surprise me because anthropologists have not read texts dealing with organizational science, and vice versa. Recently, there have been some signs that this might change a bit as the interest in culture as a text is growing (reading Geertz in business schools), and narrative approaches and more flexible descriptions are used. For me it is more interesting to look at a different adoption process as being influenced by some "needs and goals" of both disciplines. Hirsch and Gellner (2001:2) even suggest that this was not as much "adoption", but that ethnography was discovered in several disciplines independently when a shift towards 'a client's point of view' occurred.[11]

In anthropology, one of the first overviews of organizational ethnography that I know of, is Helen Schwartzman's (1993) handbook. She traces involvement of anthropologists in organizational studies since 1920s and 1930s to the famous and contested study of Hawthorne plant that inspired theories of management, she describes the subsequent disappearance of anthropologists from organizational research and their return that begun in 1970s when more anthropologists were attempting studying in companies, sometimes even undercover. In 1980s organizational studies saw an emergence of the concept of "organizational culture", introduced through business studies and psychology that were searching for possibilities to describe and change the internal organizational environment and, as I mentioned earlier, that was sometimes far away from anthropological concepts of culture.

Theoretically innovative research came with the questions about "how people make sense of their work" asking about their "native views" (Gregory 1983) and questions about how organizations are actually "organizing processes" that for example started to look at "meetings" as an important form of production and interpretation of these processes. I see

[11] In the Czech Republic one of the first disciplines that found ethnography useful was pedagogy – a group of pedagogical researchers led by Miloš Kučera at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Charles University, Prague did not agree with prescriptive methodologies in pedagogy and preferred descriptions from the inside using terminology of the actors themselves.

meetings as a kind of organizational self-reflection and sense-making sessions, where people evaluate themselves and events in the organization. In my research they were an important site of negotiations, expositions of hierarchy and conflicts between different actors in the organization. There is no single organizational reality for all the actors, each interprets it in a different way. I noticed that my questions that I had in mind when entering Amaro, were not always the topics that would be most hotly debated during the meetings. Meetings were thus an important clue to what is the most important issue at a certain point. Organizational stories, which are showing the norms of the organization, evaluating or commenting on sensitive issues indirectly, were also researched (Schwartzman 1993:43-45, 60-66). These are moments when people sum up what happened and then give their opinion on it, moments of gossiping about people and events that establish more or less official explanations of reality. Finally, organizations are conceived not as "closed systems", but as parts of larger processes of bureaucratization, state and international policies, etc. Researchers gradually started not only to "study up" but as well to 'study wide', including expanding layers of context to their analyses (Jimenez 2007:12).

These changes lead from the study of "institutional culture" to tracing individual career paths that move between private and state sector, to analysing networks connecting different spaces of agency. Some authors called for ethnographies that would include "*exploring the connections among sites that together make up arenas of social practice"* (Eisenhart 2001:110) or transnational ethnoscapes (Appadurai 1996) to get closer to the experience of people moving in between those arenas. Going behind an institution, observation gets combined with "*reading newspapers, analysing government documents, observing the activities of governing elites, and tracking the internal logic of transnational development agencies and corporations*." (Gupta – Ferguson 1997:37). In this way an anthropologist could also fill in the areas which are not so easily accessible like telephone conversations or closed meetings. Such anthropological analysis according to Markowitz (2001) and Wedel and Shore (2005:42) can further show that the distinctions between macro/micro, top down/bottom up, local/global or state/private can be just labels used by policy-makers. It can show that the actors have very different roles when they move from one context to another, and that by staying "inside" one could miss important data. The idea of studying at one place was based on assumed residential and institutional stability that does not match with a current institutional process, which is rather volatile. For Markowitz it presents "*constant attentiveness to the appearance of new units of analysis and fresh linkages between them"*

(2001:42), and she used such techniques as telephone or internet interviews to reach people that were not physically available. For her, the NGO field was a kind of chimerical fieldsite full of ephemeral social webs. In my research I myself encountered numerous situations when the focus of an NGO's action shifted quickly in connection with new grant openings, meetings where one "should be" present, or finding out about possible threats that could endanger functioning of the organization. What I considered the main concern of an institution in one week, could be sidelined the next week. The whole sector seemed to me to be relying on "the quickest reactions" to diverse changes and opportunities that could bring some advantage for the organization (or even over other organizations). For these reasons, it was also hard for me to end the research since I knew that every new visit in the organization "threatens" to undermine my previous interpretation about what was going on. It is interesting that research in organizations was sometimes called neither "a methodology", nor "theoretical perspective", but the combination of the two at the same time (McNeil 2008:110). The positioning of an anthropologist in organizations requires rethinking both methodology and theory.[12]

2.4 Missing power

The focus that I miss in the Schwartzman's account is that she just recounts the history and the main methodological developments and does not elaborate more about the reasons why many anthropologists started to do research in organizations. Jimenez (2007:2-3) mentions that actually many people were motivated politically as well as ideologically, trying to explore mainly different ways of institutionalization of power (e.g. looking at the solidarity of workers) and recently also processes of bureaucratization and governmentality. Jimenez himself wants to resurrect this tradition: „*The time is right for a political re-reading of organisational ethnography*" (2007:3). A lot of studies in organizations just describe „organizational culture", they use culture as some objectifying tool, and ignore factors like power, race and gender in their analysis. As has already been mentioned, „organizational culture" being a contested concept, Jimenes (2007:20) sees it as a moral concept as well, that

[12] However, the need to change is perceived very differently by different authors. Some want to support the case of universal applicability of anthropology to whatever context (Hirsch – Gellner 2001:13): *"It is our belief that the same methods can be used for village-level, organizational, and multi-sited ethnography*". For me, it certainly presents a set of challenges that are distinct from a village-level research.

can show what „*an organisation (...) renders worthy of self-acknowledgement*". It can become an image for public consumption that should be read as such.

It seems that going behind some of these images analytically may be difficult because of recent inflation of „the ethical" not only in the organizational sphere (with images of justice, equality or good conduct everywhere) but basically in every sphere of people's lives. Strathern (2000) shows how ethical the emerging principle of social organization together with audit and policy has become. New mechanisms of accountability are built into policy reforms demanding also certain organizational responsibility that is best summarized in „ethical codes". This triad is transforming not only the work in organizations, but has implications for the anthropological research that is conducted from institutions, and is subjected to newly emerged professional codes of ethics that, according to Strathern, can belittle the creative power of social relations during the research, making the anthropological research interested in how things work, e.g. "research *on* human subjects". People subjected to the audit are influenced by an auditor's vision of reality, together creating new kinds of reality.

In sociology, there is one important methodological school that goes in the same direction as anthropological approaches to power in organizations, namely institutional ethnography founded by Dorothy Smith (1987). She rejected the generalizing sociological theories of "disembodied objects" with the aim to better capture the everyday experiences of people (mainly women, as she wanted to create "the sociology for women"). She looks first at the experiences inside institutions, but goes further to explain how these experiences are part of the more general web of relations of ruling that reach beyond a single institution. She does it by revealing disjunctures and tensions between people's experiences and official policies. One of the focuses she uses is how official texts enter into organizations and are used to control and transform social relations. The focus on how Amaro is externally influenced by different regulations (but also the unwritten ones) became part of the multi-sitedness of my research. As elsewhere, NGO conduct in the Czech Republic is shaped by state-issued standards of quality and different accountability requirements. These issues become a new form of institutionalization of power, and I will tackle them in the chapter devoted to professionalization pressures.

In the following paragraphs I will try to describe some of the problematic sides of my research: what was my positioning in the research and the dilemmas that I was encountering during the research. Being home does not always mean that the research is safe or comfortable. In this case it was very uncomfortable precisely because there was the multiplicity of links between me and people in the organization that could sometime clash, and between the proximity of the Czech NGO sector to the state and academia.[13] Colleagues from my university studies are now working in different state organizations, ministries and NGOs. People that could read my texts are in every sector and, most importantly, some of them in positions that have power over Amaro due to the distribution of money, others are trying to reform the social services sector, formulate „policies on Roma", or work in organizations that compete with Amaro. This web of potential readers coupled with the competitiveness of the Czech NGO sector makes the situation rather complicated and ethically sensitive. Some of these people told me that my research is "dangerous". What could I write in order not to harm the organization or the people involved? How to represent the organization in the sector where there is such pressure on a controlled and positive external image? Would my writing this in English make it inaccessible to the less advantaged people in the sector? What to do when many of the readers could recognize which organization I am writing about, because they met me during the research or because they can guess it from my description?

To describe my position in the research I have found helpful Peter Pels's text *The trickster's dilemma* published in Marilyn Strathern's *Audit Cultures* (2000). Pels draws attention to ethical codes of anthropology that stress the commitment of anthropologists to *publicity* towards their sponsors and towards their subjects (e.g. Principles of Professional Responsibility of AAA 1971). These codes inform the technique of anthropological self and establish a morality of truth in anthropology. According to them, an anthropologist should be open about his/her findings and avoid "*secrecy in the contracting, practice and dissemination of the results of research"* (Pels 2000:138). The respect of these standards, in a way, is what makes a proper anthropologist.

My experience with research in the competitive social services sector in the Czech Republic has influenced me in taking a stand opposing the total openness and actually, I would be

[13] See the already mentioned article – Synková, 2008.

surprised if other anthropologists were completely open about the situation. Laura Nader (1999 [1969]:303) in discussion of ethics of working in one's own society notices that: "*To say that kula-ring participants don't perform in practice what they say they do has very different consequences from saying that a government agency is not living up to its standards*." I could paraphrase this quote to suite my case: to say that Western practices and institutions could be reinvented in a very original way by tribes in Papua New Guinea is not as dangerous as the claim that NGOs are imagined and "done" in ways that are far from the image they present to the control bodies or even far from the image they wish to project about themselves. These new sites and situations of research deserve some deeper thinking about consequences of research. Peter Pels (2000:164) suggests a kind of "impression management" that researcher should apply towards the public. He claims that even "*guarding of secrets can be a supremely moral practice*" that is part of a critical engagement of researches with ethnography of modernity. Throughout my work I was constantly thinking about which incidents and events are necessary to be described in detail, or which are so important that I really need them to move my explanation forward, and sometimes I shared these dilemmas with different people in Amaro. Nevertheless, it is still difficult to predict what reactions this text is going to bring.

Anthropologists are influenced by changing properties of sites they study and by globalization of relationships: *"Our relationships with those we describe must be accountable in new ways if we are not to destroy relations of amity established with those whom we study"* (Bell – Coleman 1999:5). I agree with Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman about the need to find new ways of accountability, but I don't feel comfortable with the centrality of amity in fieldwork relationships that they expand on the text: *"...Development of some form of friendship is inherent within anthropological practice. Fieldworkers usually have to establish cordial and even close relations with informants if they are not to become like ethologists, observing interactions while remaining aloof from close social contact*." (p. 2). Where should this "amity responsibility" have its limits for me if I sometimes received some information from my colleagues, who are my friends as well, but do not look very favourably at how Amaro functions? Should I limit my accountability just to Amaro? Which friendships are more important than others, and should friendship be the main guideline for the people an anthropologist should be accountable to? Many anthropologists do establish friendships that help tremendously in understanding other people's views, but friendship cannot not be considered a precondition for doing good or "true" anthropology.

The degree of closeness one can get to is influenced by possibilities of the environment. Being an anthropologist in the field I could be both – a danger (as I can find cleavages and manipulations in one interpretation of reality, I can meet people who can be considered "on the other side of barrier") and a resource-person (as professionalism of the field is getting greater and "an expert" can become handy). Julie Marcus (1992:108-110), who wrote about an aboriginal activist, reflected their relationship as mutual exploitation or exchange of services (I will give you some information and you will help me with this or that), which did not exclude anger, suspicion and distrust and new re-negotiations of the partnership. I would say that her descriptions of some of her fieldwork relationships are quite close to my situation. It is natural that anthropologists find some people easier to socialize with, and with others the communication is a "harder job". It was the same in the Amaro microcosm. There were also different stages of my identification with the organization, changes in my access to different people and to actors outside Amaro.

Both instances – an NGO helping to get closer to certain people, and effectively blocking the access – were present in other researches. Othon Alexandrakis (2007) has co-founded an NGO that enabled him to legitimate his research for all sides – Romani inhabitants of the Athens's suburbs, other local populations and administrative structures. Usual methodology of hanging out was not possible in the neighbourhood due to the hostility of non-Roma. The NGO enabled him to gain access to most of the actors thanks to the fact that his work was considered useful. He even calls the NGO a "research device" and a "centre of study" as he studied more "through" the NGO than "the" NGO itself. Adriana Helbig (2007) felt much more restricted by her association with an NGO. Equipped with readings about combining research and advocacy and shocked by a police raid on the settlement she lived in, she got associated with a Ukrainian Romani NGO and reassessed her dissertation project. Male Romani rights activists complicated her attempts to talk privately to women, but still she felt committed to their work and value of cultural-musical projects they were making. However, later on she was used in a corruption charges dispute between local NGOs that had to be resolved at a court, and she found out that the NGO had legitimated its funding applications also through the image of a Western scholar working for it. "*I found myself caught in a discourse of images and statistics that were manipulated to socially, economically, politically, and personally benefit the directors of Romani NGOs rather than impoverished Roma. Throughout the 1990s, donor aid made persons living in Romani settlements in*

Transcarpathia dependent on the network of Romani NGOs within the political and socio-economic sphere" (2007:81), and she identified these NGOs as a *"roadblock to economic development within impoverished Romani communities."* When she was entering the field, she was not able to see that donor aid had actually widened the previously existing social divisions, and that ethnically based grants assumed homogeneity that did not exist in the field – "*representatives from local Romani NGOs come into the settlement only when escorting international donors and human rights activists"* (2007:82). During her research the access to these poorer Roma was therefore blocked, and she unconsciously supported the colonizing projects of the non-governmental sector.

Amaro certainly brought me a possibility to talk to some of its partner NGOs, to some extent it blocked my access to "competing" NGOs and to "clients" of the organization. Meeting clients was easier in the beginning of my research before the clients, due to the standardization of social work, became more "anonymous" and were cared for on an individual basis by terrain social workers. St. Nicolas parties, a ball organized by a group of local terrain workers, children's activities and an occasional and restricted visit to a prison workshop were the possible meeting points. I have also benefited from several short visits with Amaro social workers in the field, but it cannot be said that these visits enabled me to really get to know the clients. They would rather give me an idea about how social work teams function and what is the character of their work. Moreover, I was usually introduced to the clients by some employee, and I was recognized as someone coming from Amaro, which could silence their possible critical stance towards its organizational activities. The information I got were mostly telling "how good this or that person is and how Amaro helped me". Such conditions indeed blocked my access to the clients, but illustrated well and sometimes surprisingly that an office worker, who is not herself a social worker, actually does not come into much contact with the "target population". Access to the donor level was limited because I was aware I could harm Amaro; some administrators were becoming allergic just hearing its name due to its rather frequent problems and unfamiliarity with the administrative processes. I preferred to focus on how the arrival of grants influenced the organizational functioning. I gained some insights through serving as a supplementary grant assessor, talking to Lucie after she became an assessor, talking to a ministry, a foundation representative and a representative of a service NGO that distributes European and state money (that managed grant programmes Amaro did not apply to recently), but this knowledge is rather auxiliary. Finding out how the grants are actually formulated and

applications assessed would require a different research design, less associated with a single NGO. On the other hand, rich contextual data came from my contacts with people in "expert positions" through my "professional friendship networks".

Now I will try to describe the changing dynamics of an office setting itself and my relation to it. In 2005 and 2006, being regularly in the office and involved in several weekend actions, overnight stays included, I noticed that when referring to Amaro, I am starting to use "we". The organization was very small: Anna doing social work in a prison and in one part of the town and also promotion work; Martina and Jitka, two female students of romology[14] helping with children activities, paperwork, fundraising and with organizing larger public events; Simona, a student of social work helping with a prison programme; Anna's son Josef doing social work in a prison, driving and cooking; and once in two weeks an intensive stay (due to living far away and having a small child) of Lucie who finished her BA in social work and was helping with strategic decisions in the organization, planning, standardization and fundraising. Occasionally the other Anna's son, Viktor, and his friend Dominik, stopped by, sometimes there were Josef's children around and three full-blooded dogs, which belonged to Viktor, Dominik and Martina. Anna was the first employee, then came Josef, and Martina, Jitka, Simona and Lucie were volunteering and later on received part-time jobs. The office was very small and sometimes I was sitting in the corridor next to a photocopier, on a computer that belonged to another Romani organization. Paradoxically, I was sometimes glad not to being constantly in the smoky office, where one "could not work". Meetings were held in a meeting room of the other Romani organization, and help with devices or advice was often sought out in the other organization. Contacts in Amaro were intense, there was a sense that people kind of "live together", meals were frequently shared. I perceived all the conflicts in the organization very personally, as they were connected with my everyday work. At the time, I used my resources and social networks to contribute to the success of some Amaro's actions. A summer camp in Croatia with children was a very intensive experience. I had been cooperating in preparing and implementing the programme and I unexpectedly had to serve as a paramedic. Access to most of the people at that time was quite direct and I was doing "jobs" for different people in the office, except for Josef, who was in tandem with Simona.

[14] A small department, Seminar of Romani Studies under the Institute of South and Central Asia of Charles University, focusing mainly on linguistics, but having many graduates working in the field of „promotion of Romani culture" (sometimes in its "romanticized" form) and opposing the view of Roma as a „social problem".

In 2006-2007, when the organization moved to a bigger office in a different place and the number of its employees grew significantly (it started terrain social work programme in several regions of the Czech Republic), that I did not know so well (apart from Viktor and Dominik who were now being employed), I became more of an advisor and visitor that comes to help with certain jobs, like formulation of standards of quality, or doing a small survey about "service satisfaction" with Amaro clients in a prison that was needed for one of the projects. For the prison research I had also obtained around 77 Euro, the only "paid service" I did for the organization. At that time I was closer to the people that were on the "expert side" than e.g. to Anna. I did not feel the urge to think about the organization as "we" as strongly as during the first year of my research. What was going on in the organization was rather a process to observe. It was more difficult to get access to the organization, as the activities of the organization had diversified a lot, and as a stricter hierarchy emerged, some meetings were closed for me and people at lower levels of hierarchy. During that time there were several people coming and leaving, some of them I got to know more than others depending on the time they spent in the office and if they took part in the summer camp. My relationship with two female social workers Lucie and newly arrived Magdalena was closer due to our pre-fieldwork connections – I know their partners, visit them at home, I have baby-sat their children, helped them move from one flat to another, I still sing with Magdalena in a choir, which means meeting her every week and spending some rehearsal weekends together.

In 2008-2009 I kept returning to the office once a week, now in the role of "Anna's help", which enabled me to get closer to her. I felt I had neglected her point of view and had a harder access to her due to polarization of relations in the office. I was able to meet her sometimes outside the office, when she was baby-sitting her grandson together with Lucie baby-sitting her children or during meetings with people from the government. In summer 2009, another group of new employees came both to regional offices, a children's club and the central office that I met more superficially. I realized that for them I was someone more from the "past" of the organization that was still appearing from time to time.

In the beginning of 2010, prepared to leave the scene quietly, I was surprised to find out that one of my Romani students got the position of director of a terrain work programme. When an anthropologist colleague of mine was desperately searching for a "Romani organization"

to fulfil some "ethnic" criteria of a European project and asked me about Amaro, I had recommended the student. If the grant would be approved, it would be the first "truly international" (in English; different states involved) project of Amaro. The social networks thus paradoxically brought me back and revealed that in some circumstances it is not easy to "leave" and that the contact with an organization is maintained with the help of something that can be described as "access points" – these access points being people connected to one's established social networks. Organizational access points can be of course more fragile – due to the fluctuation of employees – than access points in some "more settled" research contexts. In spring 2010 the organization grew again and moved to a more spacious and representative location. It started a social work programme in a new prison with a new team and got a grant for an educational project that should supplement social work done in localities and ensure that children got access to and survived in the regular educational system and avoid being placed at special schools for mentally handicapped. I was able to visit the educational project "as a guest" and spend some time also with terrain social workers.

2.5 Siding with friends

My rather incomplete and partial view of some persons and events during the research was influenced by the above-described positioning. When writing, I also create a clearly asymmetrical relationship with the people I write about (I edit the text of which I am the author, it is I who choose what/how to quote and describe). If I go back to my friendship relations and look at what I consider friendship, my concept of friendship is certainly influenced by its Western construction: nurtured according to Bell and Coleman by Aristotelian "virtue", medieval notion of Christian monasticism and later by "individualist" Romanticism, excluding hierarchy, practical motivations, social constraints, rules and duties, based on voluntary choice, informal relations and affection. In the West, there was a tendency to present friendship as a "non-institution" (Bell – Coleman 1999:9) and as an escape from social and institutional contexts (1999:12). These views were recently challenged to show that frequently even in the West, the friendship is indeed much more influenced by social constraints (we tend to choose persons of the same class, gender and occupation as friends) and sometimes was constructed for political purposes in opposition to other types of relationships (kinship or patron-client relationships). Friendship can support a

differential access to public spheres of society in an important way and does not exist "out" of the sphere of power and politics.

While writing this text, I struggled with a tendency to view some acts rather as "kinship" motivated and I had to constantly remind myself that I could be influenced by this dichotomous perception of reality (common even in a lot of Czech academic writing), and I had to be careful not to interpret Anna and her sons only through these lenses. I was there to see what's going on in the whole organization. According to Robert Paine cited in Bell and Coleman (1999:1, 4-6), it is a general anthropologist's tendency to do so, because anthropology tends to "*dwell far more on the significance of blood ties for the construction and maintenance of social relations*" (1969:505; Bell – Coleman 1999:1) and looks for regular, long-term patterns of social organization and disregards "unofficial bonds". Friendship was long considered to be a property of the civilized society as contrasted with rules- and roles-tightened societies. However, some authors have shown that these two forms can merge or overlap (Gulliver 1971 – Ndendeuli of Tanzania, Pitt-Rivers 1973:90 – Spain, Herman 1987 – ritualized friendship in ancient Greece, Gurdin 1996 – urban Canadians). Bell and Coleman mention the Reed-Danahay's work (1999) that "*demonstrates how kinship and friendship cannot easily be separated in a context that is highly endogenous*" (Bell – Coleman 1999:7). Anthropologists tend to stress kinship as the main organizational principle sometimes not devoting enough attention to other relationships and preferences of individuals.

It was no surprise that I was closer to people of my gender, age group, educational level, etc. It was clear to me that I was inclined to "understand" and take for granted rather their points of view. But what struck me was how quickly I abandoned the ideal of non-interfering, neutral presence in the organization, and how much this was connected to the image I had "about work" – in a quiet, non-smoking, well-ordered place with clear responsibilities. I suddenly noticed that I was pushing for having standards of work for volunteers – I was trying to define what could be their role in the organization, who should care about them, I was sorting hundreds of documents in a computer to well-arranged files, creating an address book (there was not any, as Anna or other girls had all the contacts in their mobile phones). I started to write an application for a certificate of socio-legal protection of children, because if an organization wants to work with children and be "trustworthy", it should have it. So, easily and quickly, I found myself being part of the disciplining mechanisms of the state that

require organizations to meet certain standards and I was definitely applying my own internalized norms about how an organization should function. I was not alone in this process, but I was closer to "the girls'" opinions about why and how things should be done.

The only way to proceed with my research then was through exploring these contradictions and reflecting my inclinations. The inclination of an anthropologist to "judge" when he/she is practically working in some organization seems to be strong, the project pressure introduces a regime different from "just being and hanging around". Suddenly, the responsibilities are not just for the fieldwork, but equally for the "work" itself, and this creates tensions. It showed that it is so important for my self-image and for a possibility to appreciate "working part of myself", that I really wanted the work to be quick, clear and organized. My socialization to a world of "work" proved to be very strong. Moreover "the work" in office seems to be such a mundane and natural thing, that we can quickly forget about reflexivity when suggesting changes in an organization. Especially when we move from working at a "home computer" to an "office computer" in a very short time. An anthropologist David Scheffel is pointed to by Nidhi Trehan (2009:66) as someone who did not reflect on these propensities enough – he did not manage to stop projecting his middle-class values on a community of Roma, where he implemented a project. He complained about the "lack of volunteerism" among them (Scheffel 2005). Thus the exigencies of project work can silence some of these self-reflecting mechanisms.

The way I was perceived by the Amaro people differed in time, and I cannot speak for everyone in Amaro. In the first year I felt being more of "an insider", and later someone with whom one had to be careful a bit in some situations – e.g. when I was present at meetings of organizational leadership, when someone said something a little more sensitive (strategic for the future of the organization, critical, money-connected), Lucie: *"Be careful, she is doing research on us"*, half jokingly, half seriously in reminding others of my "double" role that they might have forgotten. Being interested in gossip going around the organization, I indeed sometimes felt that I might be reckoned to be a "spy".

Lucie's question *"Will you stop seeing us and me after you finish the research?"* was another of these "reflexive" moves. Lucie actually functioned as a reflexive agent for all the processes and decision-making in the organization, not only for my research. Her position was one of a policewoman ensuring that decisions and projects do not end in some

unexpected disaster, because of not being well thought-out and prepared. As she was the first person, who directed my attention towards Amaro, close to me, and practically "second-in-power" person in the organization, I had difficult times again to balance her views of the situation with views of the others. Uneasy times also came when my partner or my anthropological colleague asked me: *"Will you include me/this into the research?"* The author's power to include "somebody into his/her research" is definitely an uncomfortable one due to its objectifying force and raises questions about where we should "draw the boundaries" of the research and about a "postmodern informant" that finally talks back to "an anthropologist" and negotiates about each detail.

In the end, not only "informants" were negotiating about what should and should not be in my research. I encountered different ideas of my academic colleagues about what should be the purpose of my research and what should it bring to light – several anthropologists and ethnographers told me that *"You should definitely describe how corrupt the whole business is."* The assumption was that I am entering some kind of enemy territory and I should map it well through my fieldwork and writing. Other expectations came from romologists and indologists: I should stick with Roma and show how the whole NGO system is destroying their ways of dealing with solidarity. They have introduced me to many stories about Roma and Indian people, particularly those, in which they received money for their work without any bookkeeping – usually pulled out of a pocket of a suit. I was told that if an NGO is giving e.g. only ten percent of its budget to satisfy the demands of the kin group, the people in the organization already behave unprecedently well. However, my field situation was much more complex and no interpretation fitted it well (and I did not want to fit my data into one or another). However, what was of particular interest in these narratives was the contrast with which they portrayed the "Romani NGOs". One of them dealt with corruption, the next one with solidarity – but both actually treated NGOs as a kind of business strategy, just with opposite value interpretations. Both of them also posited that there is necessarily "a difference". It revealed to me a whole array of eruptive moral (and sometime essentializing) discourses that exist, and expectations that my work should fulfil. When Anna told me "*to write everything as it is*", I was pleased that she said it, but of course it did not erase any of the dilemmas about my positioning, power of writing and expectations about the text. When bringing an article or sending Amaro people a draft of my PhD thesis, the usual reaction was that they were interested but finally they were too busy to read it, and the English really slowed them down, which showed to what extent this had limited their access to these texts.

Lucie gave me some feedback mainly on an earlier Czech conference presentation focusing on contrasts between her and Anna's Amaro presentations. With the others, I had mainly private conversations and a broader group discussion was postponed due to time constraints and also to the fact that many people no longer work in the organization or have no interest in coming to Amaro (like Jitka who left in 2006 after a conflict with Anna).

I dealt with the transcripts of interviews and terrain notes in the following way: Having gathered a lot of data over the years, I first searched for some common topics that could characterize the different "periods" of the organizational process first from the actors' points of view. For example interviews, jottings and presentation materials from the first year often mentioned different forms of "linkages" and "intertwinings" (and more frequently used "Romaniness" as a legitimation strategy), whereas the newer data were signalling growing "distances" and "divisions", up to the point that one could sometimes say "they" about the leadership, other programme team members or "the central office". The importance of signs of an individual and organizational professionalism grew. Then I looked at the notes about the work I and others were doing, and how external pressures influenced our modes of positioning and functioning. Relationships among views and ways of functioning were searched for. For example, the construction of Amaro as a family that actors identified with was supported by the close-knit working environment. In the beginning, such a combination was able to contain internal tensions and individual discontent about the work. With Amaro's growth, the organizational image changed rather to one of an "organizational chart" in which it was no longer possible to behave in the same way, and the tensions grew. Not many people openly reflected on the fact that the pressures from the outside (like the law, reporting requirements, strategic planning) also often had a divisive character – during their implementation, the actors inside organization became more distanced for example by their level of education, or their roles became more hierarchized. When I write about what was caused by the in/ability to handle texts, I do not describe any common organizational discourse, but rather a gradual reorganization of positions inside the organization. Finally I looked at developments and discourses on the Czech NGO scene and in the establishment of terrain social work as part of social services in order to identify dominant forces shaping what organizations are expected to do and to tell about themselves. In this way I could anchor Amaro contextually and explain why it was considered "lacking" in certain domains of its functioning.

3. Setting the scene

3.1 Czech NGO sector

The third part of my thesis is devoted to a description of and theorization about the situation in the Czech Republic. It is not a separate prelude as my research was not limited only to the inside of one particular organization, but evolved also during my encounters with government officials, colleagues or social services people. The nature of this research obviously challenges the old notion of "a site" as a physical location, where fieldwork takes place. As Jeremy Gold suggests (2004:272), the border between social and spatial is impossible to fix. A site of a research is comprised of many localities, interactions and transactions of its actors, which are in certain relationships. He states that: "*Localities are points of convergence of various actors and interests as well as of the* contexts *in which they are embedded.*"

Before showing how one particular organization interacts in these contexts, I will first map the particularities of the Czech NGO sector including tensions which exist inside it, and development of social work. Organizations do not exist in a vacuum, but are influenced by different sets of regulations and expectations from a broad range of actors. Issues mentioned in this part concerning creation of professional standards, building trust and legitimacy, arguing about who should be the "target group" of policies, and inequalities in the sector will reappear and be discussed in a later, more detailed analysis.

There are many civic initiatives in the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Interior has so far registered 75 000 organizations (MVČR 2009). The number of registered organizations does not tell much about the actual functioning of these organizations or the whole civic sector. Most of them are small, local entities, some of which have already dissolved or are inactive, but have not reported that to the Ministry. Sports clubs and different recreational activities are the most abundant, which is caused mainly by the legacy of Communism, when the regime supported them for political reasons. Social service organizations form another big cluster, but compared to the "Western Europe" where NGOs focus their attention mainly on

social services, health or education, they are much less numerous.[15] Social services, health and education were nationalized and controlled directly by the socialist state. Up to these days there are still many budgetary state organizations and semi-budgetary state, regional or municipal organizations financed directly by their founders, which is criticized by organizations that get their finances entirely from grant competition (Angelovská – Frič – Goulli 2009:24-25, 60). The list contains also a great number of local initiatives supporting the quality of life; on the other hand, "activist" organizations with pronounced political, ecological, human rights or feminist agenda are numerically in minority. Regardless of their size, level of professionalism or international focus, they are enlisted in one "list of civic associations". The sphere they create is mostly called a "non-profit sector", "civic sector" or even "non-state non-profit sector" (this form is frequently used by the government), and also numerically encompasses minor legal forms like foundations, endowment funds, public benefit corporations and church organizations.

Founding of a civic association is not a difficult process, what is needed are just three people and an official mission statement document that gets registered at the ministry. After 1989, "creating an organization" became quite a usual form of civic engagement of middle classes to such an extent that some authors (Marada 2008) describe an institutionalization of the civic society incomparableuncomparable to the "Western" countries, where civic engagement has much more diverse structure. This institutionalization was nonetheless supported exactly by the resources from large Western democratizing agencies, which came to "build democracy" in the Central and Eastern Europe. On the one hand, the availability of more substantial resources mainly from abroad pushed local actors towards institutionalization in order to manage it, on the other hand, the distribution of money, e.g. through grant systems, is better "controllable" if the funds are given to a certain institution for implementation of a concrete project. In principle, "rutinization" of organizational functioning is also an asset for better control and I would say even for the legitimation process – organizations with standard procedures are "safer" for the donor, so donors prefer standardized organizations. The level of control has been increasing from year to year, and stories about "millions" that were distributed right after the revolution to certain actors, which were selected as trustworthy by donors without having to present any detailed

[15] Angelovská – Frič – Goulli cite the *Global civil society* estimate that 27 per cent of NGOs in Western Europe focus on social services while in the Czech Republic it is only 11 per cent (2009:60).

projects, are today in the realm of fairy-tales. The donors became more careful and demanding, large, mostly American-based foundations moved further to the East, and the number of local civic organizations increased. In certain sectors it was possible to get some resources from the European Union pre-accession funds and today there is a significant contribution from the European Structural Fund. The whole process can be nonetheless characterized by steadily increasing competition[16] and professionalization. The only organization with a significant and long-term presence in the region is the Open Society Fund, which was actually largely motivated to stay here due to the persistent Romani discrimination, and today it is the main private fund willing to support advocacy programmes.

The evaluation of "Western" influence on the establishment of the "Eastern" civic sector differs and we can find two opposing interpretations. Some authors (June 2007, Sampson 2002) point critically towards the co-optation of organizations that resulted in directing their attention to the international arena, adoption of donor's rhetoric and goals, while restricting contact with "grassroots" and paralyzing the mobilization of local resources. Others, like Ondřej Císař (2008) inspired by Craig Jenkins (1998), are considering a "channelling" thesis to be more appropriate – according to them the pressure on institutionalization and professionalization of organizations did not mean that they were depoliticized or lost their former goal: *"...under the international influence they became more self-confident and better organized defenders of their cause*" (Císař 2008:18). He points out to the fact that "foreign" funding still forms the majority of budgets of most professionalized organizations that are focused on attaining political goals[17], and that the foreign funding literally saved these types of actors and assured their institutional survival, while they continued to work on their issues waiting for the future political opportunities. On the other hand, some leftist commentators (Barker 2009) consider this line of argument to be a dangerous discursive move against the critiques of donor practices: "*Funding provided by the Russell Sage Foundation (in 1983) to support Craig Jenkins's work on elite patronage of social movements proved to be an important investment for shielding liberal foundations from critical enquiry."* The level of

[16] Although the coalitions and platforms have been formed around different issues, organizations often compete for the same financial resources.

[17] Trade unions, self-organized initiatives and radical activists are another three categories of political activists he identifies. These are not so dependent on foreign resources, using rather their membership fees and organizational property, individual and self-generated resources.

co-optation or channelling seems to me to differ on an individual basis depending first on how the goals and project processes are designed, second on the availability of "funding choices", and third on the process during which an organization is "redefining" what donors want to suit their respective goals. Donors certainly do open some structural possibilities and influence discourses of what presents an "issue" to be solved.

Due to such a great interest in how much "the West" influenced the choice of issues or how much it de/politicized local organizations, the issue of professionalization was much less analyzed, even though it is essentially connected both to the channelling or co-optation positions. How exactly "it makes a difference" during an institution's growth and what are political implications of this process? Císař himself sees an increasing professionalization just as a necessary co-product of being a modern Czech advocacy activist, he acknowledges the import of an organizational model as a kind of the necessary routine which enables to get grants and to communicate with abroad (Císař 2008:16, 88-92, citation 142): *"Only a formally registered organization with an office and employees can qualify beneficiary of support from EU funds"*. However, the transformation towards a "professional organization" does not seem to be so simple and is quite unequal.

In the Czech Republic, certain organizations grew rather significantly, and there is a widening gap between organizations that have salaried personnel and get the largest amount of resources, and smaller ones that are dependent on voluntary work of their members (Rakušanová 2005:670). In most of the sector, there are several organizations whose names come up, when somebody says a certain word like "ecology, foreigners, refugees, corruption, human rights, humanitarian aid and development, etc." These organizations are visible due to their access to mainstream media and campaigns that could be inaccessible to organizations with lesser financial and social capital. Larger organizations are usually successful in getting grants, to which money flows at least partly "from abroad". Municipal and regional resources that do not channel "foreign money" are smaller by several degrees – regional resources might start on several hundreds of euros, whereas foreign funding could be around tens of thousands of euros. One can even hear the connection "European money" or "it was bought with European money" (a new computer, etc.), which means the money is usually sufficient or even a bit generous and its acquisition is much celebrated in some organizations.

The growing inequality between organizations can be seen when looking at the character of grants an organization gets. For some organizations, larger grants are somewhere "above the glass ceiling" for a very long time, and some never get them or don't try to get them. On the other hand, passing the boundary can have a strong transformative effect for an organization in terms of quick growth and even more increased pressure for professionalization. Having built an office with permanent employees, organizations then try to secure jobs for them and stay at least on the same level of funding. People that are able to write these kinds of applications for grants and manage these kinds of projects gain high status in the organization, and contacts "with abroad" could be valued or even overvalued as something exceptional – before the organization becomes so "globalized" that "going to Brussels" is no longer an exception for a few in the hierarchy. Such level of international contacts is common only for a few, or for branches of international organizations like e.g. Transparency International, AIESEC[18], Open Society Fund, Greenpeace or Amnesty International, that have central offices abroad.

Stability of funding is sometimes not secure even in larger Czech-based organizations that have to restrict certain projects or programmes because of lack of funding, but generally they have good chances to combine resources and survive as an organization with employees. The civil sector incarnated by these professional organizations has its weaknesses in terms of unstable and short-term funding, small domestic resources and not much of their own organizational property that is more common in Western countries. The Czech civic sphere has been described as 'feminized' compared to 'masculinized' politics (True 2003), not only because there are indeed many more women in NGOs where smaller salaries are paid than in private companies or politics[19], but also for their weaker negotiating position towards the state. Although the "civic sector" was celebrated as the sector that "*we have gained thanks to the Velvet Revolution"* (Proequality 2009) and that has a certain image of being heroic, ethical, not connected to the "old Communist structures" and closer to people's needs, NGOs have not been considered equal partners in negotiation with the state.

[18] The former Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales now uses its former acronym as a name, because it works with more diverse student body.

[19] The Czech Republic usually scores on the lowest ranks of women participation in politics and the situation has even deteriorated (e.g. from 21 per cent of women in European parliament between 2004-2009 to 18 per cent in the next term, in 2010 Czech parliament elections the turnout has been predicted to be as low as 15 per cent, Government of the CR 2009).

The ability to obtain money is not simply equivalent to the ability of reaching political goals. The range of manoeuvringmanoeuvering and access to the state institutions is different according to the topic that an organization addresses – general social issues having better access than ecological activists, etc. According to Císař (2008), some issues were completely blocked for years, because they were not considered legitimate, as is the case of gender issues. In order to negotiate, an organization firstly has to have some "access points" – mechanisms of providing consultation, being invited and having possibility to enter different processes – but secondly, there is a "*discursive structure of opportunities*" which prefers topics that "resonate" with state structures, media and general public, while others are not considered an issue (Císař 2008:74-79). The structure of opportunities can change with changes in the government, certain events might broaden it – as was the case with "Romani issues" in 1997, that were pushed forward by the asylum emigration of Czech Roma to Canada, or less visibly in 2006 with the official recognition of the "terrain social work" with "socially excluded" as a standard social service for which some budgets are available. This can even re-orientate the interest of some "professional" NGOs to start to work on certain topics. External actors like the pressure and directives from the European Union can also create new access points for previously ignored topics.

Attitude towards NGOs differed under governments of different parties – in general, the Civic Democratic Party governments (combining conservativeness with neoliberalism) provided in the past (1992-1997) less access points than Social Democrats (1998-2006) under whom different committees were formed. However, the access points are often just "cosmetical" in order to fulfil the EU requirements for the "social dialogue" or partnership in the European Structural Fund (ESF) between different society actors (see Angelovská – Frič – Goulli 2009:38-46). Many NGOs also cannot fulfil the idea of partnership as they have to concentrate on their projects and do not have resources to participate in conception and consultation work for free. In some cases, rather than the partnership, a discourse of "conflict with the state" is evoked. NGOs have even been labelled as "extremists", "obstructionists" or "danger for democracy" by former Civic Democratic Party leader and the current President Václav Klaus and by some politicians, who were angry when NGOs were blocking the building of a state-funded highway and other projects. As Tereza Stöckelová shows in her analysis of the fight concerning introduction of genetically modified organisms to the Czech Republic, some politicians, connected often to the Civic Democratic Party, do not

consider civic organizations to be primarily representatives of the public, but somehow "fake". They criticize organizations for being motivated by alleged "private" and minority interests that go against "the wish of the public". The public voice is then claimed to be better represented by an elected politician than by any civic association. This citation of CDP senator Jan Kubera from 2004 debate (noted by Stöckelová 2008:60) illustrates the position quite well: *"[...] Civic associations and especially commandos of ecological terrorists and fake protectors are not the public.[...] we have suddenly found out that we have given them a big authority, because it is appallingly easy to register here. Ten people agree on something, they write down to the heading that they are here just for protecting and here we have a public. They are engaged in a lawsuit, they are participants in a proceeding. These people have stopped the highway D8 against the wishes of hundreds of thousands of people that want it, but only they have the right opinion. [...]."*

In the Czech Republic, to be a representative of a civic association does not mean that you are automatically considered to be a representative of the public[20] by other political actors, you could be quite "suspect". In similar speeches the civic associations' people are presented as an opposition to "the voters", they are not someone to discuss with, but a burden that has been given too much power. It is hard to attract the attention of politicians, but it is possible to succeed if an issue is close to their election programmes and opinions, or if it shows that the association is supported by a very significant number of voters. In general, parties limit their dialogue to the most powerful unions. Paradoxically, if anyone wants to be a participant in e.g. a decision-making process concerning a new construction, s/he has to create a civic association. The first meeting of civic associations with a Prime Minister (and from his initiative) was held only in October 2009 during the caretaker government of Prime Minister Jan Fišer.

With the course of time some NGOs were able to get closer to the state decision-making by developing expertise in the sector they worked in, often inspired by how things were done in the West. These people then started to be invited as consultants, but were mostly giving their advice to the state "for free". Presenting oneself as a "professional" proved to be a much better legitimation strategy than a claim that you represent the public or fight for any cause.

[20] The tension between the private and the public seems to be constitutive for NGOs. In their "structure" they are actually private (i.e. in terms of not being an official state institution) but they can acquire state funding to work with the "public", and being trusted by the state and the public is important for them.

Just wanting something is not enough, you are expected to arrive with "solutions" that have to reach certain level of quality if you want to be listened to at all. This brings organizational networks closer to the government bureaucracy. Discourse of professionalism is thus stronger and for some NGO people a more comfortable one as well. It is not infrequent to start a career as an NGO expert and later continue to work in the state administrative. "Expertness" seems to be more easily transferable even among sectors that claim to be ideologically separate.

The image of separation is still needed to claim legitimacy in the eyes of wider public and is present even in certain civic sector identity claims and self-reflexivity (e.g. Marada 2008), where the actors evaluate themselves and others, whether their actions are in line with "civic virtues". This self-policing and at the same time self-reproducing system is not only moral, but with the increasing competition for resources, it is used to disqualify others on the basis of their deficiencies. The civic sector thus can get quite violent, with organizations fighting with each other for years. However, the competition is frequently fuelled up structurally, due to the scarce resources and more hegemonic positions of certain organization over the others. The strongest accusations I have encountered are using topics connected to ethics, behaviour towards "clients", too favourable contacts with donors, or transparency of an organization. Marada describes this system as potentially exclusionary because organizations are always re-evaluating „*what counts as civil and what not*" (Marada 2008:202). The abstract value system is constantly applied to new situations: *"The link between them requires an active interpretation on the part of social actors, and such interpretations derive from established cultural definitions or representations of specific contexts of action"* (Marada 2008:198). The checking is done by the already established NGOs, and these can even serve as certain role-models, sometimes unofficially through informal networks that discuss innovative projects and changes in management, other times they themselves actually provide educational seminars to other NGOs about how to make changes in management or how to raise funds.

NGO knowledge reproduces itself through this inter-organizational control, education and counselling. Compared to what Marada says, the organizations doing social services strongly connect the virtue of the civic to the "virtue of the professional", and the professionalism has sometimes become even stronger than the allegiance to civility or separation from the state. Accusations of amateurism can be heard very often. This system is not very favourable to

new organizations based on volunteer work, because the older NGOs have already professionalized and have more power. Some successful ones even had the possibility to influence how the standards of quality will look like for their respective field of work, especially when some NGOs were the first to set up certain social services that later got more institutionalized (e.g. terrain social work, low-threshold clubs, services for drug addicts). The formal and informal requirements of the NGO sector support the need to maintain transparent and professional image, and some organizations invest heavily into it. What is supposed to be needed is not only professionalism; it is also necessary to have some "special" quality that differentiates one organization from the others in the field. The projects should differ from each other, "territories" where organizations work should be clearly divided, etc. Some NGO actors share a common complaint that this competitiveness is taking too much of their resources which instead should be devoted to the mission the NGOs are working at. NGOs feel as well that in this race they might loseloose legitimacy and contact with the public.

Financing makes the position of the NGO sector even more precarious. The European Structural Fund is usually channelled through the state ministries, so the process of providing grants is strongly centralized. Committees that decide about grants are often set up not very transparently and those who have access to gossip systems can get some advantageous insider information about the whole procedure. On the other hand, state employees share among themselves opinions about alleged trustworthiness of organizations they are giving grants to. Thus an organization may be "blocked" even after submitting a project that gets a high score. Accusations of cliques and favouritism then spring up very easily and sometimes are not far from truth. Informal personal networks across organizations and the state-NGO divide are an important form of getting information and access to the state. However, organizations are very cautious in criticizing these organs on which they financially depend. Each sector differs in the level of dependency. For example Szczepaniková (2010:467) has analyzed the situation in the NGO sector providing services for refugees, where the Ministry of Interior distributes ESF money and at the same time *"formulates asylum legislation, decides about asylum applications and runs accommodation centres for asylum seekers and recognised refugees. Due to its wide ranging responsibilities over refugee issues it is in a close but often conflicting relation with NGOs providing assistance*." The money from the EU thus sometimes strengthens the power of the state over

NGOs and strongly curtails the advocacy side of NGOs that have to strategize a lot when they want to voice their critiques of the system.

Service-providing organizations are even more closely connected to the state, which regulates services by laws and requirements of quality of service and bureaucracy that can be checked regularly. The service orientation of NGOs has grown a lot, and recently, during the financial crisis, when some organizations had to close down due to financial reasons, dozens of mainly service NGOs signed a letter to the Prime Minister under the initiative "*NGOs and Crisis*" (Nevládky a krize 2009) requiring no further cuts to the NGO service budget. The reason for supporting them is that they are "*fundamental in ensuring social services*", they are "*often more economic and effective*" than state organizations, their service recipients (the term "clients" is no longer used as being too paternalistic) being above all people with a handicap, children, women and men in a difficult situation, youth, nature and the socially disadvantaged. Their ability to help them is "*an expression of high moral and societal values*." They can prevent a society from collapsing and act, where state lacks experience, experts or volunteers. They should get funding because "*large groups of people are directly dependent on their assistance*."

The strategy of legitimacy NGOs use towards the state is clearly based on their morality, effectiveness, professionalism and the fact of taking care for dependent people and those in need. There is a certain hierarchy even in the list of clients – the handicapped and children come first, the socially disadvantaged are mentioned only later. Similar grievances have been aired before individually during long winter months that are usually spent waiting for the actual arrival of money from the grants already approved by ministries. Organizations often close down for some time, and their employees temporarily file for unemployment compensation. In a meeting with the Prime Minister NGOs also demanded state support and quicker government payments because the NGO sector employs 60 000 people in the Czech Republic. They argued that any job cuts would raise unemployment rate. If the state wants to be effective, the best strategy is to continue giving money to NGOs and reform its management procedures.

We have seen that Czech NGOs accepted, under the pressure from the state and their donors, the increasing trend towards professionalism which disadvantages less professional actors in the NGO field. This pressure increases with the dependency of actors on the state and

gradually becomes an internalized requirement of the NGO sector itself. Norms of the sector are reorganized on the basis of expert knowledge and performance that is evaluated by other actors in the field. The organizations tend to legitimate themselves according to these trends while they keep the legitimation based on their "morality" and general usefulness for "the whole society". The next chapter will be devoted especially to organizations that have something to do with "social services" and with "Roma".

3.2 Social services categorized and producing categories

As was already described, organizations providing social services in the Czech Republic depend rather heavily on the state. Money distributed through state structures makes up the majority of social service NGOs' budgets. Social services and employment are the most robust issues supported from public budgets – 36.6 per cent in 2008; and of this public money, 74.6 per cent comes directly from the state; the rest is provided by regions and municipalities (Vláda ČR 2010). The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs prepares laws regulating social services, increasing quality of these services, distributes money through a grant system, and supports planning of regional networks of social services which is called "community planning". Community planning is coordinated at regional and municipal levels and ideally, it is based on discussion of service providers and "assessment of needs". Organizations usually try to get their service recognized as a useful service and try to get into local lists of service providers in order to be able to compete for government money channelled through the regions. NGOs are not the only organizations providing social services in the Czech Republic, others being e.g. towns and municipalities, for-profit companies and the already mentioned semi-budgetary organizations directly supported from budgets of regions and municipalities.[21] A municipality is usually interested in the survival of its own semi-budgetary organizations. In some municipalities these organizations get a lot of critique from NGOs due to their preferential treatment in acquiring funding, and sometimes due to their inferior quality of service. NGOs are thus not only dependent on the state regulation but on the situation in their respective regions and local constructions of necessity of their services.

[21] According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, till October 2009, 2 268 different subjects have been registered as providers of social services (MPSV 2009).

Provision of services depends also on how the services are categorized – some new forms of providing services were not recognized as a "category", some became standardized and recognized only later on. Providing a recognized service makes financing easier; on the other hand, it enables much better control of service quality. Officially recognized services provided by organizations which are of interest to my research usually involve social counselling, terrain programmes (when workers go directly to people, help them with paperwork and do counselling), low-threshold clubs for children and youth (clubs accessible free of charge, which lower the risk of their spending time in the street), and social activation services for families with children. Some organizations now experiment with forms of social entrepreneurship employing people in workshops and small enterprises. Social entrepreneurship does not count as a "social service" in a way similar to other activities like e.g. leisure activities for children, educational activities (for example providing extra tutoring for children at home, campaigns for "greater public"), job counselling or anti-discrimination work in which a lot of organizations are also involved.

Categories of people using these services are diverse – from *"youth threatened by societally undesirable phenomenons, people that are living risky lives or are threatened by such ways of life"* (Zákon o sociálních službáchSocial Services Law 2006) to more widely used – socially excluded people, problematic youth, etc. Social services to these groups should not only inhibit social exclusion and help these people overcome their situation but at the same time they should *"protect society against creation and spread of societally undesirable phenomenons"* (ibid. 2006). Social services to these categories of people are thus having a double purpose – to bring them back "to the society", or at least "protect the society" against those who disseminate undesirable aspects of life. These "*services of social prevention*", as they are called, identify people that should be prevented from harming themselves or "the society".

The term "society" thus evokes a body of non-problematic individuals that these people should join in their own interest – that means through cooperation with social services. The notion of individual involvement with social services was brought in by recent reforms in social work that are more and more "targeted", deemed more "effective" and so less costly for the state social system. There are obvious side effects - a bigger need of Foucauldian control and assessment and possible stigmatization of people targeted by new special

measures.[22] "Users of services" and a service provider enter into a contract they will implement together, and social workers even talk about a "commission" from individual users. The individual is thus supported in an illusion of an equal contract between him or her and a social worker, and pushed to take an individual responsibility for his/her situation. Thus the Czech social services are not any exception to this worldwide trend.

The image these services usually have is different from the image of let's say an old people's home or a day centre for handicapped children. Sometimes they are not welcomed by inhabitants of the neighbourhood from fear of attracting certain groups of people[23]. The services might not be financially and politically favoured by local politicians, and on several occasions long-established terrain programmes of different organizations had to be closed down due to changes in local politics (e.g. in Northern Bohemia), when municipalities started to promote a "tougher approach" in line with opinions of many city's inhabitants and a recently established neo-Nazi political party, ironically called the Worker's Party, which organized its marches through several Czech towns. In this context, social services are seen as too costly, a service to people that are "unworthy" of the service, because they are believed to be authors of their own situation. Other municipalities brought some NGOs into a conflict situation, e.g. an NGO was supported by a municipality to provide social services to people that were previously moved out of the city centre (against NGOs wishes) to hygienically substandard container housing outside the town. This is the media-famous case of Vsetín, the main initiator being the city mayor Jiří Čunek, who later became the Chair of the Christian Democratic Union and the Vice-Premier of the Czech Republic. He posed as a heroic figure that is not afraid (because of negatively viewed and oppressing political correctness) to "tell the truth", point "at the real problems" of people he called inadaptable (*nepřizpůsobivý*) and to come with "solutions". He is the one who largely brought this discourse to upper-levels of the Czech politics.

Many expressions I have so far used for the target population of these services have one common trait: they have become ethnicized and connected with the Roma population that gets excluded in many dimensions – economic, political, symbolic, spatial, social and cultural. As most of the "socially excluded localities" have a very large percentage of Roma

[22] There are even new ways of punishment if someone fails to "be responsible" and does not cooperate with municipalities and social services – as e.g. moving to a low-standard flat/bare flat (*holobyt* in Czech).

[23] Image of "users" of these services is dealt with in the latter part of this chapter.

population, terms like “socially excluded people”, “inadaptable” or “ethnic minorities” etc. have sometimes become just a cover-up for not saying “Roma” directly. These camouflaged categories are present not only in everyday speech (people still talk very openly and stereotypically about Roma), but very often in higher political levels and even in academic debate. As an example of such a language routinely used even in academic circles I can mention a presentation at the Department of Special Pedagogy at University of J. A. Komenský (where I externally taught “multicultural issues”) on the Law no. 111/2006 about help in material need. Among other things, the law defines the amount of money one can get if being in need, and new procedures accompanying the service. The whole department was invited to the presentation, and there were more professors than students. There were two speakers – one old male professor, representative of the physically handicapped and a former female student of the university, now employed as a manager of a labour office in a Northern Bohemian city. Both of them criticized the law. The professor talked only about the handicapped, but the critique from the labour office was constructed differently:

“*We waited for the law about help in material need for five years. The result is deplorable. Ethnic minorities, large families and people involved in false marriages will profit from it. Old people will lose. There is nothing good about this law. Those who do not exert effort, face only a 120 CZK reduction, people are maintained on benefits. Perhaps my opinion is extreme, but I come from a region, where a big number of inhabitants are so-called socially inadaptable (Bečov, Janov, Chánov). The programme we have in our office does not allow to deal with nemakachenkos* (“nemakačenka” – a slang expression for people who do not want to work) *retrospectively. No one tells you voluntarily that he does have some possession, only those honest former miners, and then we cannot give them benefits and we force them to use their life savings.”*

Someone more familiar with local discourses quickly deciphers the speech as actually talking about Roma – the socially inadaptable and ethnic minority category (“ethnic” is never connected with ethnic Poles or Germans living in the Czech Republic) is even strengthened and concretized by mentioning three famous ghettoes of the Czech industrial north. The Romani category gets interlinked with not-working, fake marriages, large families, and is contrasted with the categories of (our) old people and miners. None from the auditorium publicly criticized the speech and a lively discussion followed instead instigated by my teacher colleague: *“The more people are interested in Roma, the worse – there is the*

civic solidarity, NGOs are spreading, Mrs. Džamila Stehlíková (Minister for Human Rights and Minorities) *and types like her..."* The colleagues had correctly deciphered the message and added other negative actors that apart from the already criticized state "help Roma too much" – NGOs included.

Such vocabulary and linguistic strategy has been adopted and further spread by Czech media. In some programmes and in grants the term "socially excluded" directly replaced the previously used term Roma. Sometimes the terms became linked together as in "Romani socially excluded localities", which was used by one of the noted sociological agencies in the Czech Republic, Gabal Analysis and Comp. (GAC 2006). This link is strengthened by images of dilapidated houses inhabited by "inadaptable" Roma who are destroying them, this behaviour being somewhat "natural" to the fact of being Roma. Localities that undergo a process of ghettoization then become "their" localities and can be easily displaced from the image of the city. The solidarity of other inhabitants of the town and politicians often does not extend to this category of people. Social prevention services thus largely "serve" and "watch" the poorest of Roma, and in some cities, their creation is even politically blocked. The Roma are automatically thought of as in need of prevention – and "pre-caution" – non-Roma and some municipalities are cautious in advance; in Vsetín, there is a measure called integration quotient saying that there should be only one Romani household per 10 non-Romani households in a house. As if the Roma were in essence "unintegrated" and "problematic" (Grygar – Stöckelová 2007), which does not come up when thinking about non-Romani households. Many municipalities and social work programmes make Roma a category that should be automatically targeted by their intervention – the categorization of being Roma is sufficient enough.

In his recent research in Roudnice nad Labem (2009:6-11), Jakub Grygar shows that although places that are thought to be "fit" for Roma are physically located on peripheries of cities, they are in many respects in the centre of local politics and discourses that are revealing what is considered a "desired social order" by local actors. NGOs are not excluded from contributing to these discussions, however, municipalities often use NGOs rather as a tool to fulfil their social order vision with NGOs providing just the basic services in these localities but not challenging their idea of "where these people belong". Municipalities also do not wish to establish a participatory model of decision-making concerning these localities.

Categories defining a target population are an important part of research in connection to social services in general, but even more so when connected to the "minority groups". Organizations that are aware of this frequent stereotyping are becoming more careful about the kind of language they use to name their programmes and describe their target populations. They prefer the "socially excluded" category because they would like to show that these people are not only Roma and their situation is not completely "their fault". So the thing to fight again is the process of social exclusion. Another strategy presents care as something not pre-destined for any group, but for individuals that are found needy. One local branch of the organization that works in many regions is even so strict in its principles, that it refuses to take any money that are defined "ethnically": *"...the Pilsen branch of this organization, that I am currently managing, has never drawn money from resources, that could be classified as 'gypsy business'. I have even stipulated my superiors that Pilsen won't get a penny from the grant programmes of the Government Council for Romani Community Affairs [..], because not a single of the activities and services provided by the local branch of this NGO is defined ethnically. Besides, the same applies to CAAT* (Centre of Applied Anthropology and Fieldwork) *[..]"* (Hirt 2008:58). The fact that its leader is at the same time an anthropologist is not surprising, as some anthropologists were in fact ones who initiated the de-ethnicizing discourse. The simple fact that the programmes are designed for benefiting Roma qualifies the money as "dirty" or morally suspicious, and the body that distributes them as questionable.[24]

These de-ethnicizing strategies can fail when municipal employees keep talking about projects benefiting "Roma". Some projects are nevertheless more acceptable than others – "saving Roma children from bad influence of their families", education or job creation are the favoured models. On the other hand, housing issues that form the largest percentage in the statistics of social terrain workers don't get such attention, because they are expensive, and desegregation or "giving flats to Roma" is publicly more contested. In my research, one municipality officer indeed stated: *"Roma won't change, I am sure that those grandfathers and grandmothers, parents won't change, but children can be different, when we give them that care, continually [...] the children are little monkeys, but it is a hard job to rescue them*

[24] However, the same organization runs projects that should "help the Czech fellow countrymen" in a Romanian region Banat, where they have migrated 200 years ago. Thus, the level of ethnicization applies differently to different projects and issues.

from that old order." Thanks to the belief in the power of education (while rather ignoring structural inequalities), these children projects incite hope and are even able to attract volunteers. When the municipalities' projects happen to be successful, they can become part of the city's public relations and serve as a "good example" to other municipalities.

Imagining the "Romani problems" to fit largely to the category of "social services" is in itself a point that requires some attention. Some human rights and advocacy organizations are active in the region or even very vocal about the "state of Roma rights", like the Budapest-based European Roma Rights Centre which prepared a successful litigation targeting the Czech Republic for sending Roma children to special schools (D.H. vs. Czech Republic), the Czech Republic was criticized by the Amnesty International, and there are also local organizations like the League of Human Rights that are interested in Romani issues. However, the number of these organizations and budgets available to them locally in the Czech Republic are incomparable to what is invested to "social services". Advocacy organizations are also largely dependent on foreign funding – e.g. on the Open Society initiatives. The state obviously tends to fund rather initiatives that can demonstrate their usefulness in integrating "excluded populations" rather than financing its own critiques. In a similar way, in Slovakia where the appalling situation of Romani settlements incites projects like bringing drinking water or sewage into these localities, the "Romani question" fell to the "development discourse" category (see e.g. Kobes 2009). "Third-world-looking" images are often used to illustrate the nature of Slovakian Romani poverty. The "social services" category is present but not as strongly as in the Czech Republic, where the recipients resemble rather the "town poor". In comparison to "development" where projects are imagined as "solving the situation", "social services" rhetoric seems to indicate rather a longer-term involvement with the issue. However, in reality the "social services" are also "projectized" and depend on the short-term cycles of funding.

3.3 Tensions on the governmental level: "too much vs. too little Romani"

On the governmental level, the de-ethnicized discourse was partly supported by employing people that previously worked in the NGO sector. In 2008 a new government body was founded in 2008 in its pilot version under the Green Party's Minister for Human Rights and Minorities, Džamila Stehlíková, and reformed under her successor Michael Kocáb. Its name

is the Agency for Social Inclusion in Romani Localities. While the Agency's title still contains the word "Romani", and Martin Šimáček, its newly established director coming from the NGO sector, talks (meeting 20. 4. 2010) about deciding what weight to assign to Roma and what on social exclusion, its website writes the term "in Romani Localities" just in small letters, and documents the Agency produces, e.g. *The Handbook for Social Integration,* clearly favour the "social" interpretation: *"A big part of the inhabitants of Czechia falsely thinks that in case of social exclusion it is primarily an ethnic and not social problem. [...] Ethnic, religious, national, cultural or other difference should be taken into account during the solution at that time, when it is a source of discrimination or stigmatization"* (Agentura 2009:6).

The Agency wants a special law to be written to strengthen its position and to be separated from the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic as an independent office, which is being planned for 2013. The idea of the Agency formerly crystallized with the help of the Government Council for Romani Community Affairs (renamed in 2010 to the Council for Romani Minority Affairs). Nowadays, these two existing bodies functioning under the Office of the Government seem to diverge in the level of "acceptable ethnicization" of the issue. It is partly due to different backgrounds of people working in these two bodies. Whereas the Agency is composed of people with social work and academic background, the Council has a larger percentage of people with Romani activist background or people that work as "Romani coordinators" in the regions. The rest of the Council are people coming from different ministries. Some of its activist members criticized "the rhetoric of de-ethnicization" inín its meetings (Rada vlády pro záležitosti romské komunity 15.7. 2009), and the small number of Romani representatives in most of the bodies and grant commissions is a constant issue raised at the meetings of the Council. The Council has stressed the wish to have more control over the Agency (see e.g. Rada vlády 22. 12. 2009) up to the point of having the Agency as a body implementing its goals. In reaction to Šimáček's description of the role of the two bodies (the Council functions as a "provider of expert information" for the whole government and for the Agency but the Agency is an executive body), the Director of the Office of the Council, Gabriela Hrabaňová, ironically stated that: "*If the Agency does not want to deal with the situation of Roma in excluded localities, it logically should not be under the Council*." The Council thus sees itself as a unique body that helps with formulating policies concerning Roma.

The Agency was criticized even more heavily at the meeting of regional Romani coordinators in Kralupy nad Vltavou (Rada vlády 27.11. 2009). For example, a Romani coordinator of the city of Ostrava feared that if independent, the Agency would have a monopoly on "*the solution of Roma question*", and the Romaniness and *"Romani specifics*" could disappear – without specifying of how a "Romani-specific solution" should look like. Coordinators expressed fear that Romani organizations and the Council would not have any possibility to influence the politics, and the Agency was accused of having too many links with the previous Šimáček's non-Romani NGO. One of the employees of the Agency, David Oplatek, reacted to the discussion: "*The Agency frequently deals with bilaterally uneasy situation. For someone, it is too little Romani, for someone too much*." Kocáb, the Minister for Human Rights and Minorities, noted that for example, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs would like to have an agency for all socially excluded because *"this is perceived as a positive discrimination that is not liked (there is pressure from state bodies, municipalities and the public)."* As the result of these discussions, the Council has been established as a monitoring body of the Agency, but the Agency was not put under its direct control. Šimáček promised to "put a Rom into the second highest position in the Agency" and kept his promise. To the disenchantment of some Council members this "Rom" does not fully share their discourse, and although saying that *"they are conscious that it cannot be resolved without Roma*" he still thinks that "*the Council does not have instruments and mechanisms to be able to solve social inclusion and social questions. The Agency does have an experience and tools to do so.*" He also favours the opinion that social questions should be dealt with that body, which is more competent to do it – and the Agency has a structure, budget and qualified employees.

These battles around which position needs "a Rom", when an organization is Romani and when not, or who can be "a representative" obviously discloses much deeper issues concerning power struggles between different camps, and questions of access and control. Different parties have opposing ideas about what using an ethnic label means: for some, not using the label is an effective way to counter public stereotypes, and ethnicizing the "ghettos" is dangerous as it obscures the social mechanisms that create such places. On the other hand, for others, with the concentration mainly on "social problems", the Roma would be erased from the picture or even reduced to a social problem, which reminds of rhetoric of the previous socialist state, where "Gypsiness" was a negative feature that the state wished to get rid of. For yet others, ethnicizing is dangerous because it presents a kind of "positive

discrimination" that employees and the public do not want. The tensions on the government level are obviously reworked and used within the NGO sector and I will get back to them when describing legitimation strategies of different NGOs.

Šimáček very negatively evaluates the previous government policies towards NGOs and the lack of mutual discussion. At the same time, he points out to the fact that the state services are almost absent in the localities and that the localities were "left" to NGOs: *"If 70 per cent of the services in localities are provided by NGOs, something is very wrong! We need to help these local organizations but also introduce state social services there."* Currently the Agency does some monitoring work about "*the absorption capacity*" of local state and non-state organizations meaning *"the professionalism and know-how in local organizations"*[25]. "Absorption capacity" was explained to me only after I asked what that precisely means – it shows how much the jargon of the European Structural Fund permeates the everyday reality of people working in NGO and governmental positions. The Agency obviously continues in the professionalization trend in statements of its management and also in documents it produces: *"Effective terrain social work requires quality, and primarily qualified social workers, or more precisely workers in social services with work practice in socially excluded localities. Professionalism of the service provision is a basic condition of its effectiveness"* (Agency 2009:14). However, current trends in government offices depend on the unstable political environment – employees can be replaced with the arrival of a new government or in connection with some backstage interests. And new civil servants may sometimes change agendas quite dramatically.

3.4 Changing discourses, continuing policies

Although the battle of discourses is important and unavoidable even for researchers and has consequences in terms of how people think about localities, it does not have to mean that practices of individual organizations radically differ or that their discursive practices are not similar in other respects. Many organizations from both camps use the term "integration" which divides people into those who have to integrate, and those who represent an

[25] This professionalism is usually evaluated to see how effectively the local actors will be able to spend money from the European or state funds and contribute to changing local situation.

unquestioned ideal model. According to Petr Matoušek (2008:86-87), "social inclusion" in the name of the governmental Agency is considered to be just the older integration rhetoric in a new coat.

As has already been said, people use different categories for not saying Roma directly, but indicate that "we" are talking about "them". In the past, there were some substantial changes of the whole discourses but how did these changes affect the policies? In fact, many researches showed continuity in policies that in the end target and exclude Roma whatever the discourse prevails (Sokolová 2008, 2005; Grygar 2009), and traced the evolution of discourses back to the Enlightenment period that brought a central image of "backwardness" of Romani population which got replicated in later discursive regimes (Kobes 2009). Particularly Sokolová, who maps the policy development under socialism, shows that the seemingly neutral discourse of social deviance and sexuality that started at the end of 1960s and survived the regime change has in fact targeted Roma and particularly Romani women. At the time when the "Gypsy question" dealt with eradicating "pathological" attributes of social, mental and sexual deviance, 1971 Sterilization Directive characterized the need to increase national gene quality by sterilizing those who are asocial, criminal, mentally impaired, alcoholics, etc. Social categories became linked to the seemingly medical and scientific discourse. Medical sources spoke about "unfit parenthood", "multiple children" and "socially unadjusted citizens" (Sokolová 2005:87). Although the directive does not mention any ethnic category in any way, those who were sterilized were principally Romani women. Sokolová shows the important role of social workers and medical staff in capturing the ambiguity of these terms, in translating governmental and local discourses into one another and into a personal mission to sterilize Roma, and of course to survey their private lives more profoundly. Her argument also shows how the "lower" levels of the government and "people" were not in any opposition to the Communist elite's policy, but very much complicit and participating in it.

The importance of what is understood, interpreted, done, but never openly institutionalized is striking due to its similarity to how local municipalities and other actors interpret the official policies today. So using the discourse that does not visibly target the Roma does not in any way ensure that an organization in its practice does not distinguish among citizens. Although new concepts provided this time not by medical but rather by social sciences, spread after 1989, it seems to me that in some cases applying the new coat was not so difficult. The old

theory of "social inheritance" through which a deviant behaviour is reproduced, very much resembles the "culture of poverty" and "underclass" arguments, and even some "social exclusion" descriptions do not look very different. Exclusion descriptions often add that these pathologies are of course a result of some (often not well described) "exclusion". The usage of "socially unadjusted or inadaptable" lives till today.

Scientific or technical discourse usage is another ever-present way of hiding segregation. Jakub Grygar (2009:9) shows how nowadays municipalities prefer to avoid saying that they do not want Roma to take lodgings in the city; instead they say it is not possible for technical reasons: *"Policies and practices known from the end of 1980s are still in place here, only their legitimation has changed. Roma get housed in socially excluded localities not with the justification that it won't be good for them to get flats in the city, but referring to the fact that elsewhere it is not technically possible."* As for housing, the discourse of segregation was replaced by the discourse of necessity – nowadays, municipalities say that there are not enough flats, enough money to build social housing, etc.

It seems that sometimes, actors coming from the West did not understand how this mechanism works in practice. The Czechoslovak population policy was praised by Western demographers, and during the recent case, D.H. versus the Czech Republic, the first court decision in 2006 did not find any educational discrimination of Roma: "*The Court observes that the rules governing children's placement in special schools do not refer to the pupils' ethnic origin, but pursue the legitimate aim of adapting the education system to the needs and aptitudes or disabilities of the children. Since these are not legal concepts, it is only right that experts in educational psychology should be responsible for identifying them. […] the Court notes that the parties did not dispute that the tests in the instant case were administered by qualified professionals, who are expected to follow the rules of their profession and to be able to select suitable methods. […] It was the parents' responsibility, as part of their natural duty to ensure that their children receive an education, to find out about the educational opportunities offered by the State […]"* (ECHR 2006:49,51; discussed also in New – Merry 2010). If there is no official identification of ethnicity, the European court sees no discrimination, experts are qualified professionals and as such have the right and are right to decide which child is mentally handicapped.

Due to the long-term continuity in practicing double-speak, it is not possible to take the discourse of organizations at face value as a direct evidence of their practices. The discourses seem to be rather a legitimation device, they enable an organization to look up-to-date and scientific and, as a result, make it less vulnerable to accusation of racism. Even the already mentioned Jiří Čunek, otherwise quite blunt, when participating at his party Social Justice Conference (Čunek 11. 1. 2008) named his speech „*A system help for socially excluded citizens*". It is necessary to look at the content of the speech to see that although he claimed that he argued for the "social causes of the issue", the vision of "Romani deviance" is still at its basis*: "Romani question cannot be solved as a question of the national minority and respect to its rights. It is not about a nationality problem, but a problem of social exclusion that affects mostly members of the Romani community, mainly because their traditional culture is not compatible with the culture of modern society."* The Roma thus are not excluded through complex discrimination and inequality systems whose description would be expected, but because of their incompatible traditional culture. His speech indicates that his policies probably won't change very much in practice.

3.5 The Romani organizing: between politics and social work?

To be a "Romani activist" requires a very cautious dealing with these discursive fields. Anybody who works in this field can be accused from many sides – from supporters of Čunek's vision, from those anthropologists that don't like ethnicizing, fellow activists with other visions or Romani people outside NGOs. Such an intermediary position can be quite vulnerable. If we look to the history of the organizing, this can be mostly said even retroactively. In the following chapter I will show how the official Romani organizing evolved, how political and social demands were often intertwined and how NGOs became sites of politics.

As most of the Czech and Moravian Roma were exterminated during the Second World War and 99 per cent of today's Roma in the Czech Republic came after the war from Slovakia to look for job opportunities or were later resettled there by the regime, the history of their official organizing is quite short. It is short also due to a ban during the Communist era (efforts in Slovakia in 1948 to organize were stopped by the Ministry of Interior), with the only exception of establishment of the Union of Gypsies-Roma (Svaz Cikánů-Romů) after

the Prague Spring in 1969. It was founded as part of the National Front, a coalition of organizations under the umbrella of the Communist Party, in 1972, its membership was quite significant (8500 members[26]), but in 1973 it was dissolved. It was the only time during the period of forced assimilation when an ethnic and political representation of Roma was thinkable. It had a mixed socio-cultural focus: social and economic "elevation of the Gypsies", spreading information about "Gypsy culture", and even suggestions of recognition of Romani nationality status. This wording is a shift from the language of materials presented in the previous chapter, and the Union was also critical of the state policies (Crowe 1996:58-59), but it seems that the existence of the Union did not influence government rhetoric and segregative policies, which continued through 1970s and 1980s. However, Víšek (1999:187-188) claims that the Union had a "*fundamental role in the public perception of Romani problems"* by showing individual Roma speaking about their situation, having opinions which were "supported" by academic titles of some of them.

During this short period the Czechoslovak Romani delegation also managed to take part in the founding of the International Romani Union (IRU) in 1971 in Orpington near London (together with a Czech ethnographer and supporter of Roma Eva Davidová who, when she speaks with activists, still addresses them "*my Romani brother/sister*"). However, the idea of a worldwide Romani nation and the need for its political representation was an issue which concerned just a very thin elite. After 1973 only a careful "folkloric" presentation was possible. Jakub Krčík (2002) who mapped the birth of the Romani political movement shows that a backstage discussion continued and some contacts were developed during the folkloric and cultural events that were organized by sympathetic social curators[27]. Meanwhile, an exiled member of the first IRU congress, Dr Ján Cibula, became the second President of the IRU, but without any influence on the local scene.

Another chance to "speak to power" came at the end of 1980s, when the regime was loosening its grip and in 1987 there was a possibility to found an informal preparatory committee for the new Union of Roma in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic – note the omission of "Gypsy" in its name. During these years, activists started to negotiate informally but directly with the leadership of the Communist Party, bypassing the usual procedure

[26] However, Nina Pavelčíková (2004:105) argues that not all of them were active or paid their registration fees.

[27] The function established in some municipalities after 1971 to work with Roma. Apart from dealing with social issues, they organized some cultural events.

involving the lower instances of the Party hierarchy. Many of their suggestions were approved (but not the establishment of the Union), e.g. the future recognition of the Romani nationality, having a say in politics concerning Roma, and a possibility of founding small local organizations – the Party might have seen such concession also as one of the forms of strengthening its disintegrating power. However, the policies which were negotiated just shortly before the Velvet Revolution did not materialize with the exception of a journal, and they were also refused by Slovakian authorities, but Víšek (1999:190) suggests that these activities were important in getting sympathies of the emerging democratic politicians and assured financial support of Romani organizations at the beginning of 1990s. This event shows also a common paradox of minority representation – a handful of activists went directly to the Communist leaders and were accepted as communication partners on the issues of Roma.

Changes after 1989 brought freedom of association and to creation of civic organizations. This new option was explored by many, and Roma themselves (according to the Government Council for National Minorities), founded more than 400 organizations (Rada vlády pro národnostní menšiny 2009).[28] A political party called the Romani Civic Initiative was also created, but it was successful only during the first government thanks to its association with the Civic Forum[29] and later disintegrated into competing factions[30]. Sociologist Jiřina Šiklová (1999:275) even stated that the parties were more inclined to defend particular family interests than political-civic interests of "their ethnic group as a whole", so: "*The factionalismfractionalism of their political parties does not give them a chance to enter the societal processes as a politically relevant subject. [...] The only solution for pursuing the interests of such minority is the creation of non-governmental, Romani and pro-Romani civic associations and semi-budgetary organizations working for the benefit of Roma.*" The parties were ridden (much like non-Romani ones) by faction conflicts and political scandals, but there are some more general questions about imagining Roma as political actors. For

[28] It does not mean though that all the registered organizations are active. Jiřina Šiklová (1999:277-279), in what was the first (known to me) research done about the "Romani and pro-Romani NGO sector", suggest quite the opposite. She also comments that *"The true Romani NGOs, really founded from the initiative of Roma themselves, were and still are an exception, although the government and foundations have the goodwill to support precisely these organizations*" (1999:275).

[29] Civic Forum was a revolutionary political movement that was highly successful in the first free elections.

[30] The decline of the party is described eloquently in Pečínka (2003).

example, why Roma should be unified in their agenda, why they should be represented by "Romani parties", why there is an assumption that these parties have to and are able to speak for all Roma and, why the weak NGO sector should be the best way to assure that "minority interests" are pursued, and why the NGO sector would be the best one to define these interests altogether. The irony is that for a long time NGOs indeed became a sort of "Romani advocate" – with very differing quality.

The existing organizations differ largely according to goals of their founders and particular characteristics of the local non-governmental sector. In the Czech Republic, there are many organizations in a state of the "Sleeping Beauty", organizations that metamorphosed to a (short-lived) political movement and vice versa, organizations that "created representatives" with prestige and access to money, and organizations with more or less impact. Kašparová (2007:100-101) suggests that some of these organizations do not fit into the official categories of an NGO or a political party. If her research were devoted to all NGOs, she would find that in general, NGOs are hybrids, many of them serve to obtain access to political or economic resources, and what they have in common is only their "legal form". Kašparová indicates that some of the founders were involved in "Romani politics" and in founding NGOs at the same time, so there is an overlap between civic and political initiatives. Sometimes, when the option of a political party failed, the leaders followed the NGO path instead. Due to the fact that small parties are largely financed by their membership and sympathizers, the Romani parties could not compete with the major ones, so having an NGO with the possibility of getting grants was not a bad alternative. At the end of 1990s, some state consultative bodies were formed, thus establishing structures, where NGO representatives and their experience were more welcomed than just "Romani politicians" as such. NGOs seem to be more "useful" for these bodies as they can provide their experience during preparation of government "integrationist policies". This dynamics and the fact of a blocked possibility to succeed through the party system (a small electorate and bad management of Romani parties, and big parties not putting up Romani candidates at electable positions) thus displaced "Romani politics" to the local and international NGO scenes.

If we look at the names of some organizations they definitely show a strong desire to look political and to be perceived as representative bodies, like e.g. organizations named Romský parlament (Romani Parliament) or Grémium romských regionálních představitelů

(Committee of Romani Regional Representatives)[31]. When such an organization issues a press release, it sounds much stronger than a release from a "Happy Roma" NGO. This adoption of officially sounding names and even positions (such parliament can have its president etc.) is a linguistic strategy that deserves attention. It reminds of the long-term usage of political titles used by the majority population, such as queen, king, prince, baron, etc., as a strategy to get better treatment, make a group "legible" in terms familiar to outsiders and assure a more powerful position in negotiations. One government employee described to me the way Romani representatives ingeniously used their unpaid functions in the government council. They had business cards with words "Czech Government" printed out and used them in their other "businesses" like their NGOs or their "car service station" firm. Being perceived as a representative can obviously help both in activism, and in other real-life projects. Similar "business-card" stories were described also by other authors like Jud Nirenberg (2009) in connection with the European Roma and Travellers Forum, which is also an NGO, despite its name. These prestige strategies can be found also among non-Roma – like stressing an important work position and using business cards; however, having usually more resources to build up prestige, these strategies look more common (the use of university titles etc.).

The fact of being an organization of citizens is stressed in other names like Sdružení romských občanů v Lysé nad Labem (Association of Romani Citizens of Lysá upon Elbe) and in many others – these types of names are usually quite descriptive – the Romani citizens from a particular place get together. Finally, Romani language names are employed, with meanings evoking positive messages: Savore (All), Manuša (People), Nevo dživipen (New Life), Dženo (Man or Person), Lačhe čhave (Good Children). Non-Romani organizations also name their programmes in Romani, but I have met also negative reactions to this trend from parents that did not want to send their children to a club named in Romani and would prefer some less indicative name.

Romani people who found organizations are frequently more educated, have certain knowledge of institutions, have broader, business-oriented backgrounds and grew up in mixed or activist families. The first generation of founders often belonged to former army

[31] The tendency is Europe-wide – one Bulgarian organization calls itself a United Roma Union, another one Confederation of Roma „Europe".

employees, party members, dissidents and cultural events' organizers, which was confirmed also by Kašparová (2007:104). However, this larger capital is still incomparable to the "non-Romani" one, and organizations are known to have short-lived active existence, problems with getting and administering funds and "doing paperwork". Some donors in Šiklová's (1999:285) research openly stated that they prefer non-Romani or mixed NGOs, because they need to know themselves how their funds were spent and have each item entered in the books. This trend is also present in other countries – Nidhi Trehan (2001:140) states that the reason philanthropic organizations invest in non-Romani NGOs is that they "*are perceived as more impartial and professional*." She criticizes this approach as reinforcing stereotypes and perpetuating limited access to donors and socio-cultural capital. The disparities in cultural capital valued and required by donors thus disqualify many organizations. Šiklová herself was disappointed that she got less than 10 per cent of her research questionnaires back from Romani organizations – however, the structure of those who did send it back indicates that the question of administrative competencies is one of the most crucial ones – the organizations which filled in forms were those existing for a long time, asking for and receiving financial support, being already publicly known and being active rather in the cultural, not in the political arena. The last category looks odd, but it seems that more politically oriented NGOs have limited funding opportunities compared to those concentrating on cultural and social issues. They are also more often of the "one-male-with-political-ambitions" type having no running long-term programmes, and were created mainly for the purpose of occasional events and representation.

It seems that even to the least skilled leaders, the organization can bring a rise in self-esteem and a possibility to try their organizational skills. When I was talking to a woman whose family members themselves were among the clients of Amaro, she suddenly told me about her husband being a "chair of an association" trying to promote culture by organizing parties with Romani bands and dancing. She was disappointed that recently they "*asked*" (meaning they sent an application for financial support) and the local municipality "*did not allow them*" for the second year, nevertheless, she talked about her success in helping to organize these events in the past – especially when inviting "the best composers and musicians" from as far as Slovakia: "*I gave the band 10 000 in advance. They wanted 20 000, but I had collected the money back here. ... People gave 200 as the entry fee and understood, because they know that the group is expensive."* Although musical events are not often very highly regarded in terms of their "usefulness for the municipality", people organizing such events

can gain some appreciation among other Roma (as they usually form the vast majority of the audience and whole families with members of all ages are present), especially if inviting quality musicians.

Organizations can definitely function as one of possible mobility channels, and even more so for those who are already skilled and able to manage an NGO in such a way that it survives for a longer time. In this way NGOs present a possibility of employment and job creation, which can be significant especially in the areas with high unemployment. They present a possibility to access non-manual "office job" with certain power over other people and with access to local municipalities. In these regions, even the "richer" Roma usually have relatives which are very poor. Not surprisingly, the NGOs have become a survival strategy not only for individuals but also for the whole families (this is also described in Pinnock 2002 or Helbig 2007), which is a fact that is not necessarily going to please donors used to "non-profit" rhetoric, or that can create tensions and lead to loss of credibility, when an organization is perceived as serving to benefit the social and economic status of some particular family rather than its clients. Founding an organization is an act that can open many opportunities. Local social structures are sometimes mirrored in NGO structures – the most successful families have NGOs, an office hierarchy (if there are enough funds to have an office at all) can copy the family one and the structure can be quite authoritative. Other types of NGOs are created by younger educated elites, and there is an array of "mixed" NGOs, where non-Roma are employed often at positions requiring expertise and administrative skills. Donors are more prone to support these organizations. Male leaders highly outnumber the female ones and their organizations tend to have more "political" goals, while many women founded organizations thanks to their work with children.

Other Roma figure as "clients" and "target groups" of such organizations, they are subjects of legitimation claims by these organizations, which often build on a "Roma should help Roma" principle. Clients' mobility *can* be stimulated by an organization, but at the same time, there are cases of both, Romani and non-Romani NGO paternalism, involvement in local power struggles and attempts to monopolize access to authorities. Thus the question Šiklová wants to answer (1999:276): "*What do Roma do for themselves?*" does not fit many of the situations – first the term "themselves" must be scrutinized. For example, already mentioned Adriana Helbig (2007) described how local rich Romani families in Ukraine survive by using the following mechanism: as long as there are "poor Roma", their NGO

will receive donor aid – without actually doing much for those "poor Roma", but mainly sponsoring their own music bands. The link between the presumed ethnicity of NGO workers and their target group is ambivalent in the same way as the mission of other NGOs. Still, Romani organizations form only a small portion of all the organizations that have Roma among their target groups and get a small percentage of all the money distributed in connection with the "target group".

The existence of the "Romani NGOs" can even bring political profit to many municipalities, and these NGOs can be an integral part of the unofficial local system of governing without anyone interested in scrutinizing what these organizations actually do. The authorities themselves can patronize some of "their Roma" by providing them with positions, access to municipalities or grants for their NGOs. In her research of these local structures, Šmídová (2005, 2001) describes how "the chosen Roma" actively presented themselves as "adjustable" (in contrast to the image of "the unadjustable"); they were considered "unproblematic" in terms of their "behaviour", but also in terms of their uncritical approach towards municipalities and their easy manipulability. The label of "Romani integration" can be beneficial not only to some Roma, but also to municipalities. The non-Romani organizer of a requalification course for Romani assistants described by Šmídová employed his friends and relatives as teachers in this course to teach participants "delivered" through personal contacts from a fellow Rom. The course paid from the state money took part in a recreational resort of the organizer's company and its curriculum neither prepared participants for independent critical thinking, nor offered them many possibilities to get a job without the organizer's contacts. Romani NGOs or "Romani positions" can present a legitimation for municipalities confirming that they actively deal with the "Romani question". Anyone who wants to study "Romani NGOs" should rather look at how they actually mirror the local power structures, including excessive "formalism" (dressing in suits etc.) that is present in some organizations. For further discussion of this topic see the chapter on strategic Romaniness.

Many of the non-Romani organizations also employ Roma, but usually at positions of contact social workers, not in the higher management. The reasons for employing Roma to

work with Roma range from the open belief of "better access"[32] to simply hiring candidates that apply for the position – as some number of people got prepared for the social work, e.g. in a special secondary school distance programme called "Social activity in the milieu of ethnic minorities". What social work does and should do is in itself a much disputed issue. It serves to normalize certain categories of people, and when "Roma" form a special target group, we can often find racializing connotations in these definitions. Involvement of Roma in this normalization process was criticized by some (Šiklová 1999) as assimilationist, by others described as a communication "across the bio-political divide", when one Roma brings other Roma into a contact with the state and at the same time deconstructs and constructs Romani difference (Hegburg 2005:10-11), or praised by those who propagate it as qualification, like some activists do. Although Hegburg again describes how some of the acts of Romani social workers can be defiant towards the system – e.g. by criticizing a research about usury – there are also examples of a social worker becoming totally devoted to the disciplining agenda of its organization and even taking this position as a sign of personal social mobility – like Ms Pompová, a social worker of the Sokolov municipality. When asked in an interview about how she helps families when they lose housing, she replied: *"First of all, we are responsible for taking care of the children. We take them from their parents, till they find normal housing"* (Amaro Gendalos 2003:1). Again, a presumption of solidarity with clients cannot be automatic.

It would be a mistake to see Romani organizations isolated from general trends in the Czech NGO sector presented in previous chapters. They form its small subset and are influenced by its characteristics: its rather weak structural position, substantial dependence on the state and municipality resources especially in social services, and growing inequality between organizations. The next part of this text aims to show how a particular organization can function in this context.

[32] According to an organizer of the above-mentioned course for assistants, the assistant has to be a Rom because *"His mission is to 'dissolve the mistrust' between the ethnic groups. He has to be a Rom [...] if he is to 'win their trust' [...]."* (Šmídová 2005:98). There is a demand for some broker, who can gain the trust of Roma, based on his essentialized quality of "being a Rom". So it is not non-Roma who the Roma need to trust first, but a Romani middleman.

4. Proximity...

4.1 Entering Amaro

At the end of the initial interview with Lucie, I posed a question concerning my interest to know more about the organization and a possibility to gain this knowledge by means of volunteering. Lucie and Jitka, who was sitting next to us and listening to the interview, very quickly approved the idea saying "no problem"; I should only speak also to Anna. There was just an oral agreement about volunteering between me and Anna:
My question: "*What is a volunteer expected to do here?"*
Anna: "*Everything. Everyone is doing everything; we are just beginning to specialize*."
Q.: "*So you could try me?*"
Anna: "*You could do web articles or so.*"
And that was it. This entrée indicated most of the topics I dealt with later on – the non/importance of the written word, gradual professionalization of the organization, the hierarchy of the organization with both collective decision-making and Anna's final word on things.

I had a feeling that my entry was a bit too smooth. No one had asked about my qualifications and capabilities or thought about how I could be most useful to the organization. The nature of my work was not specified very well and actually I did not work on web articles, but was assigned writing e-mail letters to potential sponsors. As I found out later, other volunteer stories were similar. Jitka entered Amaro also thanks to meeting Lucie at an Amaro organized concert of a famous Romani group campaigning against drug use and later seeing an advertisement for volunteers at the Seminar of Romani Studies where she studied. The advertisement promised work with prisoners' families. After Jitka came to Amaro, Anna estimated that the tough social work would not be very suitable for her, but said "*we will use you in another way"*, which meant that she just gradually found out what suited her most. At first, she started working with Anna in a house of refuge and later moved to the office, where she was needed to write letters to sponsors asking them to support a summer camp. Gradually and on her own she started to write grant applications. Another volunteer and student of romology, Martina, showed inclination to work with children, but also worked in a prison programme; she was later replaced by a social work student Simona, who was the most successful at working in the area that was promised to her when entering Amaro.

Simona tried to stick to social work, refusing too much of unrelated work, because she needed the practice for her studies. People were thus moving from one area of work to another and all the people had to cooperate when organizing some big event like e.g. a summer camp or a St. Nicholas celebration.

I was also used whenever and wherever needed; I did not have a permanent seat to sit, as there were not enough computers, and in each of the computers there was a different set of programs and files. Office computer network did not work very well and it was often difficult to find a file, so the safest way was to send a file into my own mailbox. My work in the office depended on the immediate needs of the organization and on my self-invented programme agreed on by the others. It seemed that letters to sponsors was a kind of a universal task for any volunteer or even for an employee who had some spare time. Often the letters did not ask for a financial contribution but for a certain product – a gardening company was asked to donate decoration for a St. Nicholas celebration, a chocolate company was asked for sweets, a beverage company for drinks to supplement drinking regime of children during the summer camp, Count Schwarzenberg was asked to donate some timber from his woods to repair an old camp building, etc. It seemed that companies and individuals were more prone to give their products than to contribute financially, and there were even sponsors that did so repeatedly. The demand for a defined product looked more trustworthy, did not require entering into any fierce competition between NGOs, and its use could be easily proven with photographs and by inviting sponsors to a celebration, where they saw happy children receiving their chocolates. Sometimes expiry date of the donated products was very short, so I assume they had not always had a huge marketable value for the sponsor; however, such charity could serve to boost the company's image. This way of supplying the organization was simple in procedure, but the amount of unanswered letters was still overwhelming.

When I was assigned the task of writing letters, it looked like an ideal opportunity to explore organizational discourse used for external presentation; but nobody told me what the letters should look like. There were no written instructions or letter samples and I felt I don't as yet have enough information about the organization. I realized that the organization lacked many formal procedures or directions on how things should be done. This, for many people uncomfortable liberty was limited only by advice of colleagues and an occasional personal inspection by Anna who asked what people were doing. The fact that the people in Amaro

seemed to trust me, served as an assurance that I will try to do my best to benefit Amaro. Anyway, I had to produce something so I started to write: "*We are a Romani organization (Should I use Romani, won't it stigmatize the organization? No, better use "Amaro" – you can tell from the name that it is Romani anyway). Amaro is an organization that helps (No, another word…), that works with people in 'difficult life situation' (At least, that's what I found written on web pages).*" In this way I was instantly drawn to contributing to the organization's image, although I was not used to this kind of discourse and had all sorts of doubts about what I was doing.[33] Only later I recognized that "learning by doing" was an important part of many people's idea about what Amaro "means", this form of learning being of course equally necessitated by the circumstances of a young, small organization dependent on work of volunteers.

When people came as volunteers, it did not mean that they stayed volunteers. On the contrary, when a volunteer proved to be good in some area of work, she (the first volunteers I met were women) was offered a part-time job if the next grant allowed for that. Often a volunteer wrote an application for a grant and was later employed to implement it. Anna also spoke about giving "a job" to me, but I refused because at that time it was evident that having a job in Amaro meant working almost non-stop, although getting money just for a half-time job, and also being under Anna's direct command that from time to time was hard to contradict. Jitka got a half-time position and she usually came to the office at eight o'clock (this was set up by Anna, who usually came only later) in the morning often staying there to late night hours. During the first six months she even skipped classes and worked every day which meant that in the end she actually worked rather full-time. Only later she tried to limit being in the office, but she explained to me what her problem was: she knew what huge amount of work should be done and she felt certain commitment to do it. With Lucie being on a maternity leave, Jitka was the most organized person in the office, who knew what should be done in order to avoid the biggest disasters with deadlines, reports, grants or events organized. That put her under enormous pressure as some of the deadlines were indeed crucial for survival of Amaro and for avoiding punishment by donors. Other people, Anna included, frequently worked outside the office or cared mostly about the prison programme because they had not an overall organizational picture. When Jitka came to the

[33] My letter-writing was largely unsuccessful (albeit usually in the same way as the other's letter-writing), so while doing that, I struggled with my concepts of what is an „effective work".

organization, she expected something rather different*: "It was not at all what I expected [...] I have expected some system in the institution [...] and I have a feeling that I haven't yet found any [*with an ironic laugh*]."* Simona was also surprised or, as she said, even frightened after coming to Amaro, because from the web pages it seemed that the organization is much larger than it really was, plus: "*The work is not clean-cut, the tasks, competencies, obligations and responsibilities are not defined [...] it is not coordinated.*"

In the beginning of my research I felt the same. The well structured Scout organization of which I have been a member for years did not prepare me for this kind of environment. Volunteers have expected to come into an "institution" with certain characteristics. After the initial shock, they thus started establishing some routines to make the organizational life more predictable and to reduce the number of occasions when someone could not proceed with her work because things or people were not at their expected places. People began to habitualize the world around them[34]. In this sense the story of Amaro resembles the institutionalization stories of many other organizations that started to work on volunteer basis with a different constituency, but it still is specific in how it proceeded.

Many people in the organization saw institutionalization as a way out of the current overworking, and everyone in the organization wished to stabilize it through some better funding. Jitka hoped that Amaro would be able to employ more people and the work which was currently at her shoulders would be divided. She saw the future arrival of money as an initiator of these changes, as an ally that would help her change things through regulations that will come "with the money". She would not be alone any longer: *"The money is extremely important. The prescribed technical regulations are also important, as well as the creation of the system and bodies, instruments of sustaining that system. [...] Everything depends on money, because after that it will be much clearer [...] by this alone the obligations and rights will be clearer."* For her the "money" was an agent that helps to clarify the situation and establish structures. Therefore, among the first applications she wrote there were also those to programmes financed by the European Social Fund that promised a longer than one-year financing, a possibility to create many new positions and much more funding than municipal, regional and foundations' programmes. Anna perceived the money primarily as a possibility to make the jobs more secure and considered this effort

[34] In the sense Berger and Luckmann use this term 1991 [1967]:70-85.

to be her duty towards all the people in Amaro, as she also had a personal experience of being unemployed during 2004 after not getting any grants. Another reason for getting grants was to materialize some of her abundant ideas of what could be done to "help people". Thus the wishes of the actors connected with the desired growth were not completely identical.

4.2 Learning together

Amaro was a space where people were expected to learn. Volunteers could get an amount of responsibility inconceivable – and probably considered immensely hazardous – in other organizations. Indeed, when I researched possibilities a volunteer has in larger and more structured organizations I found out that volunteers are usually hired for very precise and often simple tasks that often do not have much in common with participating in the main tasks of the central office. Even several years later a new colleague said that the position in Amaro was attractive to her, because she could get to the tasks that in the Salvation Army, where she had worked previously, were reserved only for top managers. For students, it was a very intense practice with a possibility to capitalize on it in their later professional lives – for example Simona, based on Anna's immediate idea and her practice in prison work, co-founded and directed an association of institutions working with prisoners in order to improve quality of these services. Anna has always been full of different ideas, so if an idea seemed interesting to others, they exerted some effort to implement it. Such model also had obvious disadvantages – people in Amaro were rather inexperienced, they had to find out what did and what did not work. "Learning by doing" was therefore a model that made a virtue of necessity. At this stage, any mistakes could be detrimental, but successes were hugely celebrated as a proof that people in Amaro were clever enough to beat the system that seemed so difficult to understand.

It was Lucie who was the initiator of the most common learning experiences with an institutionalizing undercurrent. She was the only one having BA in social work and some short previous experience in other NGOs. When I asked her during the initial interview how the organization works, she burst into laughter and replied: *"We are trying to systematize it somehow. We are trying to share all information, to create some communication channels, to consult everything, we are finding out everything on the go, it is not that we adopt something. Of course I have some models from my studies and other NGOs how it should*

work, and in fact I try to carry them here, but they are totally adapted to how it is here. [...] It is already going well now, today we even do meetings, where everything we need is discussed. And we even plan a working weekend [...] where long-term plans will be discussed." I did not expect that my question would be so tricky.

It was considered a success in Amaro when a meeting was really held. During the first year of my research, to organize a meeting was a superhuman task – first you had to assure that all people are physically present. Meeting times kept changing constantly and the meetings were cancelled when there was something "more urgent" (the assessment of urgency differed among people). The presence of the people alone did not make a meeting successful. According to Lucie, to be able to declare a meeting a success, its organizer had, first and foremost, to find out what is important to discuss and to set an agenda of the meeting, people had to come prepared for the meeting, the meeting had to have certain order, people had to learn what a meeting as a "genre" is so that they would not spend the time by sharing their personal and unrelated problems. Most importantly, the meeting should bring some coordination, set deadlines and assign some tasks. Many meetings were "unsuccessful" as they did not seem to have any effect on moving things forward. In spite of that, people did not meet deadlines, tasks were frequently carried out by someone else, etc. For a long time, it seemed to be an empty and unnecessary ritual not worth the effort.

It was crucial to accommodate the outside rules to the way how Amaro worked. People do not have equal competencies in any organization, but here the background of members was discussed and roles were altered according to people's competencies. Simona liked this method because it supported the team spirit, and Lucie explained: *"We tell each other who is better in what, who understands something better, in what environment we grew up, anyway it is clear […] for example that Josef is a type of a person ideally suited for terrain work, he has nothing in common with administrative tasks and such things, apart from the fact that he writes reports and even with that we actually help him so that he wouldn't write them five hours or so, he learns everything. On the other hand, I get to the terrain only exceptionally […]."* Everybody knew and understood that Anna and Josef had problems with administrative tasks, and volunteers thus supplemented also the administration duties connected with their job positions. Therefore it was no surprise that when I asked Lucie who coordinated what, she replied that it was difficult to say: *"Overall, Anna supervises and*

controls everything, we decide everything together […] we try to delegate somehow the authority or specializations among us, but it is still very mixed."

The shared decision-making and even responsibility (Simona used the watchword: "*One for all and all for one*") served not only as an ideological proclamation, but as an effective control mechanism to avoid "disasters" – e.g. Anna was the one with the authority to sign documents, so it was important she understood them and their purpose, and to discuss the materials first with others. Anna did not always feel comfortable with sharing the information about what she planned to do, so sometimes Lucie had to find it out during an informal chat. Her approach to Anna and the organization was that Amaro is "Anna's idea that she is helping to put into practice" and she did not want to override Anna's ideas with those of her own. She tried hard to understand what Anna wants to do, came up with different possibilities about how to do that, and assessed the level of risk of different Anna's ideas. The ideas were then discussed so long till Anna and others were not satisfied with the proposal.

The process of sharing tasks did not work as smoothly as described – as the leader of the organization, Anna was expected to coordinate things, but it was difficult to help her with that although there were attempts to do so. Jitka: *"This should be Anna's work, but she doesn't do that all the time, and although I would do and supervise it with great pleasure, I cannot, because whenever I slightly challenge her authority of the highest chief, she makes my life a hell for a long time. […] of course I don't want to compete with her. I completely understand her and respect her place. […] but I suppose I would be able to do that or I know what should be done. I always feel that when I start to act strictly independently […] merely for the purpose of coordinating some things, I feel it's bad and I feel her attitude to me is getting cold and I have a real sense of a competitive environment. And then she usually says: 'So tell me what you have done, do this and give it to me to read', in fact affirming her position of the big chief."* This office gossip shows how it was difficult for Anna to deal with the fact that someone could be more competent than she in something and how it was difficult for the other people in the office to act, fearing that Anna could take it personally. So to ensure that everyone's activities ran smoothly, people had to negotiate with her and get her approval. The delegation of tasks and mutual help had to proceed with great subtlety so that nobody's self-esteem was hurt, and anyone who would radically proclaim that the organization had to work in a completely different way would be regarded with certain

distrust. It was obviously easier to help Anna with tasks that could be less visible – like paperwork – than with the visible direct management of people.

On the other hand, Anna was respected and appreciated for her struggles with social workers of the municipality to which some volunteers were witness, and she was frequently asked for advice when "real-life" situations had to be solved or a project intent created. There was an attempt to create certain reciprocity in this sharing, although being "closer to terrain" was evaluated as something having potentially a bit smaller value. Lucie said that: "*They are giving me that feedback – when I for example write some project, we are consulting it, so it is completely unrealistic, it does not at all conform [*roles in Amaro do not conform to the official organizational chart, which is not reflecting the reality*]. Anna is simply closer to terrain, but she knows many things that cannot be easily puzzled out."* Anna and Josef were perceived as experienced people and sometimes even as the ones who could forecast people's reactions to different Amaro projects not only as clients but also "as Roma". This essentializing position was nurtured by some small incidents people from Amaro experienced together while e.g. visiting pubs or meeting people with discriminatory remarks or behaviour. These incidents revealed another divide in the office: when darker-skinned people became targets of such remarks, they sensed and analyzed the slightest indication of discriminatory approach much earlier than people who had never been subject to discrimination. The discrimination was understood as an overall "Romani experience" that has been shared also by many Amaro members.

The idea of togetherness in learning and decision-making thus served to bridge the differences in competence and experience and it served as an important mutual control mechanism. Complete individualism was not welcomed from either "side" – people in the office wanted to know what Anna plans to do in order to be able to plan their own work and check if her ideas are implementable, and Anna wanted to be informed, approve things planned by the others and sustain her leading position. Thanks to sitting together in one small office, this concept seemed to work and many things were discussed during short informal conversations, so the space itself contributed to functioning of this immediate control mechanism - the office was a part of this mechanism. That is also partly why initially formalization of such a process in meetings did not work, because why should anybody talk about things that were already somehow discussed?

The concept of togetherness could also be used as an argument countering the outside critique of "unprofessionalism" – the roles are not divided in the expected way, people do not have to have a capability to do everything, but together the organization functions well, because people divide the tasks and everyone does what suits him/her. The togetherness was also an important part of the organization's self-image. This way of functioning was unique and elaborated as a mechanism that allowed everyone to contribute to Amaro while getting the same amount of respect for her/his work. Every person could be "used in some way", people just had to find how, they had to "try" to do something and then it will be seen whether they are fit for it. But at the same time it served as an "equalizing ideology" that did not exclude anyone. This was a model of and for an organizational culture that was not prescribed in any organizational document, but evolved as an explanation of what was going on in Amaro and convened to the main organizational actors at that time. Amaro was a result of negotiations, it was sometimes "a discussion" itself. If an NGO is a process of *"how the claims and performances of NGOs acquire meaning in practice"* (Hilhorst 2003:5), the togetherness was a convenient way to give the "chaotic" reality some meaning. This concept was legitimated also through pointing at the alleged Romaniness of such arrangement – the "collective decision-making" as a model and Anna as a senior person who deserved the respect of the others and had the ultimate responsibility for everything. This helped to sustain a certain kind of power balance in the office.

4.3 Who is Amaro?

If we want to understand the way Amaro looked and worked, it helps to look at how it was founded. When I did the initial interview with Anna asking her simply to present the organization, she did not discuss the difficulties of management with me at all like Lucie did, but on the other hand, her interview had strong biographical and narrative qualities. She started with describing her life abroad "in the West" with her former husband, an indologist, and her first encounter with an NGO of Vlach Roma that wanted to know from her what is the situation of Roma in socialist Czechoslovakia and how to deal with families that came from there and camped in a park. After the revolution, she returned to the Czech Republic, where *"the problems with skinheads started, my son was attacked and beaten [...] and it was handled by the police and so on. It ended up as it ended up, but at that time I told myself that the time has come I should look around what could be done with Roma in the Czech*

Republic." She stressed that what she did, she did not do for money, because at that time she earned enough with different international employers. She presented a purely ethic character of her involvement: "*When I watched the news, at that time the first Romani coordinator for the city was elected, Marie Ferková, I got somehow interested and [...] I ran down to the municipality and went to that lady Ferková and just said what I think, that I have this plan to do something with Roma and I asked what she would recommend to me. At that time a programme for terrain social workers was starting, so I subscribed to that course*." Immediately she started to work as a terrain social worker, so this was the way her engagement had started.

Anna presented herself as inseparable from the organization, and her experiences as a resource of founding and functioning of the organization. She was proud that she is not the kind of woman who sits at home and just cooks and cares for grandchildren. She was able to manage both: "*As a Romani mother I should be sitting at home and tidying up, cooking and caring for the grandchildren. But I do this as well – during the weekends."* She interpreted the possibility to do such work by the fact that she "*does not have a man at home*", because if she had, she would have to care for him – this is what woman was expected to do especially in her generation: "A *man just wants that I am at home, cooking and washing his socks*." Even before, when her children were small, she always looked for jobs where it was possible to leave at noon and go home to breastfeed. Once she told me a story of how a Romani NGO leader was interested in her, but after she explained him that she would keep her work, his interest waned. With some concern, she mentioned that I am on the same track and gave me some advice about how I should proceed with my relationships. Women leaders of Romani NGOs belonging to the older generation are often single, or have "very tolerant" husbands and grown-up children. However, it was quite difficult for her to work independently, especially when she had to deal with men. She explained that at first she was even scared to talk with them over the phone and was concerned about what her sons, her family and other Roma will think about her. She had to face questions like: "W*hat did you have with him*?" She usually turned this into a joke and used her older age to her advantage: *"What could he have going with an old woman? Now my children will see that this behaviour is normal. I have overcome myself. The family has to learn to wait.*" For her, to direct an NGO was a way to liberate herself from the role of a housewife.

Already after one year of work for the municipality she found out that there were "many other things", because she saw how social workers of the municipality in fact could not do the work in terrain, and how "the state" that should solve social issues actually fails. She founded Amaro to better connect what happened in terrain and in the social office. First she was alone but soon she found some volunteers: *"Because I am a believer, we meet with people after the mass, and so I told them what I have done recently, that I have started a civic organization and I am going to find volunteers – lawyers and people from social sphere, and I have found around 15 volunteers."* I have never found out exactly what happened with this large number of volunteers as the past was not much discussed in Amaro during the everyday work. When I asked about it, I got a response about some conflict in the organization, people falling in love with each other and Anna immediately "throwing out" all the people and trying to find new people on her own. Our volunteer generation was thus the second one. For Anna it was important that the organization did not again "*rot from the inside*", so she choose people that were not necessarily professionals but that she would be able to trust. This time she wanted to choose her collaborators carefully and she felt the need of finding some people that would "advise her" on how to deal with the organization ("*because even ministers have their advisors*").

It was known from the beginnings of Amaro that volunteers worked primarily with children and that the first summer camps were organized. One event acquired even a mythical status – Anna succeeded in abolishing a small ghetto where people lived in factory buildings without running water or electricity after the factory they worked in closed down. She attracted attention of media that increased pressure on the local municipality to deal with the situation; she gained confidence of local people, convinced them to move out, and succeeded in placing some of them in a house of refuge with the perspective of some of them getting into a regular housing. Unfortunately some of them did not have domicile in the municipality, so they even moved back to Slovakia. Thanks to this "operation" Anna established contacts and Amaro got its first publicity.

Other employees respected that Amaro was Anna's project, so most things in Amaro required her approval also due to her position of the founder and to her close connection to the organization. The model of Anna's supervising everything in which she directly checked what "the girls" did during the day was already described. People from other NGOs considered Amaro to be "her organization" – their frequent reaction was: "*Oh yes, that*

Anna's Amaro!" and this model was employed while speaking about other Romani-identified NGOs. People even asked *"Amaro, it is who?",* expecting the name of its leader. Romani-identified NGOs, apart from e.g. Athinganoi, an association of Romani students, frequently had this structure of long-term leaders and often invisible "support personnel".

When I discussed these ideas with Jitka, she did not agree that this would be specific to "the Romani organization" as a prototype and argued that the "*character of every organization is based on the person of its founder, representative or the leading figure*" and on the *"ideas of the person under which it runs, that is its chief, leader, head and heart."* My suggestion that the organizations are based on a "programme" was not considered to be a significant argument. Members of Amaro clearly identified themselves with the hierarchical structure of the organization. Lucie was frequently presenting herself in a "helper role" trying to implement Anna's ideas, and Anna kept reminding us: *"Girls, I am responsible for this organization, so I want to know about everything"* or: "*In this organization, there is no democracy. I have it on my shoulders and I have the last word.*" Disagreement with Anna's rule was not very direct, it was channelled away by gossiping, and even when people did not agree with what Anna did and considered it unwise or high-handed and they did discuss it with her rather thoroughly, her overall position had not been challenged. The article of Amaro statutes that the chair of the organization is elected by a general assembly for three years, clearly was not implemented in practice. Changes in the leadership were done with Anna's consent when, several years later, she suggested that her second son, Viktor, should try to manage Amaro instead of her. Anyone coming to Amaro was also checked by Anna if he or she was agreeable enough to get along with her.

The unity of Anna and Amaro was also used in external public relations. It was she who most frequently appeared in media, besides being treated by them as a "Romani representative". People in Amaro, when talking about other NGOs, often used names of their representatives, thus projecting a similar structure to other organizations or perhaps using the personalization device common in the Czech context[35]. The deeds of NGOs were spoken about as deeds of Mr. or Ms. XY. Due to such high personalization of the organization in acts and speech, I once saw Lucie (at that time "the programme director" of Amaro) shocked

[35] E.g. people from some ministries are spoken of as „people of minister XY", political parties are strongly personalised …

after a meeting with a director of a large NGO when incidentally he told us that he took his management job just for a short time and that he wants to quit soon to go to a smaller NGO. After the meeting she pointed to the fact that people in Amaro stick to their positions quite differently. Somehow, Anna was not replaceable.

4.4 What is Romani in a Romani organization?

As being "Romani" was to some extent part of Amaro's organizational identity, it surfaced and was used in different moments in the organization's life. It infiltrated talks about membership, PR, communication codes, programmes or even methods of the organization. It could be found almost everywhere I looked, making the organization unique and of course different especially in the moments when this difference had to be named and described. First, when Lucie introduced me to Amaro, she provided me with a kind of Rom/non-Rom classification of Amaro members: *"We are five altogether. If you are interested who is Rom/non-Rom, so I am a gadži*[36]*, Jitka is a gadži, but she has some Romani forefathers. Martina is probably feeling as a Romňi*[37]*, aren't you [*everyone was sitting around*], Anna – what do you want to say to that, you seem to breathe in [*towards Anna, laughter*]. Josef is a Rom and Anna, it is clear. So I am actually the only white mouth here [*laughter*]."* Later I heard Lucie repeating that she is the only real white mouth there, the others were romologists or Roma. I was unsure about how to react to that – was it an information for an anthropologist, the legitimation that Amaro was "Romani enough", or an indication that she felt herself "excluded"?

Later I found out that Lucie really felt to be different, especially in moments when Romani was used as the communication code. When Romani organizations got together, and Amaro was part of this network, she frequently found herself to be the only one who did not understand *paramisi*[38] and jokes. She felt it is a handicap also towards those clients who appreciated communicating in Romani, so she planned to learn it when her parental and

[36] Gadžo (sg. masc.), gadži (sg. fem.) - a term from Romani describing "non-Roma" (or even "peasants", sometimes used pejoratively). For Romani words in citations, I use the orthography of the Eastern Slovakian dialect spoken by Anna.

[37] A Romani woman.

[38] Stories, tales.

work duties allowed to[39]. Simona had a similar feeling when she once witnessed how Anna and Josef spent about five minutes communicating in Romani during their first visit in a locality and she was excluded from the interaction.[40] In Romani organizations, Romani was used not only in some exchanges, but as a code with a symbolic value in names of organizations and in their mottos; if there was someone in the NGO who mastered the written form of Romani, at least part of its website could have a Romani version usually accessible after clicking on the international Romani flag. Jitka indeed worked on translating pages and sometimes telephoned to other Romani organizations in Romani. The language indicated the Romaniness of an organization for an outside audience and was a part of the organizational identity. In the internal communication of Amaro, Romani was used mostly in some isolated expressions like *šun čhaje* (listen girl), *dikh* (look!), *beš* (sit down!), *kames?* (do you want some? – usually about food), *dilino* (stupid), *ta so?* (so what?) and of course *gadžo* (non-Rom).

These organizations clearly enticed students of romology and I have met there several student "generations" in early stages of their careers. This could help the students established the first contacts and gain job experiences. Jitka was attracted to Amaro not only because of the possibility of meeting Roma in general and being useful, but also because she could implement some projects connected to her field of study. Jitka promoted events which did not target Roma as social work clients, but "Roma in general", like e.g. at a St. Nicholas celebration or a country-wide Romani prestige ball. She talked about "bringing a romological element" into Amaro, meaning organizing quality cultural events or possibly even publishing a journal. When I asked her how this element relates to the social work done, she explained that it is good for an organization to have more directions of interest, when it has different target groups: *"We have it in our motto, 'we search for our way', and this way does not have to be the only one, just the social work. Being a proper romologist I don't think that it is the only way."* The ideal organization should be all-embracing.

Simona also supported a mixture of these activities not because she would think that cultural programmes would make Amaro more Romani but because the two things ideally

[39] She tried to combine her work in Amaro with parenting and was supported by her husband who had spent some time on paternity leave, which is quite an unusual model for Czech men. In 2005-2006 she worked from home with regular visits to the office. She also considered adopting a Romani child.

[40] None of those two girls in the end really learned Romani.

complemented each other, and such connection (she thought) raised the quality of social work and made cultural events more meaningful: *"These two spheres can be mutually beneficial to each other. It brings more understanding and sensibility, knowledge of the environment and better approach to the social work [...], and the cultural part is enriched by another dimension. It is not only a celebration. [...] supporting the identity can't do any harm.*" Thanks to this mixture the organization is especially qualified to work with Romani clients. Simona wished there were more cultural and informational programmes. No problem should arise from the mix of cultural and social programmes, provided that everybody was discrete about which client received particular social services, and this client's families could also be invited to events. According to her it was an asset when the organization showed the Roma were not always the ones who "needed help". However, she did not initiate any of the cultural programmes because she did not feel to be "a specialist" in this field, and she focused primarily on improving her social work skills. She did not consider it interesting to determine if the organization is Romani or not, and what specifically makes it Romani, but she definitely felt that it was unique. Her approach was more pragmatic: she saw that in some way, the variety of Amaro's programmes can benefit the clients. Another member of Amaro, Martina, was not fully convinced about the appropriateness of the cultural way, and later she also left romology to study social work which she considered more useful. Romology seemed to her too *"idealistic"* because it was partly romanticized.

Amaro, apart from *„supporting and helping people threatened by difficult life situations and social exclusion"*, had another stated goal of *„strengthening the versatile development of Romani national minority and renewing traditional Romani values"* (quoted from Amaro's web pages). It was not explicitly elaborated on what these traditional values were, and when I tried to find out how this goal could actually be seen in recent activities, Jitka acknowledged that in fact there are not many grants sponsoring "culture", and that it was rather her plan for the future. Lucie disagreed that this would be Amaro's primary concern because in general they "don't apply for culture" or they "don't fit in there" with their projects, meaning that they do not participate in grants of the Ministry of Culture or in cultural support of national minorities – specifying that they do not organize any festivals and had arranged only one small exhibition.

With social projects, Amaro sometimes hesitated if its project should be sent rather to "social care" or to the "services for Romani communities" calls, like at the case of prison

counselling, but finally it decided for social care with "prisoners" as the target group. People writing projects did not protest against the rhetoric of the call for application, so when it was targeted at the "inclusion of threatened groups of population", they used this category, and when there was a possibility to specify the target group, they specified Roma among others. Curiously enough, they later really got many Romani clients, because of the Romani name of the organization and because the interest in Romani clients was included in the leaflet for prisoners. Lucie even stated that the news *"that some Romáks*[41] *are needed spreads through the whole prison*." So although Amaro does not "write" projects focused on Roma in the social area, it is able to get "Romani clients" because of the PR effect and because of the sheer percentage of Roma in the prison system. The Romani organization thus really has many "Romani clients", but does not exclude the "non-Romani" ones, if they are interested.

If Lucie were more prone to write social projects on "general population", it did not mean that she opposed the Romani national project carried on by Romani organizations. She even spoke about these organizations as "having a nation" and about the *"right of that nation to go through the same phases and the same development"* as other nations, and described the self-confidence and identity as an important part of changing everybody's situation. She did not see the Romaniness in planning downright cultural projects but in the way Amaro worked and carried out its social work. The tradition was in what was stressed in the organization, in the way of communication, in people who work there, in a different atmosphere, in keeping formal elements but in an informal environment. She also gave an example of common breakfasts that according to her do not only bring people together, but also show a part of the "Romani culture" – that Roma can eat well, have common meals (which is "different from gadje") and enjoy company of each other. What I initially described as a system that evolved in a small organization with different constituency was for her profoundly "Romani". It was something people should get used to and learn about rather than try to change it completely. Anna should be a guardian of these processes, and new things should always be carefully evaluated and domesticated.

Organizational anthropologists have warned about automatically connecting organizational structures and processes with "the ethnicity" of organization: "*Many 'Japanese' practices in*

[41] „Romák" (sg.), „Romáci" (pl.) – in Czech a familiar appellation for Roma often used by Romani and pro-Romani organizations. It indicates some closeness or a positive perception of this group. However, it is not preferred by those who criticize "essentialist views" of these organizations.

C-Life have come about as a result of the structure of the organisation. The company must therefore be seen as a complete social system, the structure of which has evolved partly through necessity. So, for example, the ideology of harmony regulates the competitive atmosphere of the company." (Graham 2003:22). In a similar way, also "gender" was criticized. Let us look at a small feminist NGO: "*They spoke face-to-face in formal meetings and informal problem-solving sessions, engaged in informal work-related and social chat in their workspaces, at breaks, and in passing; they communicated by telephone or e-mail on occasion, and they regularly read and commented on one another's written output (e.g. letters, reports, etc.). There were organized opportunities for socializing at work with colleagues and with external contacts, with some individuals also choosing to mix socially outside of work. In short, the communication patterns in this workplace could be characterized as "high involvement" and heavily context-embedded, with a strong emphasis on face-to-face interpersonal talk"* (Holmes – Stubbe 2003:582); consensus-seeking and meeting not following a linear pattern were also common. Such a description resembles many things encountered in Amaro. What was of particular interest was that this form of interaction was considered by the participants as especially "feminine". "Romani togetherness" might have the same regulatory function as "Japanese harmony" or "feminine informality and consensus-seeking". It can not only help running the organization, but also provide a sense of organizational identity connected to the context people work in. Holmes and Stubbe (2003:595) note that "*Each workplace team over time constructs a unique set of discursive practices from the resources available to them, compatible with other aspects of the way they work together."* The communities of practice thus represent the organizational reality in terms of their missions and identities. What is rather interesting to focus on is which of Amaro practices that evolved in the organizational setting are marked as Romani, and why its members claim that.

On the other hand, in contrast to Lucie, Jitka was more prone to externalize the Romaniness to the "cultural projects" or "Anna's full-hearted approach to clients", and hoped for a quick change in the organizational environment that would bring some "normalization" of her overworked condition. In Amaro, "Romani" could be employed as a wish to implement projects that suit somebody's competence, as identity-boosting description of Amaro's originality, it could be also ignored as a label that would not bring too much to Amaro and that it is not interesting to think about. Thus internally, Romaniness was a contested label that was adopted by each member in a different way in accordance to the person's ideas

about the organization, his/her professional goals and relationship to Anna. This flexibility of the term was facilitated also by the fact that its definition has not been strict, so it could be employed in different areas of organizational functioning and work, and used as a "sense-making" device. In the next chapter I will show how in some interpretations, Romaniness interacted with the concept of social work.

4.5 Our social work

For Josef, these questions were not much interesting to discuss, the flexibility and supportiveness of organizational functioning suited him. Whenever I asked him some "serious question" he was readily able to turn it into a joke and diminish the inequality that might be established by my "investigative" attitude. In the same way he resisted the approach of "girls" who tried to advise him in his work. This strategy shielded him from feeling "less useful" for Amaro. On the other hand Anna talked about these things openly and gradually developed a whole legitimation system based primarily on the concept of social work.

At the time when she started Amaro she was still employed as a social worker by the local municipality, and she did not take the issue of the legitimation very seriously. There were just Roma living in appalling conditions that needed help, and this was "a fact" that required action from anyone, for example from people of Anna's parish. Later she wished that people have more experience "with Roma", so she preferred Roma themselves or romologists. When I came to Amaro, the Romaniness was praised even as a sort of added qualification that makes people in the organization ideally suited for social work with Roma. According to Anna, Roma are more suitable to this type of work, because they, if needed, know the language and inspire trust, so people are not afraid to talk to them about their problems. She expected that Roma will care for Romani clients much better. Of course every social worker has to be "good" but *"a community needs longer time to get used to a Czech terrain worker."* She claimed that people believed her that she was not going to harm them and that she will fight for them with the authorities. The cautious approach to gadje was caused also by behaviour of social workers during the years of socialism. She stressed that she had some excellent experience also with romologists' ability to "get into the community", sometimes they were even better than a Romani worker.

According to Anna, Roma should be much more active in "solving Romani things". Moreover, such an activity sends a good message to the "majority": *"It is time, and I acknowledge that, that our people should get educated, they should resolve their problems themselves, because then the majority society sees it. When we are not able to defend ourselves, when we can't orientate in the current situation, how then can we go one step further? It does not work."* Anna's "cultural capital" is allegedly an ideal qualification for such work. Again, she went back to her life experience and started describing herself as a kind of "halfie": her father did with himself something which she called revolutionary and for which she held him in great respect: he came alone as an illiterate man from Slovakia, from a house with no water, no electricity, and with earthen floor, and married a middle-class blond woman with green eyes (who was actually of Jewish origin). He climbed the social ladder, strictly oversaw the schooling career of his children, allowed them to engage in many leisure activities, built two houses and was an example in this to his brothers. Her experience in mother's and father's families is an experience in two worlds – for example a visit to the family on Anna's father's side looked completely different from a visit to the family on her mother's side. On her father's side there was no need to discuss the visit in advance, twenty, thirty children could come and they were all "theirs" and got something to eat. Someone with such experience was prepared to become a mediator between these worlds – her sympathies for romologists might stem from the fact that they approached this midpoint from "the other side".

A legitimation very similar to Anna's was given to me by her former employer at the municipality: "*I am very satisfied, because Ms. Šťastná is a person that should be cloned, there should be more of them, but she has an advantage of her ancestors, because she is mixed and she is an intelligent lady with a warm heart and zealous for the cause, you can see it." "The person working in this sphere of problems has to have above all the heart and the relationship to those people, this is terribly important, one cannot be without that. Whenever someone starts with charts and that – no. Everyone is an individuality, and that is why it is necessary to be sensitive [...] and speak to them how they speak, simply with respect to the person."* She also stressed Anna's flexibility in being "educable" and appreciating advice despite not being so much professionally educated plus being of an older age, when people are becoming usually much less flexible. However, the mention of poorer education was quite relative as the university educated employer meant a university education and

Anna had "only" secondary vocational education with a school-leaving exam and a social worker's course ; this was in fact exceptional when compared to different (and often inaccurate) statistics of "Romani educational levels"[42]. Already in one of her first positions of a social worker Anna was supported by a woman that was able to appreciate positively both her origin, and her approach to people, and spent with her several hours of consultations explaining her things that Anna needed to clarify. She also accepted Anna as someone for whom people are more important than the administration – which fitted into her categorization of people as humanists versus technocrats. This as a whole supported Anna's confidence and made her appreciate learning new things.

According to Anna, the role of a terrain social worker thus consists of translating different worlds into one another and giving a client a feeling that he or she is really respected, appreciated, assuring that no sense of distance is felt in contrast to the usually cold and hostile municipal offices. One of the nicest moments of Anna's work was when she met a freshly released prison client, shook his hand, looked him into the eyes and asked "how do you do?" to give him the feeling of respect, of being "a person". Anna was proud that despite being a leader of an organization she still had direct contact with clients. She also stressed that this differentiates Amaro from majority organizations. Anyone who wants to do this work has to do it out of "*conviction*", he/she has to know "*for whom he/she is doing these things"*, having the clear idea of Roma he/she wants to help. She saw herself lucky that God sent her the right kind of volunteers that were responsive to people. According to Anna, every man is in need of human dignity to develop himself, and she also said that it is necessary to teach people "to catch fish". Projects should be designed according to the needs of people, and not vice versa. She does not want to *"sit at the table and invent unviable projects, but rather to be in contact with the terrain*." Amaro members shared that view. Jitka described how the approach that Anna promotes is really close, "half-family" and that it is "*good, from the heart, in our way, in Romani way, spontaneous and intuitive according to the situation."* The Romani way of doing things "from the heart" actually corresponds with quotes from other researches, so this construction of the Romani worker is quite common. When Šmídová (2005:104-105) and her team asked future Romani assistants about the desired qualities of an assistant, the response was that the assistant should be "*'a genuine*

[42] E.g. according to the census of 2001, only 2.8 per cent of people identified as Romani and being over 15 years had vocational education with a school-leaving exam (Český statistický úřad 2001).

Rom', in order to be taken as a real Rom, it should not be someone who is 'painted white', who does not feel in a Romani way and who 'does not think with his heart'." Lucie stressed that they want another "result" of social work than majority organizations: *"We do not want to re-educate people we work with, we want to find what is good in them, on the basis of what they want themselves, what is in them. We don't want to paint them white in order to integrate. The term 'integration' is used, but I think 'identity' is a more suitable word, and it is quite different."*

Such description may suggest that the "majority" organizations used only a disrespecting and assimilating approach. They indeed used a very different discourse and made despising jokes about anyone who talked like Jitka did – calling these people "hearters" or "heart specialists"[43], who in fact mask their incompetence; however, in some of my encounters it seemed that the practical application of these concepts did not have to be at the completely opposite poles. What Anna described as "learning to catch fish" quite nicely corresponded to the concept of "empowerment" that was recently introduced to the Czech social work, and Anna's descriptions of the need to work with a whole family resembled the theorizations of a family as "a system". A higher manager of an organization Amaro sometimes considered its "enemy" told me: *"The result of that service cannot be that people will move where anybody, for example a worker, wants. The client is able to advance only as far as he can, on the basis of his own will. Even if he can be supported, motivated – yes, all of this, but essentially you cannot move people around like chess pieces."* The encounter with these two descriptions warned me again that the divisive rift between these organizations can be reproduced, to a certain extent, by the discursive activities of both "camps" or networks of organizations that claim "the other camp" does it badly.

4.6 Strategic Romaniness

Amaro surely was a part of a network of organizations that tried to promote that Roma should be active in working with "their own" people and used this as a kind of strategy of gaining access to social and economic capital. Each organization develops its survival strategies with the help of some kind of public relations. One of the possibilities that Amaro

[43] in Czech „srdcaři".

can obviously draw on is the strategy of using the "Romani" label as a form of resource. My concept of strategies was influenced by Michael Herzfeld's suggestion that strategies should be seen behind essentialist claims: *"Essentialism is always the one thing it claims not to be: it is a strategy…"* (Herzfeld 1997:165). This is not very surprising as every identity based on the opportunities arising from the context can be used in this way. Many anthropologists writing on Romani topics (Williams 1982; Stewart 1997; Gay y Blasco 1999; or Okely 1983) have described how people can manipulate the presentation of Romani identity and how some of these manipulations contribute to survival strategies. However, their work focused mainly on less institutionalized settings. I do not attempt to present here any theory of "Romani identities", but rather to look at how organizations can network based on this label, or benefit from it in some way. Today, organizations can reinvent "Romaniness" to serve the image of the organization, to bring resources to it and to get access to some networks of legitimacy provided by local or international actors searching for "Romani representatives". Organizations can employ certain strategies of essentialism. One curious interaction showed how international activists understand their links and how they can use the concept of Romaniness to create bonds between each other. At a conference a Spanish Gitano academic was explaining to a largely non-Romani audience what "a Romani identity/*romipen*[44]" means, elaborately using memory theories of Carlo Ginsburg and Paul Ricœur. During the break she clarified to me that she uses *payos'* (equivalent to gadje') instruments (meaning academic knowledge) to give non-Roma what they want to hear. She was not particularly keen to discuss anything with non-Roma, but when she was approached by a Czech Romani activist, she started to discuss with him stating that, "*Between you and me we don't have to explain to each other what romipen is*." *Romipen* was something that could create a bond between all the world's Roma. Another Czech activist explained how international links with "Romani movement" and European structures can help her to be seen as someone more important and powerful when dealing with state institutions. In the already mentioned case Nirenberg (2009) describes how many members of the European Roma and Travellers Forum wanted their business cards with the name of the organization to use them exactly for these purposes.

Amaro is in contact with other Romani organizations that perceive the situation in a similar way – they invest in their Romani label, their representatives present themselves as "Romani

[44] It is often considered to be also a set of moral values.

representatives" and try to gain access to power structures on the basis of that. They promote positive perception of "Romani culture" that they define in varying ways. At the time of my arrival, Amaro was closely neighbouring – or actually sharing part of the office space – with a male-led organization of a political activist, whose organization was oriented at lobbying, supporting Romani politics and media, organizing cultural events and occasionally also organizational networking. Everyone from Amaro met with the members of this organization at the bathroom, in kitchen space, at a copier or in a meeting room several times a day, its leader sometimes consulted with Anna and visited the Amaro office. This neighbourhood assured some access to minority media, some information from high politics and occasionally backstage information about a grant application process. The Leader (pseudonym) gave his opinion on the effective applications strategies:

Leader of the other organization*: You're my love, ta šun* (so listen)
Jitka: *Čhaje* (girl)
Leader*: Čhaje, you need to play diliňi* (stupid, in feminine)
[...]
Lucie: *It's clear, but the only problem is that they want us to keep that project after the end of financing.*
Leader: *Don't deal with that now.*
Lucie: *And there are very high costs.*
Leader: *[...] First do the project and solve it only later.* [stress] *Then you can go to the Interior [*the Ministry of Interior*] and I don't know where: 'Look what we have done with them, it is useful for many sides.' [...] Let them give that funding, when they say all the time that someone has to work with those people. [...] The state will prosper from that.*

It can be seen that these "consultations" could be quite direct and not very open to negotiation. The state figures here as a kind of a collective actor that primarily should positively evaluate the idea – this time of employing prisoners. The state should be "glad" that someone has such an idea. It is also necessary to be "clever" in dealing with other people, and it is permissible to promise them something to soothe them. The Leader: *"Nobody gives you as much as I can promise to you. Didn't you notice that people live on promises?"*

In addition to some exchanges and consultations, this organizational neighbourhood facilitated Anna's participation at a delegation of Romani representatives that went to the President of the Czech Republic and influenced Amaro to be more "Romani-promoting" and critical towards "non-Romani" organizations up to the point that it contributed to some personal animosities. It also meant that Amaro did not cooperate with those Romani organizations that had some conflict with the Leader's organization, so at the same time, this partnership was time limiting. The network depended not only on the similar "ideological vision", but also on personal sympathies between leaders.

Amaro had other contacts with a Romani representative for the region and with another at the municipality. From time to time, these people organized meetings on national minority agenda and had some say in the nature of supportive programmes. However, the extent of power of these positions depended on how much time they wanted to and were allowed to devote to "Romani issues", and how much room they had in their institutions. In some municipalities this position has been completely sidelined, in others there were "non-exchangeable" individuals establishing almost an omnipotent control on "anything Romani" that went on in their regions and municipalities. An example of how the representatives used their roles in activating local Roma and establishing their networks was given to me by a terrain social worker that first worked under the municipality and later in Amaro: *"I looked after my family and garden. Out of sheer boredom, I finished a secondary school. Suddenly he (the representative) called me and said that I should do terrain work under the municipality. He called me three times a day. He simply gave me orders: 'You have to do a St. Nicholas celebration; it will be nothing, just children coming.' In addition to my work! After half a year I decided to pack up in because of him. In the municipality they said they understood me, that I should make a break. After the New Year I started again. He called me: 'So now I have been promoted to the region and I give you this NGO to care for and this and that. Should you need something, just contact me. I do not chance my arm for my people, but I will put it on the block provided that no one will chop it' [*laughingly*]."* The people capable of doing the work in the municipality could be "convinced" or activated by the local representatives, but the role of the representatives also enabled forming networks of "my people" that have to listen to me and can contact me (frequently the representative is the only contact in the regional administration people know).

Amaro had somewhat less intensive contacts with Romani NGOs in other cities that occasionally cooperated when some pressure needed to be exerted for political purposes (usually in a form of some communiqué of "Romani representatives"), met at the Council for Romani Affairs, or when they invited each other to their events. In general, these contacts were rather infrequent and did not form any regularly cooperating action coalition with a set programme. Contact with non-Romani organizations was even scarcer and Amaro cooperated mainly with an organization providing services for drug addicts in which actually Lucie's husband worked and where Anna once also had some small job. This organization provided specialized care to Romani addicts and Martina undertook their training with a plan to continue Amaro's addiction prevention activities. Lastly, Amaro had some work-related contacts with people that supported or tolerated their projects at municipalities and in a prison.

The network thus formed was not very dense, but it linked together activists, leaders and officials who made similar claims of ending the policy of deciding "about us without us"; so "strategic Romaniness" cuts across NGOs and government offices. It shows again how NGOs are not directly opposed to governments and municipalities as the label does not correspond to reality of social networking. The competing "camp" has a similar cross-cutting network and people circulate rather inside these networks, while crossing the NGO/state line, instead of switching camps. From a Romani NGO, people would more often go to the Council for Romani Affairs, become municipal or regional Romani coordinators, or eventually get a position in some international Romani-focused initiative. People from a non-Romani NGO would rather become advisors on social policy, be employed in a major state integration project or in a research project. Non-Romani NGOs were usually more closely related and had a number of regular working platforms. The "Romani-specific" paths are obviously more restricted both in scope and power than "non-specific" paths (there is no need for visible "strategic Czechness"). However, it has to be said that in different municipalities the strictness of the border between the two camps differs as the organizations can meet in community planning or get together to defend some cause.

The networks do not have to be used only for an effective defence of "causes", advocacy and networking when e.g. there is some racist attack that needs a coordinated response of more people, but also serve as networks enabling access to different posts that might be connected with "anything Romani". In fact, they can be sometimes used by a local municipality to

"have their people" in the positions, but not improving the situation of local Roma too much. Thus the network of Romaniness can serve to more powerful actors to neutralize opposition or enhance their paternalism. Illustrative example of how some of the networks operate was described in a collective research in which Šmídová, Fafejtová and Černá (2001; and Šmídová 2005) described long-standing networks in "Romani politics" of a Northern-Bohemian town. Under the new regime, the Roma that during the Communism worked in party positions were called by their former colleagues, now officers of the municipality, to take part in a course for Romani assistants to become "their assistants". When they needed to write a paper for their courses, the officers "submitted" it to the local social care department to write it instead of them. The same people were called again and again when there were some other opportunities labelled as Romani and for which there was some government money, so new positions were created for them constantly. These Roma also usually founded an NGO. The Romani assistants then chose other people from their own networks to participate in a retraining course for Romani assistants to create a new controlled generation of Romani representatives. Although the official course admission rules demanded that its participants were adult, without criminal record, had at least elementary education, were less than 40 years old and had domicile in the district or region, they were not observed irrespective of the enormous number of those interested in the course. Its organizers could turn a blind eye to a criminal offence of those who were part of the network, to the fact that in fact they were employed and so did not need a publicly funded retraining course, or that they did not live in the region, or had already graduated from the same course. Entry interviews planned in the project were not conducted. Thus the access to opportunities is distributed through these networks as course participants are also promised jobs after their graduation – again "thanks to contacts" and not thanks to preparing so well that they could actually get a job "without contacts". The system thus strengthens the dependence on these networks.

Šmídová describes this "assistant play" as a complex relationship of local officers, ministerial clerks, MPs (whose role is to give the whole course some external prestige and come to congratulate graduates of a very poor-quality course) and local Romani structures. The six-months course was composed of the Czech language lessons, typewriting, basics of rhetoric, administration and law, but the students were not lead to understand the subjects, rather to reproduce the text that sometimes did not make much sense. "Advices" that the attendants got in the course concerned e.g. the fact that people should "dress cleanly", and

taught them how to organize equipment in the office etc. (Černá 2001:135-143). Černá describes how simultaneously to the exams, where some participants got questions to which they were expected to know the answers in order to show off their knowledge to the officers, the Goffmanian "backstage scene" was much more important. There were around 30 people from the government, regional and municipality offices, Czech TV and Radio who met there to drink and eat, to congratulate each other on the efforts of Romani integration, the municipality officers tried to make some contacts there to get new funding, or ministry officers organized spontaneous lectures to bystanders and promoted their own publications about "Roma on the Edge". They did not mind that they were disturbing the nervous assistants-to- be dressed up in their best clothes and doing their exams just behind a curtain...

During this play the assistantship is institutionalized in a way these actors want it to be, to complement to the general municipality institutional structure. In the research, the superiors of assistants openly talked about their subordinates as "*clean but not very clever*" and "*incompetent*" (Šmídová 2001:120-121), and together with providing them a substandard training, it seems that such a characteristic actually conformed to the municipality's idea about whom they need. Assistants can be manipulated with, they do not present any competition and are paid by the government money, so they are not a financial burden. For officials, having a Romani assistant can mean they can use the (quasi)rhetoric of participation of Roma in solving their own problems. To a Romani assistant this position presents a mobility channel through which information and money are channelled to his relatives' NGOs and which offers the chance to differentiate his family from the "backward and inadaptable" families. Assistants also never opened the question of usury that damages many local families, because they did not want to be accused by usurers' families of "leaking the information".

The role of an assistant is doubly representational: to the municipality s/he represents Roma (and s/he can be represented as such to the higher structures as a sign of the municipality progressiveness) – i.e. he/she is a materialization of the public image of Roma, and to the "Romani community" s/he should represent the municipality – or some caring Romani face of the municipality, a translator and explanator of its orders and documents. This relieves all the municipality officers of the need to enter into contact with Roma, to become sensitive and skilful in compensating the factual illiteracy and different competence levels of Romani clients. One assistant told me: "*For the municipality it is easiest to say: 'XY will deal with*

that' (if it concerns Roma) and I indeed fix it." The power of an "average" assistant is not very great, s/he "advises" officers on his/her (segregated) Romani agenda, but the advice does not have to be listened to. Municipality uses an assistant to acquire information that would be inaccessible for a "non-Romani" officer from the fear of being politically incorrect. The assistant can e.g. find out how many flats in the locality are illegally inhabited, count local Roma or get some incommunicado person to the municipality (because the assistant knows where he or she sleeps) without facing similar charges. Assistants are called whenever there is some "interethnic conflict" or when there is a difficult client that tries to cheat. Such a function has been described as a "lightning rod" (Šmídová 2001). The assistants can become a part of controlling municipality agenda and build also their own networks of control that do not have to be beneficial to the whole "Romani population". They do not have to serve as a bridge but rather as a filter or a buffer that assures the maintenance of safe boundaries (Šmídová 2005:117). The few conflicting assistants who were "too clever" or skilled enough to challenge this system, who charged the office being discriminatory and wanted to redefine their competencies, were fired or there were attempts to "kick them upstairs" to some higher state structures or Prague NGOs.[45]

Thus the networks of Romaniness can mutate in different forms and be used both for mobilizing or demobilizing purposes. In this particular case it seems that they actually copy other client structures that are common with Czech municipalities – they often have "their people" to deal with healthcare, culture, architecture, energies, schooling, building companies etc. The fact that this network uses "ethnicity" as a kind of currency and manipulation label seems to be rather incidental and depends on whether there are resources for such an agenda. Literature describes patron-client networks as a "*by-product of a specific situation of domination*" (Bierschenk – Chauveau – de Sardan 2002:14), and apart from their high incidence during socialism, they were very much present in the Romani–non-Romani relationships for centuries. In some localities, being part of different cliques was one of the few options of getting access, resources and protection. If anybody founds an NGO and wants to influence local politics, it is quite important to which networks s/he has access in order to get information, find opportunities and be invited to decision-making events. When some new actors try to undermine these networks, there can be much anger from all the sides

[45] For further reading on future assistants' understanding of the course and their self-transforming mission see Fafejtová 2001; for the reflection of long-serving assistants on the nature of their work and difficulties of their positions see Červeňáková 2006.

that were so far comfortable with the existing arrangement. Such networks stand behind cases of some policy failures when government programmes reach local levels. They can make local Roma dependent on the "Romani leaders" for access to public services. Iulius Rostas (2009:180) who described these networks in Romania shows how: *"The source of these leaders' power is their official recognition from the government"* and how in fact these leaders depend on it rather than representing interests of other Roma or having any mandate from them. The anger may also be caused by efforts to surpass these structures without giving them opportunities as readily as they were used to – e.g. widely distributing a call for a job opening and controlling that the selection procedure is based strictly on merit.

Amaro had some displeasing experiences with such kinds of networks as it was not part of a certain, at first sight invisible, "NGO coalition" that had "its" Romani representative at the municipality. This coalition was actually formed by relatives and cronies who were members of each other NGOs control bodies. Amaro tried to cooperate with one of these NGOs because it aimed at similar clients but this cooperation did not turn out well – seen from the Amaro point of view due to the grave incompetency of the other NGO leader and the fear that Amaro would be actually better than the other NGO. Amaro then could not get much grant support in a grant commission in which the Romani representative was a member of the decision committee. This representative was informally called a *"big shot"* meaning someone with a huge backstage power (usually being in the "Romani business" for years and having well developed networks). With such people everybody had to be very careful and keep the relationships well oiled, e.g. by inviting them to organizational events, wining and dining them there and letting them feel important – the "cultural" events held by Amaro functioned as an ideal site for this type of networking and could be even more important than the "dancing children" on the stage.

Home anthropology can bring many paradoxes; once I was contacted by a colleague who evaluated grant applications with a request to help him with orientation at the NGO scene. The vastness of this coalition became apparent to me only at the point when it came out that Amaro had one of the most detailed applications with a clear budget (carefully written by Martina, who could not understand why her "nice" and repeated applications had such poor results) while many other applications actually did not give much information about details of the whole project including the budget. These NGOs submitted almost the same application each year and despite getting low scores from the external evaluators who knew

nothing about these structures, the commission's final decision granted them sometimes very generous funding. It was sometimes considered also a "tradition" to finance subjects that were around for a long time and were represented by well-known figures – so the "who's who" knowledge of people from the decision-making commission was more important than the application itself. My colleague evaluator felt very disillusioned because his careful and time-consuming evaluation work with applications seemed to make no sense. In other towns I encountered another municipal policy – to give each organization of "the Romani sector" some small and almost equal amount of money in order to keep all of them alive (from different reasons ranging from considering their services helpful or needing "the representatives"). The final decisions are thus influenced by many different factors and experiences of the people in decision-making commissions. The stories about "mistakes" in selection procedures and injustices in decisions in general are part of the NGO folklore. Some people in Amaro who came with the idea that "a good project" has to be supported, did not like these stories at all and did not want to participate in any political relationships with the "big shots", and to actually become parts of their personal networks. However, it is hard to ignore these calls for applications, if there are not many of them fitting into what an organization would like to do – although knowing that the actual chance of getting support is not very high or that the organization will get just a tiny portion of the money required for its project.

4.7 Personalized politics and a voice of the civil society

In Amaro, differing visions of politics coexisted. One was Anna's vision of the usefulness of any individualized contacts with different actors that could benefit Amaro, and the other was the idea that Amaro is a part of the "civil society" and the NGO sector, and thus it has not much in common with elected politicians or people from the business sphere. It should therefore contact them only in the established ways and through clearly demarcated channels. Anna was prepared to cooperate with many people who would be sympathetic towards Amaro or the Romani cause without scrutinizing their political backgrounds. Her personal visions of the "individual self elevation" and a need for equal chances without any preferential treatment were quite liberal. She described capitalism as a regime under which anyone can raise oneself by working "on him/herself" – if getting a chance – and become a "rightful member of society". At the beginning of her work at the municipality, she was able

to get some support of a newly elected vice-mayor for the Civic Democratic Party (CDP), the conservative-liberal party that was rivalled in its power only by the Social Democratic Party. She held sympathies for the CDP to the extent of becoming its member but the possibility of pushing Romani issues through party politics proved to be impossible. Later on, she sympathized with liberals, when Count Schwarzenberg supported the organization with a material donation; and when there was again some hope that socialists will push things forward, she did not hesitate to contact Zdeněk Škromach, the former socialist Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and chair of the Board for Social Affairs.

In whatever Anna did, she usually tried to directly contact the highest possible representative of the respective institution skipping over the subordinate employees, although sometimes it was obvious that they were clearly authorized to deal with the agenda. This probably correlated with the personalized vision of institutions and of the anticipation that the "chief" has the biggest say in the organization, so it is not worthy to deal with his/her inferiors. A few years later, with this strategy in mind, I was instructed to write a letter to Barack Obama before his visit to the Czech Republic, to call his attention to the fate of Roma in Europe, the Roma that celebrated his election, and invite him to meet with Romani representatives. The letter was "lost" in the White House, but sometimes this subversive strategy bore fruit – usually when interests of these leaders corresponded with the interests of Amaro. Anna was sometimes able to come with rather unexpected contacts to people in power obtained by seizing any opportunity to talk to them personally, like seeing someone in a restaurant. In this personal contact, she was quite persuasive although usually she was not very organized, but rather insistent. The same strategies were used to convince business sponsors, and people that represented those businesses were internally called by the name of their business as if they embodied the whole enterprise – e.g. "Mr. T-Mobile". The girls attributed Anna's success in convincing people to her "personal charm and charisma", and when I consulted it with my colleagues in anthropology they labelled it as a "typically Romani strategy"; this seemed to me to be a rather one-dimensional and essentializing classification, especially when I met people with the same strategies during my involvement in the neighbourhood fight against our town hall development projects.

However, Anna's political efforts were not very systematic, Amaro did not have long-standing working contacts at ministries, and certain members even thought that Amaro should not meddle in politics. Anna's political activities were considered "Anna's business",

and the other people were not much informed about them until they were directly required to do something. Lucie said Amaro could influence how the state's concept of integration looks like only by means of indirect critique through the NGO sector, as a voice of civil society, "*because that is a political thing*" – meaning the business of elected politicians. At the ministry Amaro communicated only with people that gave support service to grant applicants. However, sometimes this communication was not easy as Anna is quite direct when she does not like something, so when in the beginning of the year, the ministry was several months late with the expected payments, she went to the officers and yelled at them in a righteous anger complaining that she had her responsibilities towards her employees and that now she cannot pay them and the organization has to work. She was remembered by these administrators for years and Amaro did not have a good reputation at the ministry, which retaliated with controls that were sent to the organization. In general, ministerial grant administrators were considered incompetent, inflexible and not able to understand the changing practice of the NGO work, as the positions were frequently taken by young ladies leaving the University of Economics with their MSc (in Czech Ing. – engineer) titles.

Lucie assumed that Amaro should not have contacts with people that decide about the applications. An application is just processed by independent evaluators and experts and then it goes to the final commission. Amaro can decide which grant programme it will apply to, but cannot influence how the programme looks like. The politics is left to real politicians, and an NGO remains ethical and clean from the polluting contacts. This idea of separation, as described earlier, was one of the consequences of the active dissociation of the Czech non-governmental sector from the "old communist structures" and seeing its role in balancing out the business and state structures. Being too political was seen as "dangerous". This separation then hindered Amaro's creating longer-term contacts at a higher political level that in fact was not uncommon for some other NGOs. At the same time, Amaro was a miniature organization at this stage that could not offer too much in terms of "expertise", and it spent most of its time on keeping the organization alive.

In 2005, Forint – Forum for Integration, coalition of several organizations won a competition for a contract from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to create and standardize the system of terrain social work. The coalition is composed of large organizations that were the initiators of terrain social work in the Czech Republic, based in the three biggest cities – Prague, Brno and Ostrava, but with branch offices also in smaller cities. Forint teams up pro-

integration organizations in general, so among its members there is also an NGO working with prostitutes, a social policy research NGO, a rights consultative NGO and the Czech branch of the Open Society Fund, the organization that for some time served as one of the largest donors for many integration and Romani-related projects in the region. Two openly pro-Romani organizations were among its founding members – *Drom – Romani Centre* founded by the city of Brno, and an NGO called *Mutual Coexistence* (Vzájemné soužití) founded by an Indian activist Kumar Vishwanathan. Although in its founding papers the coalition proclaims that it "*does not have any political goals*", at the same time it claims on its web pages (www.forint.cz) that *"the main reason for cooperating is reinforcing their influence towards public administration and politicians*". This is to be achieved by national-level negotiations with the government, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, regional and municipal authorities and NGOs. One of its goals is "*to build coalition's prestige and capacity*" and influence state politics.

It can be seen that the notion of what is political is rather narrow here. The coalition succeeds in keeping an apolitical image, it does not want to be allied with any party politics, it has just the goal to influence the policies aimed at socially excluded people by sharing its expertise, which is self-evidently a praiseworthy effort. This involvement will bring its members greater prestige and power. Nevertheless, in the interview I had with a representative of the coalition members, it did not seem to me that he considered this effort to be completely beyond the political realm. The goal of the coalition was described as *"how to transmit what we know and what we think that works to the public administration [...] to standardize the system of terrain social work."* To transmit this, they will bring in their prerequisites and ideas and will negotiate with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. They want to "help" the ministry, because the public administration will anyway have to increase the quality of terrain social work under the new social services law. He even called that a political-lobbying activity of Forint. The coalition consults its viewpoints, shares the experience, prepares projects and the coalition members support each other. As far as his own organization was concerned, he said that *"it is politically strong, that means that what we say is heard and even some things are changing according to that"*. The organizations obviously engage in politics without wanting to call it that way because to look apolitical brings some advantages due to the bad image of politics, and because the NGO sector presents itself rather as an alternative to the political sphere.

It seems that the public claim of "no politics" can also be a strategy to get to the ministry that does not like too much open critique but is eager to show that it modernizes some of its most problematic programmes – the state Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs showed that the state's own terrain social work programme under which Anna was once employed was poorly managed, amateurish and chaotic (Winkler – Šimíková 2005). Therefore, some expertise from the non-governmental sector can come in handy. This organization I talked to was first very critical towards the whole system and towards how the money was distributed to the "*completely non-transparent corporations that in fact do nothing*." The leader mentioned that the time of the critique of the system was risky, so now they employ a strategy of "constructive critique" which amounts to offering public administration some research projects or a project that builds local coalitions of institutions which can influence people's situation. They excited interest of expert workers of the ministry because they were the first to come with a functioning system. They hope their critique and expertise will bring a stricter control of quality for which they are well prepared.

In fact, Forint, as a mainly NGO coalition, got one of the rare chances to influence the design of a part of the social sector. It required a certain cutback of some of the organization's critical positions and focusing instead on "positive" offers towards state structures. There were some concessions present, but organizations were glad to be able to influence how the future conditions for their work would look like. During this process, the political currency of these organizations rose and they gained some advantage because they had the opportunity to model the future system according to their own measures of quality etc. It is hard to criticize Forint's involvement in preparing the reform, because if the goal of the whole process is to raise quality of the social work, those criticizing it could be seen as the ones who do not care for quality. The involvement of NGOs from this sector in politics thus takes different forms from cooperating with state structures on reforms to assuming that it is not proper to be much involved, or simply to not having an easy access to political channels due to being in some remote part of the state or not having a personal or organizational capacity to do so. Efforts to change the system are not usually funded by anyone, and if someone is employed in a project that requires most of his/her attention there is not much time to devote to other activities. Lobbying and expert activities are sort of a luxury affordable rather to larger organizations that are able to compensate for the absence of some of their employees or fund these kinds of activities.

4.8 Politics of a ball

Although Amaro did not have many contacts in certain spheres, "doing culture" actually could bring a politically benefitting publicity to the organization and open some access points. One year, the Leader's Romani organization did not have enough capacity to organize its Romani ball, so Amaro tried to organize it with Jitka as the main organizer of the event. For this event, friendly Romani organizations were mobilized – Leader's organization helped with media coverage and organizational tips, and another organization helped to get available space and sent its "dancing group" to the event. A quality and very expensive[46] band from a neighbouring town was called to play. The ball is an event with one of the highest potential to present an organization to others as a "Romani organization", and "balls" belong to the frequent repertoire of even smaller Romani organizations (sometimes a ball is the only event organized by an NGO – as it showed when I talked to an Amaro client who in fact also had "an organization"). It seems that such events are one of the most "independent" (on non-Roma) events an organization can prepare – a grant from a municipality might be needed, but the organization can do everything else: find the space, do the promotion, bring a music band, set up the programme, moreover the visitors of the event are usually largely Roma. The organizational networking helps all the actors to get their share of publicity, friendly musicians and dancing groups are given the opportunity to perform and can earn some money, local "higher class Roma" can show themselves in front of the others... If the ball is "prestigious enough", it can attract attention of the national media and political actors. The prestige ball organized by Amaro certainly claimed to be the most important Romani ball of the year in the whole Czech Republic. Such events can bring considerable benefits to many people.

The organization of the event started several months before with talks about who to invite. As the ball was organized before elections, the Leader deemed dangerous to invite politicians to the event as Anna suggested. Many of them were also ineligible as they were openly anti-Roma before elections. When Anna suggested some people from show business,

[46] Such a group plays for more than 100 000 CZK a night (almost 3 500 euros at that time), and this money is an important part of its members' income. In terms of cost, they are in the upper part of the "music band hierarchy". The lowest part is represented by alternative groups of mainly young non-Romani musicians playing for free, for "petrol" (to travel to a concert), or for 35 euros a concert.

Jitka was against as it would look “as a circus”. Finally Amaro was successful to get the patronage of the wife of the former President Václav Havel. When preparing invitations to be sent to the so-called “VIP” guests (even embassies were invited – to my surprise without thinking about their human rights record) I put the logo of the Leader’s organization on the first place and I got told off. The first should be Amaro as it definitely did the most of the work. To organize such a ball was something very prestigious, and the amount of work done had to be taken into account at the invitations. Anna and a female member of the Leader’s organization decided to share the post of the moderator of the evening. The cost of the event was high but everyone believed that the budget will be balanced although the sponsors for this kind of event did not seem to be responding. The only sponsors found provided free drinks and food to give to VIP guests. The food was donated by one Anna’s friend’s luxurious restaurant and contained among others a half of a pig. Viktor and Dominik promised to find a couple of guys that should serve as security of the event. I was told not to bother about limited availability of late night train connection as all people were expected to come by cars. I was probably the only one coming by train.

When the D day came and I saw the hall for the first time, I was disappointed – the hall did not look very impressive. It was clean, but it was a part of a trade fair area next to an industrial zone and had cold fluorescent lamps on the ceiling and visible huge pipes on the walls and ceiling. It was rather a multifunctional space in which fairs as well as some cultural events could be organized. Nevertheless, it was the largest hall in the city. Local workers spread tablecloth on VIP tables and we arranged some food – pork, sweets, salads and open sandwiches, and added rose blooms. The space was hierarchically divided – VIP guests had their tables and free food, other visitors had to buy their food and drinks at a local bar. The idea of luxury had to be created at all costs. Anna brought two costumes – the first was a borrowed cream-coloured satin baroque robe, and the second was a darker robe of her own. At her side there was a professional dancer in a dinner jacket with distinguished manners who was invited for this occasion to keep Anna’s company. The list of VIPs was read at the beginning of the evening comprising several local municipality representatives, the music band, other organizations’ members, some sponsors and journalists. People from the municipality and journalists belonged to the few non-Romani guests of the event. A diva with an opera voice was invited to sing (on playback) and later on with the music group composed of two keyboards, electric drums and the only acoustic instrument – a saxophone. Similarly composed bands are no exception, rather a rule – for the most part electric

instruments are used as they are more “user friendly” and can imitate different sounds of traditional instruments.

At seven o’clock there were five guests in the hall. I served part-time in the cloak room and nobody seemed to want to leave her/his coat there for a cost of 5 CZK. Some visitors tried to convince us that they are also VIPs, so that they would not have to pay the entrance fee. The wife of the former president was not coming and journalists (in clothes inappropriate for such an event) that came from three Czech dailies and two news agencies were disappointed. Photographers complained about the light from the lamps and organizers began to worry that the cost of the event will not be covered. Journalists started to eat VIP food. The hall was filling slowly, people in their best clothes started to appear and I was guarding several fur-coats. Photographers started to be more active only when they saw children dancing traditional dances, a break-dance show performed by teenagers, and a quality disco show prepared by another youth group invited by Jitka because it got a prize in a state competition. A diva with an Italian-sounding pseudonym that otherwise sung Italian, Czech and English pop songs started her performance with the Romani anthem. After her performance, she was handing out her photos with autographs. People kept coming even around midnight and at this time the dance floor was finally crowded – as if this were the most important part of the evening. The group switched from international repertoire to Romani songs and people changed from robes to trousers. The evening was structured according to the level of formality and informality, some people preferring the last informal part of it, where the group could present their virtuoso knowledge of Romani songs. The event ended successfully late at night (for all the organizers it was important that everyone enjoyed the event and that there were no problems with alcohol and the police), too late for some journalists who left earlier and wrote some articles about their disappointment.

The political potential of such events, although “the president’s wife” did not come, lies in attracting some media attention – organizers represented by Jitka were even asked a few questions. A promise of “Havel’s wife appearing at a Romani ball – and maybe Havel himself” functioned as a snare for journalists – otherwise they would not come in such numbers and from the national dailies, the Czech Press Agency ČTK, nor from one international agency. The luxury of the event seems to play a similar function – a “Romani prestige ball” sounds better than a “Gypsy hop”. It attracts and gives its participants a sense of uniqueness. There seems to be also another benefit – people can personally meet some

sympathetic municipality politicians who are more prone to visit such events than higher-standing figures. Finally and very importantly, such events provide an opportunity for showing off and networking among people that belong rather to "Romani elites" – the presence of important "non-Roma" is not a condition for a successful event, and these events would exist without any interest from the "majority" side. I visited also other events where I was almost the only non-Romani in the crowd, most people being there with their whole families including children and grandparents who danced to the same music. Groups that would be categorized with certain disrespect by non-Romani music commentators as "Rom-pop" have their loyal audiences and compete with each other to play at such events. They especially try to monopolize playing in and around their home towns. Because of the entrance fee, this particular event was not affordable to clients. During some later and less luxurious events organized by Amaro and its cooperating organizations, clients were encouraged to come and offered free entrance. Such events build an organizational reputation among visitors of the ball – they see that the organization is able to organize a quality event with good music. They present an opportunity to get some prestige "among Roma" and to use the ethnic image to get political access in an alternative way and strengthen networks of strategic Romaniness.

4.9 Dangerous proximity

Apart from searching for alternative ways of acquiring prestige and access and maintaining contacts with friendly Romani organizations, Amaro was not much networked or active in trying to change the system. It concentrated on its own survival, and it is possible to say that it was rather centred on what was happening in its small circle of employees. For Simona that was worrying, as in her opinion organizations existed "because of clients" and "for clients", and conversations I had with her were mostly focused on the work with clients. She was not interested in inter- and intra-organizational fights and gossips and said she did not *"grow much into the office*", so she cannot tell me much about it. She did not consider relevant my suggestion that organizations might exist for a number of other competing and interlinked reasons, and tried to displace these reasons as much as possible. However, anybody in the office could hardly escape the particularities of office life. Sharing personal problems or being questioned about them by Anna was common – especially when she met our boyfriends at events organized by Amaro, or when they helped with preparations of a St.

Nicholas celebration or of a summer camp. One's life was part of the organization's life. The day often started with Anna's preparing a common breakfast, sharing meals was frequent, sometimes we even went out to eat; the only problem was that Anna liked the nearest restaurant situated at a hotel lobby, which was a bit expensive for a student's budget. Working weekends and a New Year's Eve celebration at Lucie's house in the country were enriched by Josef's pizzas and other meals he refined while working in restaurants. In the following years, Anna also used her cooking to win sympathy of new employees and create a sense of community: "*I have won over also that guy, who was quite asocial. Once, when Amaro had no money, I took what was at home and cooked for everyone.*" Despite the fact that people were not being paid that month, a sense of togetherness was supported by having a common meal.

Josef's two children, kindergarten-aged Vojta and Nela in her first school years were frequent visitors to the office playing and drawing there while waiting for their dad or, on other occasions, going somewhere with Anna, who for example accompanied Nela to her ballet classes. Josef frequently drove Anna around to her Amaro-related errands but also to other events. She was not a big fan of public transport, and also Anna's sons avoided it because of not feeling comfortable and being used to their nice cars. Martina's little lapdog was usually present and sometimes there were also two big dogs of Anna's second son Viktor and his friend Dominik. I saw Anna more frequently than my own mother, and she sometimes knew about my life more than my mum. This was something more than just resolving organizational things together. We were also expected to spend together our non-working time. Anna did not make much difference between her personal and working life, so for her that was not a problem, however, for others this was sometimes hard to bear as we had some duties also outside the organization. Amaro was overwhelming and omnipresent. It is not surprising that I started to use "we" quite soon and Jitka became so identified with Amaro that she said: *"With me it functioned totally as an Amaro identity. Simply I breathe for Amaro and live for Amaro."* In my description of what was happening in the office I could not escape using the metaphor of a "family" – and indeed that was a sort of appellation that some members used, including Anna. People, who came to the organization, were expected to quickly share their social capital in order to benefit Amaro – not to share would be considered strange. If you knew someone personally, your contact could be used. People thus did not come only with their "knowledge" about how to deal with administration, etc. but with their whole social networks. For example, this resulted in inviting my friends' Scout

choir to perform at a St. Nicholas celebration of Amaro. I was able to convince them to sing for free because they were my friends. The person working in Amaro is thus "completely available" to it. Anna often jokingly suggested that we should marry someone to get something for Amaro for free, for instance the guy that wanted to rent his sound system for the St. Nicholas celebration for an exorbitant price. Had these events be counted, all the girls from Amaro would have been married already several times.

I would not say Anna was consciously creating this "exploitable" and "unlimited" environment. However, in reality it was definitely difficult to accept and work under this logic, it was almost necessary to explain why somebody was NOT going to participate at some event or why somebody really had to leave the office. Simona described it: *"I think that anybody who works here cannot stop working with the end of office hours and do the job only as a work obligation. Nobody would survive with that for a long time in that collective, and you have to adapt to the majority."* This model of functioning developed rather spontaneously. Anna wanted everyone to "feel well" in the office, of course with the exception of moments of conflicts about someone's authority. Also Anna's "questioning" sessions, when she checked the other people's work, could be harsh. These events, on the contrary, could make the office quite an unwelcoming place.

Due to the almost family environment of the office we were not explicitly informed that Viktor and Dominik were starting to work for Amaro. Of course, we knew them from the past – they helped the organization, participated at the events and weekend actions but suddenly in April 2006 they started coming to the office every day. I asked Jitka, who usually knew about most of the things, what was going on:

I: *And what about the boys? Will they be here more often now?*
Jitka: *It seems so [laughter], I don't know how and why it happened. But it seems that they are here already for the whole week, the second week.*
I: *I wonder.*
Jitka: *They were at a training and now they go around with a suitcase and write.*
I: *So probably they will remain here. This sharing of information is incredible! […]*
Jitka: *It simply seems that they have started to work here, I preferred not to ask, because it quite helps us. So that's how it is.*
I: *Ok, ok.*

We found out that Anna encouraged them to start volunteering only later on, but she was quite strict with them and insisted that they should settle down first and get used to the regular office work. Their business in realities was not going very well, so they accepted that. Behind this offer there was a hope that if the new grants turn out well with some new positions, they will be already trained to take these jobs. They started to help with a search for a new, bigger office, because the room was already overcrowded and the neighbouring NGO needed the space. They were also drawn to the preparations of a summer camp in Croatia, and there was a hope that Dominik will help with budgets.

Anna's family and Dominik (that was so close to Viktor they considered themselves almost brothers) supported Anna during 2004 when Amaro did not get grants. Anna was actually unemployed but she still worked in the office every day as if nothing had happened. Anna commented on the importance of the family support: *"Thanks God, I have such a family as I have. They say to me: 'Mum, if this brings you enjoyment and if this is important for you, we will support you.'"* The Leader's organization also postponed Amaro's lease payment for that year. Viktor and Dominik regularly helped with summer camps and they often contributed also financially, they donated and borrowed their own personal computers and printers to the office and offered free driving services. When Amaro organized some pastime activities, the boys (or guys, how they were called in Amaro) joined in together with their partners. This was a kind of reciprocity and now it seemed that when the guys were in need, Anna gladly helped them, and offered them a "proper job" that was not so lucrative but maybe a bit more stable than their previous jobs based usually on buying something cheaply and selling it for more (cars, buying properties, reconstructing them and selling them – the guys generally called it "deals"), reconstructing and running a discotheque or working as a chief of security. Their success in these jobs differed but they still supported e.g. the camp with 50 000 CZK (circa 2 000 Euro). When Viktor said "*That was just peanuts*", meaning that was not too much money, I have almost fainted, because the sum was nearly my half-year's doctoral student pay. Nobody talked about these contributions very much, they were not public and I got to know about them only by chance. Seeing Anna's problems the guys just decided to help her.

The office now became even more "family-like". Had the guys not been in need, they would have never ended up here, they lived very independent lives in separate households for some

time already, Viktor said that the family was split up for a long time and now they were happy to be together again: *"It was extremely nice that there was my brother there, my mum, that I was there, but not only because we were there together, but because we could trust each other naturally. Because we did not come to a new collective, where we would not know anyone.*" For Victor, Amaro was a welcoming place full of familiar people with foreseeable reactions. When it was clear that some of the grant applications would succeed, the guys found a handsome four-room office and Anna decided that it has to look pretty, so she moved some of her unused furniture there. Later also some pieces of the guys' personal furniture appeared and disappeared again – e.g. a huge red leather sofa. Everybody who entered the new office had a feeling of entering something between a living room and a business office – decorated dark-brown oval table in the centre, a cabinet from the same set, a sofa, and a decorated mirror and a painting hung on the wall.

The new space certainly did not look too "NGO-like" as Czech NGO offices are usually equipped with cheaper furniture and use different improvised and creative solutions. Anna was disgusted when she visited squat-like offices of some, even quite large, Czech NGOs and saw sundry vagabondish figures (with university diplomas) working there. She designated them as "the dirty ones/*špinavci*". It seemed as if non-Roma experts had a kind of privilege of "not having to look well" (like wearing jeans, army shorts, sandals and T-shirts to meetings at a ministry), but yet they had better access to power than perfectly dressed Romani representatives. According to Anna, the whole office environment, employees included, should be pleasant to look at. Such an arrangement gives a good example to clients – they then have a possibility to "copy" such a nice environment in their homes. Obviously, looking well was at the same time part of the self-elevation life project, which I was often one of the slowest from the office to catch up with (together with Simona) as I did not own high heels, court shoes, hand-bags, I did not wear make-up, visible jewellery, suits, I did not do much with my hair or nails, and I had a limited set of skirts, usually in a sort of hippie style. In fact, I was rather opposed to wearing those things as to me they symbolised the pressure of the society to "look as a woman" and "being looked at as a woman". Amaro did not have any dress code, but many people there just wanted to "look well", which was only secondarily connected to the image of professionalism, like in some Czech NGO exceptions – e.g. in Transparency International that regularly interacts with politicians and business

people and where the fact of wearing a suit became a proclamation of professionalism[47]. Anna was always trying to look well – even in her old kitchen job – so not being shabby was a part of being a credible person. Only when she went to meet clients she was careful not to wear anything too sophisticated. Viktor connected his strategy of looking well to the need to show to other people that he keeps abreast of the times and has some "niveau" – to dispel their possible prejudices. In his interpretation this image was supported by driving an expensive car and wearing an expensive watch, so that the others would think he had a good job. For Josef it meant e.g. wearing Nike shoes. Through this strategy, Viktor explained, he did not want to become better than others, but rather simply a "normal" man. But to be taken as "normal", he had to do much more things than non-Roma do, and invest more in his appearance.

There was also some circulation of clothes in Amaro, because clothes, cigarettes, coffee and food were important items in the office re-distribution and bonding system – when e.g. Martina bought a nice jacket that was too large for her, she gave it to Anna. I distributed some of my clothes both to office members and to clients. The guys have contributed as well, especially when men from a prison needed some piece of clothing and had similar body proportions. It was easier to donate their own clothes than to buy it in a second-hand shop. When there were some outside clothes donations, we could sometimes get a nice piece as a reward for our volunteering – especially when I and Simona did not seem to have an appropriate robe for the Romani ball. For this event everybody had to be dressed up, and I was given the tightest robe of my life. I knew that should I need to dress impressively I could borrow some clothes in Amaro. Viktor bought a pair of expensive shoes and a handbag for his mother as a sign of affection, and Anna did not forget to mention from whom she had her new things and that she would never buy them herself. When Jitka mentioned she liked Josef's sun glasses, he gave it to her immediately. She then said she had to be more careful to say she liked something or he would give it to her again. News about cheaper jewellery (factory specimens from Jablonec glassworks) was shared across the office, etc. Apart from signalling status and presenting "an example" for clients, clothes and their sharing symbolized the proximity of members, it was an expression of affection and brought many pleasant moments to the office when people appreciated each other for their "looks".

[47] Analysis of the Czech Transparency International and their dress code as a part of creating "a professional individual" can be found in Raymond June (2007).

The family-like atmosphere of the office seemed to extend also to how clients were perceived. In the beginning Amaro did not have many clients, and together with Anna's long-term clients from her municipality work, they were invited to celebrations, and their children to summer camps and other events. Anna talked about children as someone who she became attached to, and she sometimes did not distinguish "children that Amaro cares for" from "her own children and grand-children": *"I have other children around the city and in the whole region..."* All these people seemed to be an extension of the "Amaro family". When describing the reasons for doing her work Anna said *"We are doing it for our children",* the metaphorized children being the future of all the Roma in the Czech Republic. Anna explained that the reason for starting the prison work was that there were children and mothers alone at home, while their fathers were serving in prison. "Our (Romani) children" was a category that an NGO should care for; therefore this category could be used as part of a legitimation claim. Also other Romani women, more often the older ones, use the "care discourse" as legitimation for their NGO work and activism (as was described by Pulkrábková 2009). Such legitimation is understandable both to Roma and non-Roma, who look on women as responsible for their families and hence their communities. In the past, women-mothers, more often than men-fathers, were considered accountable for bringing up children "badly", their parenting methods were scrutinized and controlled by social workers, and their fertility by medical institutions. The focus of all these institutions was profoundly gendered and women were the ones who often dealt with the institutions (Dvořáková 2009) and got sterilized in hospitals. Sokolová (2005:92-96) shows that targeting women was much more convenient socially and politically – although male sterilizations are simpler and less dangerous, nobody would think of them, because it would threaten the whole patriarchal order. So it was women's bodies that became a symbol of social deviance and some of today's descriptions of "Romani girls' early sexuality", etc. show that this tendency has not disappeared.

After 1989, some women started to reverse that image of irresponsibility and claimed to show their "responsibility" by launching child-directed projects. In this way a limited kind of social mobility could be achieved (e.g. good singing and dancing groups could be invited to the city-organized events, they travelled to competitions), and of course their own children

usually became part of these activities.[48] Amaro invited a woman's led association from another city to one of St. Nicholas celebrations. The association came with several dancing groups and a music band. The highlight of the performance was the leader's daughter as a singer, and her mother did not forget to show how her family is rich and powerful by mentioning that the daughter got a car for her twentieth birthday and she had to try it, so that's why she came late. However, the richness of the family did not show when Amaro wanted an entrance fee from those members who did not perform. The mother finally succeeded in getting all the fifty people to the celebration for free, which meant that all the children of the family got St. Nicholas' presents for free. The family kept sending more and more people on the stage – in addition to the planned programme, so Anna had to stop it because there were other performances waiting. One young daughter of the activist grew so angry that she started to swear at Anna and attacked her physically. It was inconceivable to her that somebody could stop this display of her "family wealth". Activities of this respective NGO could really be described as "doing it for our children". It happens that other families do not want to send their children to activities of other NGOs not only because they are organized *by* another family but because being perceived as organized *for* that family. Organizations in general, Amaro included, frequently direct one of their first projects at children as such projects are also usually not so difficult to imagine and execute, and small municipal grants for leisure activities are more easily accessible than complex social work schemes.

Clients were not only perceived as part of Amaro family, but also in the context of their own families, and Amaro tried to mobilize the family to help them. At the time when Anna combined her municipality work with Amaro work, I could meet some of the municipality "clients" quite freely, chat with them in the corridors of a local house of refuge or even get an invitation for a cup of coffee. Usually they did not want to talk too much about the social work, because that would put them into an unequal position in the conversation, so not even a "respectful approach" could diminish the power distance between the roles. Anna was

[48] However, not all the women liked to necessarily mix their work and family – for a worker from the neighbouring NGO, her work was rather a refuge from the family: "*I have three guys at home, I have tidy everywhere, the dishes washed. When you are at home, you can do nothing; I would tidy up constantly here and there."* Other women whom I met in the NGOs praised that they could be there because of having supportive husbands, and other women had their children with them (e.g. one help in the Amaro club) because they did not have a husband or someone who would baby-sit for her.

"good", but otherwise there was not much to say about her: *"We know each other, see each other, greet each other, when she gives something to children and talks with them. Um, she is quite good. Otherwise I have a lot of work with children...*" The conversations usually centred on children, everyday problems, gossiping about other people and positive life stories about one's past. From the client's side the proximity was not perceived with such intensity, because despite Anna being on their side during their visits in institutions, she had links to a whole array of municipality employees that were controlling client's lives.

Nonetheless clients, e.g. in prison, sometimes called Anna the "aunt". This appellation was linked also to her position of an "older (and Romani) woman", the clients were frequently a generation younger than her, and it was a male prison. They did not call the prison social workers in the same way, although some of them were also older – these were designated by their surnames. Jitka, when describing Anna's relationship to her clients and people in general, said that *"She is sensitive to them, takes them as her own and she generally makes people feel like that, someone may even be a bit confused, maybe I am a bit scared that this is one large happy family Amaro."* Jitka, who otherwise happily embraced the idea of Amaro, felt that sometimes the closeness of relationships is "too much", too exhausting or even dangerous, leaving no space for a separate, individual life. She once used the metaphor of her need to "close the door" on the work.

In fact, it was not easy to "close the door" as there were no clear borders of where Amaro starts and ends or where is the end of one's responsibilities and involvement. Simona sometimes felt tied up, because each employee was not responsible only for his/her work, but also for the work of others. The whole experience of Amaro was characterized by fuzziness, mixing areas of hybridity, when people were something "between" family members, friends and employees, between clients and "closer" people. People also combined and mixed their working roles, so Amaro was rather a symbiotic organism than a computer with exchangeable parts. This hybridity was dangerous not only to some people's idea about the distinction between work, leisure time and personal life, but also to many ideas about what should be an NGO, how it should be directed, how a social worker should behave and what are the norms of professional conduct. Not only could it be questioned by outsiders, but from time to time, many conflicting areas resurfaced inside Amaro itself. It can be well illustrated on the example of a summer camp in 2006.

4.10 The camp

The children's camp is the highlight of summer holidays. It is usually exhausting to organize, but it is one of the few occasions when all Amaro people can come into more personal contact with children. It was considered to be an all-encompassing event with participation of all people. In previous years it took place in different parts of the Czech Republic, and usually it had some problems with rainy weather, and as Jitka described, also with its "organization". She participated for the first time in 2005, and being from a "camping family" (her parents got to know each other at camps, she grew up at camps and later organized some herself) she has imagined a camp totally differently. When describing her idea of a camp, she talked about rules, learning to know nature, about combination of an idea of play with education in an intricately thought out "camp play" (*táborovka*), which is built around a theme that runs through the whole camp and every day children play part of this play in competing teams. At the end there is the finale in which one team wins, but everyone should feel that the fight was worth it. In a camp children learn to cooperate, they learn many things with the help of experiential education and become a bit healthier, more modest and hardened. By running the camp themselves – including cooking, preparing firewood, bringing drinking water from a village, night patrolling, building the whole camp (as the camp "means" a camp with tents) and tidying it up – they become more self-sufficient and responsible. Camp plays can have different topics, e.g. pirate treasure hunt, adventurers trying to save someone or the planet, Native Americans, but also historical topics like Antique Greece or episodes from the Czech history. Nowadays it can also be a story of Harry Potter and other favourite heroes. Having a Scout background myself I shared her "learning through experience" image of a camp.

When she came to the 2005 camp, she was horrified not to find much of her idea of the camp there – there was not a programme she expected, nothing much was prepared in advance and children were only supposed to go swimming, do a bit of sport, visit a nearby castle and that was pretty much it. She considered it a waste of time and a chance for children to gain some experience, to learn something, she saw children bored and getting up to mischief, etc. Actually she did some preparation for the camp, prepared a camp play and its different stages, but there were no adults sharing her idea, so paradoxically she did not have problem with children but with the adults. She was not much successful in explaining her idea of a

camp to the adults, who did not hear about "a camp play" before or did not have much idea about a "play" apart from sports. For others, the camp was closer to "vacations with children", concept with adults sitting and drinking during the evenings, sleeping till late morning hours. Lucie with her little son came only for a visit towards the end, helping to cure some children with her medicines, as there was no first-aid-kit in the camp. The differences in socialization to the idea of camp were obvious, so for 2006, Jitka wanted to assure that the camp would be a bit "more organized".

For this year, Anna "promised to children" that they would go to the sea. The camp was well above Amaro's budget (the poor families paying only a symbolic amount) and for a long time, it was not sure that it will really take place, but Anna insisted on keeping the promise and on God's help. The God was a bit helped with moving some money from the budget of a municipality grant, which later, quite naturally, made the municipality angry. Amaro people were expected to pay the full price to relieve the strained budget. Finally, one location on the coast of Croatia was chosen and Martina with Jitka started to prepare the programme. Apart from the story of explorers from competing countries, they prepared an educational background of the play based on learning basic English conversational phrases suitable for situations at holidays abroad. They even wanted to consult it with some schools and English teachers.

A meeting with parents was organized, who were worried about children's safety – and the poorest of them had to be helped by Martina to obtain passports and other documents. Anna presented the goal of the camp as "*primarily swimming*", its location was described as "luxurious", and the programme was mentioned only as "*that rubbish around*". It would be probably hard to explain the programme to some parents, but I started to feel that although the camp team now comprised four Amaro girls with "an organized" idea of a camp, hard days lay ahead of us. As I was partly responsible for the programme, that was much advertised to sponsors (in contrast to parents), I was worried.

When approaching the bus departure point, I saw many parents and other people that were not usual part of Amaro. It was not clear to me who was going to depart with us. Apart from Anna and her sons, Jitka, Martina, Simona and I, there were people that I saw only occasionally – Viktor's girlfriend and Josef's wife, then women that I saw for the first time,

but who seemed to have roles of cooks[49] – Anna's mother and another relative. Then there were several people evidently without any specific "role" – a woman from the neighbouring NGO (paying also the full price), the driver's wife, another driver and his wife (being forced upon us by the bus company, as it was difficult to find any available driver). As it turned out, the children were also rather mixed, and I found that out only gradually during the camp – Josef's children, cook's children, children and relatives of the neighbouring NGO employee, children of a famous Romani group player and singer, and several children from poor families with which Martina worked and that Anna knew from her previous work. The camp was advertised as an event for children from poor families but with many of the children no one could say that. Thus the group was again a hybrid mix – there were several adults that seemed to come rather on vacation, children that had their relatives there, children without them, children of clients and children of friends and relatives. The age of children was very diverse – from two or three children of pre-school age to 15-years-olds, because there were whole groups of siblings.

After the arrival, Anna and some others found the house with dissatisfaction to be less "luxurious" than expected and described in presentations to parents – although every room had a bathroom and the house had a pool, there was no TV and, most importantly, no beach, but rather a stony access to water. Anna, during the first meeting with all the children, introduced me as a paramedic, thus establishing me to the position of permanent responsibility for the health of children. That surprised me, because this was not negotiated with me in advance, so that I could prepare for that role. However, Anna knew that I had a licence from the Scout first-aid course because I promised to teach children some water life-saving actions before we would allow them to go swimming. Other surprises followed. The pre-negotiated rule of non-smoking in front of children was transgressed immediately, our (office girls') references to the rules and responsibilities to parents were dismissed and Josef's wife said that the 14-15-years-old girls were already old enough, that they were her friends, and if any of them would ask her for a cigarette, she would give it to them – so we were not able to limit children's smoking (at least they usually smoked secretly). This incident shows that Josef's wife did not understand these girls were "children at a camp supervised by camp leaders", but considered them to be "friends who can do whatever they want". From this point of view our action group could be viewed as a group of oppressors,

[49] So it became clear that self-reliance would not be the leading concept and children will be cared for a lot.

who are setting up unnecessary rules. Indeed the older girls did not want to participate in many programmes.

Cooking was also not what was expected – at the meeting with parents Anna promised light dishes – no dumplings and heavy meat, and a balanced bill of fare was prepared before the departure. The reality looked different – heavy and fried meals sometimes two times a day in the immense heat, snacks mostly in the form of cookies, sweet drinks only. Sweet drinks proved to be dangerous in these circumstances, as children did not drink enough and I had 24-hour service in caring about heat-stroked and dehydrated patients with high fever that would never drink pure water. Children constantly asked me for pills for headaches and I had to keep explaining, that the reason of their headache was that they don't drink and wear hats. The camp became one of the ultimate research experiences, where my suddenly acquired "medical responsibilities" screened out the "researcher's interest". I ceaselessly cared about different sorts of injuries, most often those of a girl from difficult family circumstances who wanted to get attention by harming herself; I was worried about one boy's bleeding cutting wound, etc. For sure I was not much reflexive during that time and I just wished everyone would survive the experience, no one would drown, get injured or ill seriously. When I use "we" in the camp narrative it often relates to the office girls, and it reflects my sympathies to them, because they were trying to make the camp more foreseeable.

The prepared bill of fare was thus largely forgotten and Anna often drove to the town to buy something despite our protests about rising costs. The cooks tried to do their best according to their ideas about cooking and care – they were getting up at five o'clock to bake desserts and their cooking was heavy, meaty and tasty, but not much appreciated by children, who came supplied with sweets from home. If a child did not like the dish, there was always something sweet to offer her/him instead, and especially to the children that had an adult relative at the camp. The office girls' idea of a camp thus started to have other cracks – children were not dealt with equally, but naturally, they had been favoured by relatives – so they could get better food, something brought from the town, Vojta was driven by his grandma Anna to the town where other children could not go and she bought him expensive toys, with which he played in front of everyone's eyes. He was allowed to sit with us during the evenings when other children were expected to sleep. Josef's wife announced that she had moved her daughter from one team and put it to another without consulting anyone. Relatives pulled strings to help their children during the evening evaluation exaggerating

their good behaviour, trying to give suggestions that everyone should acknowledge, or putting the highest number of points to their children's song performances.

When I discussed with Anna's sons about what it is like to work with children of their relatives, they explained that these children would obey them mainly because they did not want to hurt them, and not because they obey any "general rule". They claimed we (the girls) were more effective in an educational approach, which is based on an approach "it is good for everyone to obey this rule" rather than "obey me because you like me". It did not seem to me that our group would be much effective though, the idea of teaching some English that was originally advertised came to nothing quite early after the camp had started. For Martina this was her first Amaro camp and she became disillusioned already during the second day and commented on losing her pedagogical aspirations.

Children teams were also expected to help with the maintenance of the camp and tidying up their rooms, but even this effort to put all children on equal footing proved to be futile. Boys were thrown out from the kitchen by the cooks in the moment they started to wash the dishes, and we found out that some sisters came to clean their brothers' rooms. The camp was thus re-modelled according to everyday inner- and interfamily hierarchies.

One hierarchy that became the hardest to negotiate was Anna's position. We found out that although she did not take part in the programmes, she gave the children different instructions than we did, even if we tried to consult everything with all the interested adults in advance (Josef, Viktor and Viktor's girlfriend were the most active and helped to lead different competing teams) to ensure that the programme would run with their support as planned. It seemed that we were too active with trying to run the programme and involving other people into it that Anna had to show her position by disrupting some of the programme by unexpectedly bringing snacks in the middle of our explaining the rules of the next game, by announcing in front of everyone that tomorrow she arranged a trip to Dubrovnik or a football match with local adult men (which was from the beginning unequal because Anna's sons did not play and did not support the kids), that in the evening there "would be" a disco or a Superstar contest, telling us that it is not possible to play some game now and that we should have prepared it earlier, which was obviously not possible because of the rain. Jitka was even told that she "ends in Amaro" (she opposed Anna the most and the conflict that smouldered for some time became very personal), and Martina wanted to leave as well.

Anna might have wanted to be in command not only because of her leadership position but also due to the fact that so many people including watched her. Compared to the office, our acting there was much more visible. Our activities profoundly disrupted her idea about how the camp should function, and we evidently still did not have enough knowledge about how to negotiate hierarchies and how to deal with the conflict. The fear of our group was directed also externally – to the sponsors of the camp to whom we successfully "sold our idea" of the camp. It seemed impossible to explain to anyone outside Amaro why the camp did not achieve what was planned.

After the camp, Lucie, who did not participate at the camp, tried to calm down the situation by stressing that Anna takes everything personally, and when pushing something through, she does not hear any "logical arguments", so it is unwise to oppose her in that moment. She used an essentializing argument at that time – "*That is how Roma have it*." She considered our partial implementation of the programme a success and reminded us that previous camps often did not have any programme at all. She interpreted our conflict in an ethnic way – we should not "*steal*" the organization from Anna, just because "*gadže would do it better*." That would be the end of a Romani organization (it has been already explained how ´the processes inside organization were significant to her to consider the organization a "Romani" one). She herself wants to stay in Amaro only up to the point when it becomes sustainable. The role of the employees then should evidently be to support and advance "the Romani organization" in a way not conflicting with how "Roma" want it, which means she simultaneously excluded Martina (that identified as Romani) and Jitka (that occasionally identified herself as Romani through her ancestors) from the Romani category. They were probably not "Romani enough", as their ideas about organizational processes did not differ much from Lucie's view. In the end, disillusioned Jitka left the organization and started to work for an international NGO, where she continues promoting Romani topics, but this time in a "safe", better organized and merit-based organizational background.

Martina stayed and took up Jitka's work with children, founding a little club, where she could work with them more regularly. When the next camp approached, she resisted Viktor's pressure: *"And what about our children?"*
Martina: *"What children?"*
Viktor: "*From our family*."
Martina: "*There is no more space*."

She gradually limited the amount of number of friends and relatives in the camp, enlarging the proportion of children from the club and being surprised just by one big visit of Anna's relatives that emigrated to England and stopped by while visiting their family in the Czech Republic. Overall she felt satisfied with having those children that "*deserve it*" at the camp, meaning children from the poorest families that sometimes even did not want to go back home, where they would miss e.g. hot water and regular meals, or would be returning to sometimes difficult family environments. The maximum age of participating children was also limited. Martina carefully negotiated Anna's role explaining that she needed some space to carry out the programme. Over the year of hard work, she won children's respect. Anna and Josef offered to take up position of cooks and not to mingle in Martina's business – meaning preparation and execution of the programme. Martina was appointed the leader of the camp. This division of roles seemed to work and Anna, when children were doing some mischief and somebody asked: "*Who allowed them to do that?",* pointedly replied "*I am not the leader here!"* and told me she would not like to experience what happened last year again. Martina thus had the space she needed to carry out the programme; she just did not have many people there that would support her in that, as I visited for only a few days, and others did not want to participate in thinking it out and preparing it. They could be counted on mainly during the course of the programme after being carefully instructed. When she wanted to prepare some programme, her strategy was to send others with children for a walk to the woods.

After the 2007 camp in the office, Anna said that she would never like to cook again, as she usually got up at six in the morning and became completely exhausted, but also that she would ban the other girls (Josef's wife, Viktor's girlfriend and Dominik's girlfriend) to go to the camp again, because they *"did nothing, while Martina was working all the time. It is unbelievable how Martina copes with children, you can see she's a professional."* Amaro started to professionalize.

5. Standardization of terrain social work

5.1 Working under contract

With self-invented functioning methods and strategic Romaniness explained in previous chapters Amaro entered the scene that was populated by different discourses, and had to actively interact with them. Other organizations have invented different legitimation strategies that sounded meaningful to them, and their internal structures were also diverse. Now we let Amaro be for a while and look at other levels and "sites" of the research that, however, are crucial for understanding some processes influencing Amaro, namely the internal structuring of other organizations and the visions of managing systems and professionalism they promoted. When I visited other organizations to get at least some superficial comparison of their PR strategies and organizational structure, what I usually encountered was the delegation of volunteers mostly to the area of helping children or after-school tutoring. When I explained in more detail what I would like to know, getting access to these organizations became more difficult, access negotiations took longer time, and I had to explain goals of my visit in more detail.

The most difficult task was to watch any direct interactions of the organizations with adult clients or families as these interactions were subjected to a strictly private "contract" between the organization and a particular client. One "higher manager" explained: *"The help is based on a contract, either written or oral, which means that the client comes with some order, the worker explains to him what the service is about, how he, as a client, is going to function in this service, what are his rights, and then they together analyse the client's order. The worker explains to him, what is realistic within the scope of the service, and what not, and under which conditions. From that order and that offer, a commission is put together. Of course, within one case, there are more commissions. The client can work on his housing, something connected to his children, search for a job, and within the commissions particular consultations are held, whose goal is to plan the cooperation, set another goal and distribute the tasks."* He further spoke about clients being experts on their own situation and about the need to work with clients in a "structured" way. Such a detailed analysis done with clients helps them see their situation in a broader perspective and enables them to see what and where could be changed. According to him, by this process the client gets empowered and acquires a better understanding and overview of his or her situation. Thus, in such detailed

structure there is not much space for some other interactions – the organization makes some offer and sets up consultations to solve the client's demand. When there is no longer a demand and the case is solved, the contract ends.

This contract negotiating method has been considered "ethically clean" in opposition to the situation when a local municipality sends a social worker to solve some situation regardless of wishes of clients. It has some disadvantages in working mainly with more motivated clients, but for NGO workers that use it, it has a clear moral advantage of not being seen as part of major coercive power that wants to pacify people. The social worker in this system should not be a guardian, rather a guide. The commission can end "unsuccessfully" from reasons on the side of the client, the social worker or some other parties. There is sometimes even a written contract signed after the commission has been negotiated. The work conceived in this way can also be much better monitored as the social workers write down a record about how the different consultations went on and if the commission was ended successfully or not. Some organizations have already developed database systems that allow monitoring the commissions and are able to quickly draw some exact data about the nature of their work for their annual reports and for the internal feedback. In addition to that, such organizations usually have a system of supervision of social workers that helps them to evaluate individual cases, analyze one's mistakes, deal with psychological stress and reflect on the character of one's work. Supervision forms integral part of the organizational hierarchy – e.g.: *"These groups* [of social workers] *are directed by a manager and this manager is, on the one hand, a personal manager of those people, and on the other hand, he cares for case supervision*[50] *[...] these people have long been in the social services and are qualified for the performance."*

Finally I was able to get to the terrain with one of these more hierarchized NGOs to a kind of a "look-around" visit, when a client is also "actively searched for" because not all people immediately come with a clearly formulated "order". This was later described in one of the first methodology of terrain social work as "mapping of the situation" (Nedělníková 2006:31). A terrain worker usually has some regular schedule when he or she can be found in the "terrain", and people have a possibility to contact him/her, or they can come directly to

[50] Supervision is a reflective practice introduced recently as an integral part of social work – it comprises consultations about cases but it can also be aimed at relationships in a team. It should improve quality of services and prevent a burn-out of workers.

the office. I participated in a visit which turned out to be a repeated visit to some families that had some smaller issues to solve and were dealt with before. To get there, I had to get permission of four levels of organizational hierarchy, sign a written consent, and my visit accompanied by a terrain worker was limited to approximately two hours and two families. I was specifically asked to anonymize names of the visited persons even though I would do it anyway. All the time I felt that I overstepped the rule not to bother clients with anything much outside the scope of their "contract". This was different from moving around a house of refuge and chatting with clients over a cup of coffee without any control from Anna or the municipality. In general, in similar organizations keeping the privacy of clients is very important, and I heard people refusing to take any new delegations of people that came to see "the ghetto", as people were not in a zoo. A coordinator of the social workers said to me: *"We are constantly bombarded by students that want internships and by journalists. To let them into the families could be sensitive. ... Especially no photos, or we are going to take your film out of the camera [*jokingly*]."* I felt guilty about coming although I was rather interested in seeing a social worker translating the "contract theory" into practice than in spying on clients. However, one important observation has to be mentioned – NGOs have become entry points to localities. If politicians, media, activists or scientists want to come, they frequently contact these mediating structures, so although the organizations can be very suspicious about any visits, they have an influence on the image of the localities and, in the end, they can also choose with whom an outside person will talk.

When I first came into contact with the director of this organization, I was quickly supplied with some data about the organization's size, its budget and funders, etc., things that I would never get so quickly in Amaro, where at times I was not even sure, who really works for the organization. At first sight, this image of organization indeed resembles a "business corporation" rather than a "caring family". The director was talking accordingly: "W*e are [...] providers of these services for this kind of target group*", "*there is a demand from municipalities to solve the situation in some way, but any idea about how to do that is absent. So our programme constitutes a product that is offered to these municipalities*." Similar marketized rhetoric and relationships are used both with municipalities and clients (or rather "service users"), so they are consistent at different levels of functioning of the organization. Dealing with the "contract" resembles the ways a "project society" (Sampson 2002b, see the Attempts of Deconstruction chapter) deals with its projects – the interaction between a worker and a client is put to a clearly defined frame of successive actions, and it

seems that actually a client is taught in some way to think about his or her life also in a project way, that can compartmentalize different areas of one's attention like housing, debt amortization, job, etc. On the one hand, in this way a person gets insight to a possibly overwhelmingly threatening and confusing situation and can learn some ways of dealing with it, on the other hand, his/her life becomes a bit projectized.

The critiques of the idea of contract generally do not see much overall improvement in a client's situation after introducing services based on a contract. The client could become objectified and instead, it is "the service" that becomes the end product of the organization. This is actually nicely shown in end-of-year reports, where NGOs started to provide pie charts not showing how much their services actually helped anyone, but how many consultations or "contacts" they had and in which areas these commissions took place. Thus the client-centerednesscentredness can be not exactly what happens under this regime. The system can hide the fact that the workers and clients are social actors with possibly different ideas about what should be done: "*Service provision is interactive and involves negotiation between subjects who are each trying to get out of the interaction what they think is best for them. 'Clients' have the capacity to engage in creating their own life circumstances. And so, practice should be reconceptualised as a negotiated outcome between agents who each have expertise that contributes to determining the outcome"* (Dominelli 2005:69). The contractualization rather raises the control of organizational management over what their own social workers are doing, so it can make their work more performance-related, as every move of the social worker is meticulously documented and thus traceable. The budgets then can be calculated more precisely and be more predictable, however, they can restrain a worker who would devote too much time to one "case".

The change in management can also change the focus of social workers by changing mechanisms of rewarding, focusing their performance on the internal institutional context rather than on the wider social context: *"Workers are rewarded for prompt and precise reporting, for meeting deadlines, for finalizing high-volume credit agreements, for accessing privileged information about competitors or partners – not, in other words, for alleviating poverty, enhancing governance or promoting human rights"* (Gould 2004:278-279). If the workers are rewarded for small and immediate tasks, they can also feel less guilty if they don't fulfil the goals that an organization has in its vision. Gould calls that "cushioning of normative dissonance". This dissonance can be sidelined also by administrative

reorganization – as there can be a belief that this work, which is OK in itself (to question the work is one of the most sensitive issues), it just needs a better managerial system.

The above-mentioned encounters with other organizations indicate that contrary to Amaro, their bureaucratization and market rhetoric is much stronger – although at different levels in each organization. The size of the organization plays an equally important role here. It is also clear that the whole Czech NGO sector is under pressure to employ certain rhetoric and level of bureaucratization to be able to reach the funding, and that all of the organizations deal with these tendencies. However, can it be interpreted as a "takeover" of neoliberalism? Anthropologists Catherine Kingfisher and Jeff Maskovsky argue that "*neoliberalism as a thing that acts in the world*" (2008:115) should not be seen as some totality that is inevitably coming. They rather suggest the neoliberalism(s) are much more unstable, partial and interacting with already established cultural and political-economic formations, so locally different governmental regimes with different patterns of inequalities are created. Neoliberalisms interact with previously established governing projects, and anthropologists are well positioned to show how it functions for specific people, institutions and places. Authors suggest we can learn much *"about contemporary relations of power and inequality if we treat neoliberalism as an unstable, incomplete and limited governmental regime"* (2008:117).

If we treat neoliberalism as a certain cultural formation, a set of meanings and practices, it is clear that its adoption can be contested and it can be integrated to the already existing structures differently. Neoliberalism seems to be useful for different power actors that use it for their purposes for example of control. The manager said: "A*dministration, apart from projects, is not such a burden. It exists mainly to do the quality work, especially with terrain social workers.*" Opinions of a terrain social worker that worked under this manager were different. For him bureaucracy was more of a burden and he did not seem to share the overoptimistic idea that the organization had the best solution to problems of their clients who had to cope with their everyday lives: "*The bureaucracy is awful. These managerial manners are expanding balefully. I am pestered that in the meetings it is said we are the best, and that we know, how to do it."* And "*I should write a detailed field diary about each client, but I have resigned to that. I have three months delay. With my colleague we are sort of black sheep."* The perception of these processes on the lowest levels of organizational hierarchy does not have to be as positive as the higher level presents it, and social workers

prefer to help clients to do administrative things. Also the "formulation of a commission" actually seemed to me much less formal and structured in practice than in the presentation of the manager, although there was an attempt to talk very clearly, and different possibilities of solutions were offered. The above-mentioned terminology thus served rather as a sense-making tool for managers, but also as a kind of a checklist and a reminder for the social worker. The first-generation managers were frequently previous social workers themselves, and sometimes they regretted these organizational changes but described them as "necessary": *"I have transformed to a 'pen pusher' and now I think about the direction of the project. I do it because if I would not do it, someone else would do it, but worse, or no one would do it at all."*

The introduction of some neoliberal tendencies coincided with the efforts in the Czech context to reform the whole system of social work that, during the socialist times, was rather controlling, unwelcoming and largely bureaucratic. Some reform which tries to change the paternalist system into one based on "partnership" or "orientation to client" was necessary. Offering the social work as a service that cares about wishes of an individual client, that is based on an agreement, provision of information about the whole procedure, clear institutional structure and budget, and on finding devoted workers that ethically care about privacy of their clients, looked revolutionary indeed. The aspects of social economy with their emphasis on effectiveness, calculability and audit came as a part of this reform, but did not seem to be its main driving force. If we contrast NGO social workers with the "disinterested and overworked women from the municipal office", the social workers were often able to provide better quality information and service, especially for populations that so far were rather dropping out of the state social system. These organizations could use business rhetoric and showcase their efficient administrative structures as a sign of their professionalism, and actually make the state interested in cooperating with them on the reform of social services, because at that time, it were the NGOs, who were, certainly in the area of social terrain work, the best in expertise, which thanks to their capacities, they could verbalize and explain to others. Other areas that I know of, that got standardized as social services with the help of the NGO sector, were low-threshold clubs and services for drug addicts. To get a service standardized also meant that this category will be counted with and mentioned e.g. in grant systems and that the social work community will be interested in its maintenance and development. Pushing for reforms and being one step ahead of the state was beneficial for certain NGOs. The "professional" outlook also became a tool of

competition between the NGOs. Indeed, personnel management was described as "*central to the governmental mechanisms through which credibility of aid narratives are maintained*" (Gould 2004:278).

5.2 Terrain social work in the making

The way how terrain social work looks now is not a result of a concrete plan of any individual actor, it rather arose from many discussions and pressures in the field. In the beginning there was first the need to create some kind of training for people that were becoming employees of municipalities[51] and NGOs. This was created by the Drom, the Romani Centre in Brno, in cooperation with the Council for Affairs of Romani Community and NGOs Člověk v tísni, o.p.s., Socioklub and ETP Slovensko. Anna graduated from this programme among the first social terrain workers in 2002. In order to prepare the training programme, there was a need to define what such a terrain worker should know and which competencies s/he should have. The main competencies required were to know well the situation in the locality, be skilled in helping clients and in communicating with institutions. The training focused mainly on supplying participants with concrete information about the legal background and on solving the most common issues (e.g. rights of tenants, social help entitlements, dealing with debts and usury, understanding institutions), and partly also on practice in solving case-examples, developing communication skills and fundraising. The leader of the training programme wrote: *"In order for the terrain workers to cope with their demanding work, they don't need to know, when the Battle of White Mountain took place, what the Pythagorean theorem is, neither how to write a low-standard flat"* (Češková 2002:9). The terrain social workers should primarily be able to help their clients and be able

[51] The government programme was launched in 2000, but some NGOs had terrain programmes concerning Roma already since 1998, there were also isolated "Romani advisors" at municipalities whose task was not to do social work but in reality they were often involved in helping people. Štěchová (2002:24) shows that especially those advisors who were Roma themselves, saw the fundamental purpose of their work in everyday practical help to Roma (32.4 per cent); on the other hand, non-Roma were stronger in favouring "work on conceptual solutions". The idea about the extension of social work to the „terrain" was first mentioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in 1993 as a preventive service, and in 1996 „social assistants" were created that should contact mainly problematic youth. Organizations working with drug addicts were among the first to have terrain programmes.

to direct the clients to other institutions if they need some more specialized help. The training was divided into two levels. In the first one, trainees were taught the very basics, and if they were motivated enough they could deepen their knowledge in the second level and get a certificate. The system of terrain social workers was designed as a low-threshold job, a job which allows people without much formal education to enter it.

This concept was quite radical in the context of the Czech social work. It argued that after a specifically targeted preparation, even someone without university or secondary education can become a good terrain social worker: *"The emphasis in his work is put rather on the ability to establish a natural authority among clients and to gain their trust"* (Češková 2002:9). It is interesting that even with this discourse, the creators of this programme did not think this would be an "unprofessional way". The professionalism of terrain social workers rested on the above-described abilities that actually most of the "office" social workers did not have. This was an attempt to create an alternative concept of professionalism, different from the trends in the social work that were at that time promoting higher education as one of the requirements of being professional.

One whole issue of the Czech journal *Social Work* (2003/4) was devoted to social work "with Roma" and to the question of terrain social work. Lada Češková (2003:52-58) defended the existing concept of terrain social work in an interview entitled "*Not even the best training can encompass all the varieties of problems*" in this way: *"Essentially, it is practical knowledge that is necessary for a terrain social worker (TSW), not an encyclopaedic one. [...] I would not like to equate educated TSW with good TSW. [...] There was an effort to enable access to the course even to those TSWs that, for many different reasons, had just basic education, nevertheless with a good guidance they are able to do quality work."* However, she stated that she does not feel to be in conflict with the protagonists of a "high-threshold" job – it would be nice to have educated TSWs, but the situation is alarming: *"It is necessary to solve it immediately and graduates of the university social work programmes don't exactly rush into localities in dozens."* The reasons behind this initial disinterest of graduates in terrain social work (TSW) could be explained by the above-mentioned lower status of "Romani topics" and also by the nature of the work itself, which is exhausting and underpaid. Češková thus defended the courses by the image of necessity and by working with people that were available in the localities and that were actually put to their positions by municipalities and NGOs. The whole situation is

exceptional: *"We are now solving quite a non-standard situation, when there are people in the terrain that teem with enthusiasm, but do not have the factual knowledge of the basics of the discipline."* Thus it is necessary to supply the "basics" and consider a TSW with the elementary education better than no one.

Although she presented her vision as a reaction to the current state of things, her concept was attacked by Pavel Navrátil, a social work teacher from Masaryk University in Brno (2003:59-64). An interview with him is titled: "*The work of TSW has to be professional*." He considers the situation of TSWs without professional education in social work not only "problematic" but even "tragic". To illustrate his argument, he gives a comparison with medical professions: *"If an epidemic of a serious illness breaks out somewhere, it certainly is not a reason for physicians to stop being interested in that and to provide crash to laymen, who should fight the epidemic. It would be naive and useless. However, in the social sphere some people take an analogous practice for granted. I believe this to be a tragic fault [...] The conduct of professional terrain social work is not a volunteer activity. It is a paid activity, that should have standard procedures and of course outcomes (efficiency)"* (2003:61). By using the metaphor of medicine, he constructs social work professionals as the only ones that should deal with "social diseases" and that can do it professionally. There can be "laymen" in the field but not in a position with responsibility to clients. Money should be given to professionals for a professional work, because if clients are not treated professionally, they have lesser chance to be "helped".

Navrátil's concept of a "minimum standard" (2003:60) is quite different from Češková's. It comprises *"philosophy and ethics of social work, introduction to sociological theory, introduction to the psychological theory, theory and methods of social work, practice in terrain, methods and techniques of social research, introduction to law theory and practice, social politics, social pathologies, problems of ethnic and minority groups, health and illness, social services. Besides these main disciplines the TSW should know the basics of social work with children and family, social work in the area of employment, social work with delinquents, social work with old citizens, basics of counselling, social work with the handicapped and possibly others."* Thus the social worker is a universal person capable of working anywhere, and when working "with Roma", a course on the "Romani specificities" should be enough to prepare him/her for this specialization. In this argumentation he gives us an overview of everything his department basically offers. On the understanding that

university applicants should have a school-leaving exam and pass difficult entrance exams, the absolute majority of people working at that time as TSWs would be out of consideration. Češková's prerequisites for entering the course were much lower – reading, writing and arithmeticarithmetics (their knowledge was not checked in advance) and support of the employer, although she considered secondary education desirable in future.

What is also interesting to note is the primacy of theory in Navrátil's argumentation (2003:61): "*Man becomes a professional first through getting the necessary qualification and then practice."* Both of them are necessary, but first there is theory, and then there is practice. The opposite way – becoming professional through having practice and later getting some specialized training that deepens one's knowledge – seems to be excluded from his consideration. A graduate makes also "fewer mistakes" than an "uneducated activist" for whom all the situations are allegedly new. Thus the anomaly of TSW thus should be corrected as soon as possible and the training should be institutionalized. It is paradoxical that at the same time, Navrátil elsewhere (2001:190) wrote on the nature of professionalization: *"Professionalization of certain profession is characterized by several specific processes. It means that the professional group makes an effort to control, typify and standardize the work in the area of its competence."* His description fits well to the description of his and some other social workers' reaction to the TSW courses that could undermine the carefully constructed "desired professional paths" based on university education and that were facilitated by social services reform. University degree became almost a precondition to work in some positions and receive a certain level of salary. Even people working in social services for a long time felt obliged to do some university programme and enrolled in long-distance courses that often were not of high quality or not exactly in social work but in some related disciplines. These older generations commented bitterly on the fact that after their years of practice they can be displaced by a young university graduate without much experience. The debate around TSW thus fits into attempts of some elites that connected the idea of "quality" of a service to the broad outlook of well-trained university graduates.

However, it seems that even graduates of university social work programmes were not well prepared for TSW and that "having a university course on Roma" was not enough for them to do the work well. The graduates with this opinion argued rather for the "specificity" of TSW and appreciated the TSW course: *"At first I was a bit sceptical, I thought that, after*

all, I graduated in social work at the university, so I needn't learn anything new. Very soon I realized that this was a mistake. In fact I did not get enough practical information connected directly to my profession at the faculty. It shows again, how specific work is TSW and how it is demanding to do it well" (Romano Hangos 2004). The authors of the TSW course later succeeded in getting it accredited by the Ministry of Education as a course on the level of a requalification programme. However, being run by NGOs, the programme was dependent on the unstable financing.

The social services reform of 2006 newly divided social workers according to their level of education – the ones with higher[52] education in social work and related disciplines were categorized as "social workers". People from unrelated higher education disciplines had to complete an accredited course longer than 200 hours and to have at least 5 years of practice, and for people who graduated in related secondary education disciplines it meant completing the course plus 10 years of practice. Then a lower category of "workers in social services" was created for people with an unrelated education up to a "higher vocational education" that also have to complete an accredited course. This means that for someone who does not have a related secondary education, it is impossible, with practice of any length, to become a "proper social worker", and the only way to become a social worker is to graduate in a related higher education programme or to complete another, but disciplinarily related secondary school, plus the accredited course, and have 10 years of practice. Of course, people with elementary education who would want to become "social workers" would first have to get a related secondary education. In case of direct "nursing" care for people in institutions or in their homes, "workers in social services" can have elementary education plus a course. "Workers in social services" that would provide some educational services (terrain work included) have to complete at least secondary vocational education. For this category of workers the requirements have been set higher than for "carers", and elementary education would no longer be sufficient for this position (see Article116 of the 108/2006 law). Those who worked in positions of social workers when the law came into effect, and wanted to keep their positions, have to meet the educational requirements within 5 years.[53]

[52] In the Czech Republic, higher or tertiary education is provided by e.g. higher vocational schools, colleges and universities.

[53] Those with the relevant secondary school have to meet the educational requirements within 10 years, and people over 55 years of age are exempt.

Among specific competencies that a social worker has in comparison with a "worker in social services" there is a basic social counselling, helping to lessen security-related, health-related and other risks, monitoring, coordination and evaluation of services, cooperation with other individuals, organizations and experts in order to benefit users of services and development of social services and social work as a discipline, monitoring legislation, managing workers in social services methodically, cooperating in creation of social policies, coordinating resources, initiating changes on behalf of target groups and participating in community planning (for detailed explanation see e.g. Janoušková – Nedělníková, eds. 2008:14-22).

In terrain social work this division materialized in employing two terms – "social terrain worker" was kept as a designation for higher educated workers, and for less educated workers there is just a term "terrain worker". Terrain worker works with clients on commissions, but he/she does not have evaluation, coordination or policy formulation competencies – so he or she actually has to be coordinated by an educated social terrain worker. Demands on his or her "professionalism" and "quality" are not smaller, as TW works directly with people who, according to the *Ethical Code of the Society of Social Workers of the Czech Republic* (Společnost sociálních pracovníků ČR 2006), have the right to be respected and maximally supported. The lower education level thus should not be a reason for providing lower quality work. According to the older version of the Ethical Code (valid since 1995) the social worker even *"prevents a non-qualified worker without the appropriate education from doing professional social work*", while the newer version valid since 2006 includes a softer formulation "*sees to it that professional social work is done by a qualified worker with the appropriate education*". The TW is thus a kind of "lower level" but nevertheless a "professional" that should work according to certain standards and codes.

5.3 Terrain social work as a "standard service"

In 2007, the social work department of Ostrava University won a state grant for a project to create accredited training and education materials for the two above-mentioned groups of workers and produced several voluminous materials – e.g. a material designed for terrain workers has 551 pages (Janoušková – Nedělníková, eds. 2008). Some of the Czech social work departments now started to use these materials designed formerly for trainings in their

own university courses. The institutionalization thus proceeds, materials get standardized, and becoming a "social worker" with all the responsibilities is ever more connected to universities. Lower-educated workers can stay in their professions, but now they are designated as terrain workers, they cannot do certain things and have to be coordinated by terrain social workers. The original idea of a very low threshold for becoming a TSW was not kept by the majority of social work public and the "minimal requirements" rose even in the case of TWs. Similar development has been described in other social work systems – e.g. in the British social work system, a professionalization at lower levels of the profession occurred and untrained women who provided care for many years now receive minimum training on the level of the National Vocational Qualification. However, this blocked their getting into higher social work positions: *"Although performing duties previously done by social workers, NVQ holders are not guaranteed access to jobs requiring higher qualifications. So, they become locked into a fragmented, low-status, low-paid gendered ghetto."* (Dominelli 2004:60). Dominelli's remarks should be taken into consideration as the work "in terrain" is now also becoming more and more feminized – a research concerning participants of the pilot courses of the Ostrava University (Janoušková – Kvasnička 2008) showed 73 per cent of women participants (although the first courses of Drom had a prevalence of male participants), only 5 per cent of participants had university education (thus having a possibility to acquire the "terrain social worker status" more quickly), and almost no one had graduated from a disciplinarily-related secondary school.

Dominelli has also described British "deprofessionalization" of social work at the higher end, where three years' programmes prepare technocrats with low ability to reflect on what they are doing and who are unable to effectively challenge key professionals they encounter, e.g. lawyers, psychologists or doctors. This is partly the case in the Czech Republic, where the Bologna Process and the establishment of new higher schools led to the creation of new programmes and division of MA programmes into two levels – so now most of the programmes offer BA-levels or higher vocational training. At the same time, four universities started to offer PhD programmes as social work aspires to be not only a profession but an "academic discipline". After 1989 it has again[54] become a university programme that became connected mostly to the "social science" disciplines – as can be seen from the "minimal requirements" idea of Navrátil that comprises also the basics of sociology

[54] During socialism social work was taught only in secondary education.

and research methods. According to the head of the department where the above-mentioned TSW publications and courses were produced, such development *"had a positive influence on the development of social work as an independent scientific discipline that respects the logic of scientific study in the social sciences"* (Chytil 2006:339). Different levels of „professionals" thus have been created – ones that consider and model the field of social work according to "scientific standards" trying to rise its prestige and standardize it, BAs (and related higher vocational training graduates) that now belong to one of the most frequent practitioners that have open access to most of social work positions – and later sometimes even continue in MA programmes – and "the rest" with different combinations of courses and trainings that are kept at lower-status positions.

What also raises some concern is the fact that the trend of working individually "on commissions" can direct social workers' attention away from challenging the structural bases of their clients' "inabilities". What suggests this is the rise in number of simple "providers of social terrain work", organizations that do not have other programmes challenging the inequality structures or that are not particularly interested in doing so. The TSW is no longer the radical concept that tried to change social work practices in connection to other programmes targeting mechanisms of social exclusion; it has become a "standard" social service that is now provided by increasing numbers of NGOs. There was even some scepticism about its "effectiveness" and the small emphasis on the "change" described in the evaluation report of Navreme (that calls itself the "*dynamic and innovative consulting company"*) and that was submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs:

> *The Social Services Act understands field work as a standardized service, the level of which is guaranteed upon a provider's registration, for a defined target group. As any other service provided pursuant to this Act, field work is also perceived statically as an activity fulfilling the defined standards. The Act does not create any tools for the monitoring of the quality/price ratio, it does not enable any dynamics. Even in the environment of the evaluated organisations, it is perceived as something that is kind of contradicting the meaning of work with this target group, i.e. the change to be achieved, the whole orientation of the life practice of members of the target group.* [...] *Thus, the concept of field work as an activity, intervention that should change the existing state has been completely fading. Hence, the Act only reinforced in their opinions those who assume that the given community will need field work forever and*

its objective is not and cannot be to head towards a problem solution. Any real discussion about efficiency is therefore oriented towards a discussion on standards, i.e. for example the quantity of time necessary for the given type of field work with a client so as it would be possible to compare the "performance efficiency" and procedures applied by various providers. The result is naturally entirely formal and irrelevant for the efficiency and impact evaluation" (Navreme Boheme 2008:16-17).

The fact that Navreme warns that no one presses for looking at the real impact of social work is worrying, and also the fact that NGOs will face problems in finding grant finances for a service that is considered "continuous". However, equally worrying is the way the evaluation is crafted – to show the real efficiency there just have to be better management and monitoring devices, and what should be monitored is primarily the change in "*the whole orientation of the life practice of members of the target group*"; so social work is seen there as a device that should re-orientate people towards better life strategies again without challenging the structural inequalities. The report only marginally mentions the fact that TSW could serve as a service that at least for some people makes it possible to access state and municipality services that were previously inaccessible to them, and threaten to stay inaccessible until the change is made in the whole social services system and in policies of municipalities. The evaluation ends with warnings that clients are becoming dependent and demand these services as their right.

When we look at what kind of TSW is promoted in the newly produced educational materials (Janoušková – Nedělníková, eds. 2008:486-490), we can find demand/supply/service rhetoric and also a typology mentioning four types of social workers – "engaged workers" that treat their clients as friends and perceive their own role primarily as men, not as workers, which is allegedly a dangerous position because a "relationship" can develop and both the worker and the client can misuse that, or the worker is endangered by burn-out. Then there is a "radical worker" who also "puts his/her own values" into the work, but who primarily wants to change laws and social policies and practices that he/she considers unjust. This posture is commented as a "*question of political ideology and work in the name of social change*" (2008:487) rather than a primary interest to care for a client. Then there is a "bureaucratic worker" who wants to manipulate with people in order to change them, and finally a "professional worker", that is an autonomous and educated professional working according to a code of ethics, who considers a client an active

collaborator and wants to strengthen his/her rights. The services are open to the influence of clients, clients are given some power by the worker but nevertheless this power is under the worker's control… Although the authors state that the attitudes mingle, they leave the typology without any commentary and one cannot leave unnoticed that the professional worker comes out the most positively here; as the engaged worker endangers everyone by his/her relationships, her/himself included, the radical one does not care for his client and has some "hidden ideology" – both of them put too much of their values into their work. The bureaucrat, on the other hand, is a cold manipulator. Finally the professional has everything under control (even the dosage of client's power!), and, supported by ethical codes that do not allow too much of his/her own values to enter into the social work, creates safe working relationship that empowers the client. Being engaged, radical, or bureaucratic seems far from being professional. This distinction again seems to craft a certain vision of the professional who is primarily "individual-oriented" and well-trained.

The Czech social work practitioners have not publicly reflected on the nature of these changes very much; privately, of course, there was much complaining about the increase in administrative tasks. Some reflection is starting to come from social work "academic" levels that for example reflect on the tension between help and control, on the fact that in reality it is not possible to "forget" about one's own values during the work and thus the worker is faced with many dilemmas, and that the reflection of one's own values is a necessary part of the work. The "managerialism" of the current reforms was also sporadically criticized as a method that leads to a retreat from solidarity, from dialogue, and to a construction of a "business" distance, that relieves the social worker from a suspicion of manipulating with the client (Kappl 2008:59). However, this academic reflection does not influence practice or decision-making of the state bodies. It seems that from the initial efforts to seek more individualized help in the 1990s, now (and especially after the right-wing parties formed a coalition after 2010 elections) there are pressures again to make social work rather a controlling device, and to limit the support of the "unworthy" clients.

In this context academics Milan Šveřepa (2008:242) and Oldřich Chytil (2009:8) remind that there are vast areas of social work where the controlling attitude still survived almost unchanged and nowadays strengthens again. Social workers at municipalities and other public institutions (including welfare offices, labour offices, children's homes and children's care, health care, work with refugees, probation and mediation service, etc.) were not much

touched even by the "client-oriented" changes in "social services", as they stayed "out of the market competition". Each of these many services is directed by a different ministry, they are not well coordinated, they do not have any qualification and performance requirements, or are regulated only very formally. The client orientation with all its positives and negatives stays mostly a domain of NGOs and "privatized social service institutions". In contrast to "social services", these institutions do not have supervisory mechanisms in place similar to "*inspections of quality"* described for social services by Chytil (2009:8). These inspections "*are based on quality standards determined for the individual social services by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. If a provider does not comply with these standards, the license allowing provision of services is revoked."* It thus happens that next to the much regulated social work spheres, like TSW, there are areas where the regulation is lacking and where other institutions or clients do not have much power to complain.

In their practice, social terrain workers have to deal with representatives of these less-regulated institutions, who are actually their "professional colleagues", but often with different constructions of what social work is and what it should achieve, plus with an incredible overload of tasks and clients that diminishes their attention and competence to deal with individual cases. Thus the newly established terrain social work still has only a limited power to influence these public institutions. TSWs often work on "commissions" connected to housing, social allowances, labour offices, etc., and can be perceived as those who complicate the work of municipality social workers. Their position is even more precarious if they are employed by municipalities themselves. In her old job, Anna was often in difficult position towards the local social department when defending clients' right to get allowances while the local workers were often reluctant to grant them. Research with terrain workers from Ostrava (Červeňáková 2006:39-41) revealed that in case of a conflict between the client's and institution's interests, the TSWs prefer to delegate the case to NGOs or are limited in their work by the fear of being fired, which has happened in several cases. The work is then very time-consuming and seemingly "ineffective": *"When I am paid by my employer and I want to resolve some case, where I have to be in opposition, I cannot proceed in the same way that I would, if I would not be an employee of the municipality. I have to zigzag and walk around many things. And when my superior says: 'Not in this way', I return to the solution of the case in an alternative way or even at some other time."* Another terrain social worker from an NGO (Kročil 2002:12) described that there are often unrealistic demands both from clients and from institutions that a TSW has to balance – s/he

is not able to "give a flat" to a client and s/he cannot fulfil the order of an institution to ensure that some family pays all its debts in half a year. Some municipalities had an idea that a single worker can "solve problems" whose roots are dozens of years old. The changes are thus very "small and slow". However, the now popular "evaluation of impacts" of social work does not take these "external" influences into account very much. The TSW thus can help some individual clients but structurally, this service, if it is not part of a larger complex of services and pressures to change institutional practices, remains rather "weak".

5.4 "Romani" in social work

When discussing the professionalization of social services we cannot miss that the TSW service was imagined as being "ethnic" by different actors and from different positions. For members of a municipality and for some social work academics (like Navrátil) it meant simply "working with Roma"; with Amaro members it was often the same – but for each of them it had just different connotations. Municipalities often desired that "the Roma" were brought to the norm, or were happy that finally someone started to work with "them", some NGOs saw it as an emancipation work and legitimation device of their own organization, and social work academics strived to offer lectures explaining "what are the values of Roma" in order to work with them successfully. All of these have constructed Roma as a "category of intervention" that is somehow special and have to be dealt with separately. Krista Hegburg using Foucault's definition of racism noted that especially Roma can be labelled as the population which is "*inverse of the optimization of life"* (2005:125) in contrast to the majority of "*proper citizens*". Due to the continuous trend of culturalization (and hidden racialization) of the "Romani problematic" as if the fault lied with the "Romani culture," it is not surprising that Romani social workers who looked more "integrated" were considered particularly apt for these positions because they could set a positive example to "non-integrated" Roma and bring them to the "norm".

In the initial phases of many programmes targeting Roma through social work or through counselling, the majority of people who started to work in these positions identified as Roma and was valued for their "access" to the communities. This is the case for one of the first social services of "Romani assistants" at municipalities, and many Roma also entered the ranks of "Romani advisors" at the regional, district (these were later dissolved together with

the districts) and municipal levels. However, a more mixed picture can be found in this higher-standing advisor job (Štěchová, ed. 2002: 6-7): Romani women were the most numerous (33.8 %), then Romani men (25.4 %), then non-Romani women (23.9 %), and finally non-Romani men (16.9 %). Evidently, this position still was not very prestigious and well-paid for non-Romani men. As for age of advisors, in general, Roma were older and less formally educated (7.1 % with elementary education, 19 % with vocational training, 69 % with secondary education and 4.9 % with higher education compared to non-Romani 0 % elementary, 3.3 % vocational, 36.7 % secondary and 60 % higher education). It seems that these positions attracted Romani elite with predominantly secondary education, which met in these positions with younger non-Roma with high education.

When programmes of terrain social work started there were many Roma who entered the job. The NGO coalition that prepared the first courses estimated that there were around 100 TSWs in the Czech Republic working in municipalities or NGOs (Češková 2002:9); those who participated in the courses were in 70 % men and in 30 % women, and 80 % of all the participants identified themselves as Roma. In the following years women started to dominate TSW and the gender ratio changed completely. Altogether, only 15 % of participants had secondary or high education (the division into Romani and non-Romani education levels is missing) and some of them did not have a completed elementary education. This shows that TSWs were mainly Roma (later on mainly Romani women) with elementary education, so the "terrain work" position was much more widely accessible than becoming an "advisor", and many of the workers were recruited directly from the localities they lived in. Another reason for this structure of employees seemed to be low wages and the tiring character of this position in which TSWs work with people in very difficult conditions and try to mediate their contact with the often racist institutions. Even some "clients' families" were interested in the position but they were refused as e.g. someone from an indebted family cannot be a trusted partner for a municipality. Similar structure of employment could be found at the position of "Romani educational assistants" (later renamed to "assistants of the pedagogue") at schools, held, however, predominantly by women who were often recruited as mothers of children at schools to which they sent their children.

The organizers of the first courses were actually faced with the necessity to develop training for this particular group of workers. Češková (2002:9) said: *"Theoretically the TSWs have a*

possibility to start studying at some social work-related school, however, among student's obligations is mastering of subjects that are related to social work only indirectly (as maths, philosophy, foreign language, history, biology). This requirement is without dispute legitimate when people want to get a vocational certificate or a school leaving exam certificate, but it presents an insurmountable barrier to many TSWs." A Romani representative of the Council of Affairs of Romani Community (Beňák 2002:7-8) also asserted that other factors than formal education should be taken into account during the selection procedure and that the Council would support even the non-Romani TSWs, but that being "a Rom" proved to be an advantage. The Romani TSWs were considered as having an advantage because they know the rules and communication codes in localities (not only speaking the Romani language but being skilled in talking to clients in a simple way) and at the same time are able to "translate" them to the language of institutions and vice versa – such an encounter was described by Hegburg (2005:133): *"The social worker often speaks to the bureaucrat on behalf of the client, and the bureaucrat responds to the social worker, who in turn repeats all the bureaucrat's questions to the client, who responds to the social worker and then has her response repeated again to the bureaucrat. I often marvelled that, as a foreigner, I seemed to understand the bureaucrat and the client better than they seem to understand each other, even though they both spoke Czech*." The TSWs were expected to master the skill of translating between different codes of the Czech language, and again "integrated Roma" were expected to have more sensitivity to this translation. Also they were celebrated as those who can divert a frequent stereotype (e.g. of municipality workers and general public) that Roma do not work or cannot be professionals. Sometimes, the fact that someone from the family worked, motivated other family members to apply for the same job. TSWs were thus described from different sides as "positive integration examples of Roma", which is a hard-to-escape position if one's job skills are somehow constructed and imagined to have something in common with Romaniness.

The acceptance of these workers in the municipalities – if they did not come through clientage networks and/or were not quickly pacified to serve the agenda of the institution but tried to negotiate some room for their own work and to defend their clients – was not easy. TSWs describe reactions ranging from unsupportive approach of their colleagues to sometimes continued ostracization and hidden mistrust, or to an acceptance of the worker by the nearest collaborators accompanied by the permanent need to negotiate one's position at other departments of the municipality, and actually to show that the worker is able to speak

the "language of the institution". The administrative vocabulary that the TSWs had to learn during their training thus served as a trust-building device. Hegburg's respondents called their skills "talking nicely" (meaning also using a very careful and emotionally flattened language that does not offend administrators) and Červeňáková (2006:44) who also did a small research in Ostrava noted this reflection: *"I am mapped first. I am a mapping object for them. They let me speak for some time before they understand why I am there at all. Only when they find out I speak 'the same language' as they are, they start to deal with me. They had to get used to us, the Romani social workers. The beginnings were awful. When I represented a client, they asked: 'And who are you?' They could not understand that I am acting on behalf of him, in spite of him standing next to me."*

When Romani social workers were asked to reflect on their positions as Roma and social workers, they sometimes considered being Roma an advantage because Romani clients trusted them more than their non-Romani colleagues, but a disadvantage in terms of the difficulty of their intermediary position: *"A few times I was verbally assaulted by clients that thought I am totally on the side of the office or that I am not behaving as a Rom. They wanted me to defend their 'rights' at all costs. Of course, I had to abide by the laws as any other officer"* (Červeňáková 2006:37). Some workers described that as a position of a diplomat seeking some position between their municipality colleagues and clients, trying to build and keep the trust of both. Thus the Romani TSWs were subjects of essentializing judgments and observation from "both sides", and their translating was not only considered a translation between just the two codes of the Czech language determined by the social status of the speaker and his or her socialization, but also a translation between Romani and non-Romani "ways". In Amaro this concept was present both in Anna's (as her personal legitimation was based on "knowing ways of the two different families") and Lucie's approaches. This is how Lucie described anti-drug sessions moderated by Anna: *"Anna had an effect by bringing these people together, and she was there as a kind of translator, broker, simply when she saw that they don't understand."*

Another side of this translation is illustrated in Šmídová's research (2001:118-119) – she shows that by considering that the translation takes place between Romani and non-Romani ways, the Romani translation can sometimes actually look quite offensive and manipulative, but it is not taken as such when it is said by "a Rom". An assistant illustrates to the researcher how he "translates": *"'This your child has to be better than you are, you are an*

ignorant. Do you [family form of "you" instead of the standard one] *have a work? You don't. I frankly tell you, you are a burden for this society.' But when a white man would tell that to him, he would be immediately offended."* The worker was not expected to talk as an institution; quite opposite, he had to explain things "in a Romani way". When settling conflicts the assistants pedagogically pacified their clients at a social department of a municipality: "*Be so kind and say sorry to this lady because, as you* [family form of you] *know, she was right, only she tried to explain that to you and you did not understand that... Otherwise I cannot help you."* What the translation "to the Romani way" means can thus have very different interpretations: from speaking just simply to being able to speak more "rudely" or paternalistically – the Romani label is so flexible that we can find many manifestations of how it is performed and how it enhances the power of the translator or his institution.

Hegburg (2005:132) suggests that anthropologists should turn their gaze to people who use their Romaniness as the basis of their engagement and who actually perform some hermeneutics of Romani culture in their daily work and use it as their technology of intervention. She considers a TSW programme professionalizing its participants on the basis of their status as Roma and being Roma *"the very technology that legitimates the role of the Roma social worker,"* (2005:133) although to define being Roma as a job skill is difficult. She notes that due to workers' intermediary position and constant breaking and recreating of the Romani difference at different levels, and "producing Roma" in their work*, "most aware of bio-power's uses and abuses were the Roma social workers whose daily work it is to reconfigure the social terrain of bio-politics."* These social workers actually became "the technologies" of this bio-power which reveals to them its racializing character.

Although Hegburg's explanation looks attractive and the Romani TSWs are certainly very sensitive to different manifestations of racism, to officers' reactions towards them and their clients, we can meet TSWs who, on the other hand, embrace the possibilities that the bio-power gives to them without much ethical reflection, and others who try to escape it through entering other power modes based e.g. on "professionalism through education". Also the professionalization of Roma on the basis of being Roma is an interpretation that is found only with some actors in the field. The extent of connecting TSW and Romaniness could be rather "graded": from the perception of the TSW position as a job "for Roma", to a job where being a Rom can have some advantages (in addition to "translation", e.g. having

"easier entry" and winning clients' trust more quickly) but also some disadvantages[55], to stressing sensitivity of Romani workers, and to preferring mainly professionalism regardless of the allegiance of the worker.

The perceptions of Romaniness in social work seem to be influenced by the discursive definition of the "target group" (Roma, or socially excluded, etc.) and also by the speakers' own experiences in seeing different people performing this work. The already cited representative of the government Council, David Beňák (2002), stressed the Romaniness a bit more than the other partners in the initial NGO coalition that prepared the courses. A Romani director of *Drom, the Romani Centre* Miroslav Zima considers important that Roma participate in social work, and to maintain a low threshold entry point but in terms of the result of social work: *"It cannot be said if the result is better, or if it would be done better by a non-Roma. In my opinion, it is very good when there is a combination of both in this work. The Romani community is very diverse. Some Roma come here and say that they don't need any Romani centre. On the other hand, there was a group who said: 'Why don't only Roma work here?'"* (Zima 2003:15). Štěpán Moravec from a non-Romani organization *People in Need* remarked: *"There was a Romani professional in the team, who coped with the situation* [of having relatives in the locality] *very well and, on the other hand, a Romani amateur, whose belonging to one of the families in the locality lead to the fact that he was not available for clients from other families, or they were not interested in his services"* (Moravec 2003:32). Moravec stressed the amateur-professional lineage much more than the lineage of ethnicity, and also mentioned that auto-stereotypes of some of his Romani colleagues did not exactly work, so in any case really good knowledge of the locality was necessary for all.

When clients were asked about their preferences for a non/Romani worker (Balážová 2006), the most important criterion seemed to be whether the social worker is able to help them effectively. A possibility to speak *Romanes* and the fact that the worker knew their family was important to some clients. There was also an interesting response given by women from the poorest families: "*Are you following social worker's advice?" – "If we feel, he means well by us, maybe yes, he has schools to be able to advise us, yes, possibly yes"* (Balážová

[55] These were rather confused with disadvantages of coming from the same locality in which a TSW works – e.g. having a family there can complicate the situation due to a more difficult access to other families or due to the fact that the worker's own family uses his/her services excessively.

2006:41) and "*Did the social worker teach you anything? – "What a social worker should teach us? He has schools to help us, we are not educated"* (Balážová 2006:47). Both responses concern the perception of a social worker as someone educated who "has schools" and thus power to help – expecting a certain level of "educated professionalism". The clients also do not often see themselves as being part of any self-transforming process (that is so much stressed by the new standards) as "the help" should come from someone who is professionally prepared for that. On the other hand, in some of my encounters with clients this image of education was not present – clients were pleased that "anyone" is helping them, because no other social worker cares about them and if they want to be cared for, *"they would have to pay him/her."*

With the already described professionalizing and standardizing processes in the social work sector, the vision of being Roma as a job skill became more difficult to hold.

5.5 Rising the threshold

The times of the organizational openness did not last very long, and already in 2002, job advertisements for social terrain workers often did not match the educational background of people coming directly from the socially excluded localities. Such advertisements demanded at least secondary education, knowledge of administrative work, ability to work with a PC or even knowledge of a foreign language. I did not see advertisements asking for "the knowledge of Romani", which could be a sign that the advertiser expects "a Rom" in the position. Organizations themselves wanted to choose rather from among the best educated as one advertisement I noticed in 2005 (before the standardization) shows: *"We welcome high education or higher vocational education preferably in the area of social work, law or a related field, previous experience with direct work with clients and organizing of a network. ... We offer: work in a professional team for a worthy salary, continuous supervision and specific education in TSW with the socially excluded and sociotherapy, share in developing of a unique social service. Structured CV, and possible questions or requests for more detailed information should be sent to the e-mail address..."* The process of choosing a TSW was meticulously described on the web pages of the same organization: *"Professionals are chosen to the position of TSW based on the best preconditions of theoretical and practical education, training and previous work experience in social work and on the tested capability*

to resolve problems of clients. The first three criteria are tested in the application procedure based on the CV and an interview about the CV, and the last (and the most important) qualification based on the oral solution of a model case."

Such advertisements are published mainly on websites of the NGO sector, but definitely more often on the Internet than at labour offices of municipalities. Češková was dissatisfied with the development as she considered the high threshold to be useful mainly for standard social work which the TSW concept should have surpassed and complement (Češková 2002:10, 2003:54). The TSWs should get the maximum support to pass from the state of a "*dedicated volunteer or amateur without the knowledge of the basics of the relevant disciplines and contacts to a trained professional willing to invest in further education*". She promoted also the work in "ethnically mixed" teams where TSWs can help each other in their duties, divide the work, or let clients choose with whom they want to interact. Some level of flexible improvisation was acceptable to her (which was a standard in Amaro). In general, she did not prefer any group identity in advance, but stressed that the worker has to be socially skilled and sensitive. TSWs should also become "professionals" after some time, but their starting level does not have to be so high, they do not have to be "professionals" when they are entering the job as the TSW is "learnable".

The organizations were not often sufficiently prepared for the fact that some workers will need to go through the above-mentioned learning process, or would require an extensive help with paperwork. The question of a "complicated" administration of the terrain social workers was discussed e.g. by a municipality employee (Panagopulu Nesétová 2002:11, 2003:35): *„The book of attendance, daily records, final report, punctuality, reports from the work-related journeys, written preparation of bigger events, accounting and submitting of tax documents, all that can be designated as a 'point of conflict' between the TSW and his/her superior*." She noted that it was usually for the first time that TSWs met with these administrative duties, and that these were often considered totally pointless, unpopular and not solving anything, so the TSWs inclined to ignore them. She stressed the need to explain to the TSWs what these instruments are good for, and that administration is part of their work, is remunerated, and that the honestly and regularly documented work in a terrain book is the proof of TSWs work and essential for strengthening the position of TSWs. She thus presented the need to socialize the worker into the office work and even used a "help and control" rhetoric. It seems that for institutions that were already much bureaucratised,

employing these workers could present some challenge for which they often did not have the necessary capacities.

With the institutionalization of standards of social services, NGO competition for effectiveness and administratively burdened municipalities, the number of requirements for these positions increased and more and more non-Roma became interested in them. The standardization of the service assured some professional supervision, further training in counselling methods looked appealing, and some NGOs have been trying to pay their employees more decent wages for their work. The social workers started to be expected to do more difficult tasks and actually support some other organizational projects that were planned in localities, e.g. in connection with community planning or organizational networking. Non-Romani workers usually came at the start of their careers and perceived this work as useful to learn something and get closer to people, but not necessarily as a lifetime job, because there is, among others, a high risk of burn-out and the changes in clients' situation are not often very much visible. A young man with an MA: "*There are not many opportunities for advancement in the structure of TSW. They have offered me a post of a coordinator, but I like this, it still fulfils me and I have strength for that."* With the small remuneration for the TSW it actually was not attractive for them to stay very long if the NGO did not have additional resources from other grants to add to their pay, because in 2006 the Ministry of Labour set the upper limit of the TSW pay to 11 500 CZK per month which at that time meant 400 euro. This amount was acceptable mainly for single young people sharing an apartment or living with parents, but direct work with clients in the NGO sector required a rather enthusiastic individual because university MA graduates could find positions with two times higher pay. Since then the amount of possible pay has risen, but TSWs are still generally low paid as organizations do not have money and prefer to have most people in terrain.

The whole process resulted in disillusionment mainly of Romani NGOs whose workforce sometimes did not have the necessary level of education even for a terrain worker (secondary vocational) and considered the new measures discriminating. One Amaro TSW coordinator mentioned that in her previous job in another Romani NGO, there were two workers with elementary education and fifteen years of practice and they were excellent, so it seems absurd to her that they should not do the work. Anna also thought that, first and foremost, the TSW has to be able to talk well, know how to deal with institutions and have a good

grasp of some laws. A TSW course prepares him/her well for this. Many of the organizations had already problems with accessing the complex bureaucracy of EU financing, so they did not have projects lasting several years (they applied usually for municipality and regional schemes). Now they should get to know the social service law, have their services standardized and registered in order to provide them.[56] Some organizations also stopped functioning. The former Romani head of an NGO: *"We were not able to carry on. Constantly we wrote applications for grants but mostly without success. One of our applications was written by another organization – frankly, without their help we would not get it. But look at the schemes – there was one for Romani entrepreneurial activities, and from one-hundred applications only seven were successful. So who they are doing these grant schemes for?"* The organizations were frustrated that the process is so complicated not only in the social services, but also in the grant calls that are perceived to be "for Roma".

"Social services" became the domain of non-Romani organizations which, thanks to their longer-term projects, also had more stable financing and more experienced management. One of the few accessible fields left are children leisure activities. What happened was that in some positions and mainly in non-Romani organizations, Roma were gradually displaced by more educated non-Roma. In one case I know of, the problem also was that the Romani social worker could not stop using the family ("ty" in Czech) version of "you" instead of the standard version ("Vy") used by all other Romani and non-Romani social workers, or raising voice at the clients and behaving manipulatively towards them. The standardization thus requires that all the workers talk and behave according to the way considered "appropriate".[57] The rise in the administration was another fact that contributed to the changes. Coordinator of TSWs: *"Romani social workers usually did not last too long. Some did not cope with the discipline of the TSW, others did not manage the rise in quality:*

[56] According to my estimates from the registry of "terrain programmes" at the Ministry of Labour (http://iregistr.mpsv.cz) that lists 204 subjects in 2010, there were now around 20 Romani NGO providers. In 2007 around 11 Romani organizations were registered. Of all the providers 126 claim to provide TSW to "people living in socially excluded localities", and 87 to "ethnic minorities" – sometimes to both categories at the same time. Sometimes these categories overlap with "children threatened by socially undesirable phenomena", etc. To map the situation in other social services like "low threshold clubs for children and youth" or "social activation of families and children" further research would be needed.

[57] However, the issue of using family language and shouting could be an interesting question for linguistic anthropology as such communication codes are quite common in local Romani populations; nevertheless, their use in the "institutional" setting is perceived as conflicting.

computers, reports, programmes. Those who stayed are the ones who are here the longest time. They are exceptional personalities. They were willing to educate themselves – seven years of education is not manageable for everyone when they have families, etc." The bitterness of some people was hardened by the fact that some people perceive TSW as a "job for Roma" and that some organizations stressed social aspects of their clients' situation instead of the "ethnic" ones. The terrain social work was perceived as losing the "*Romani little heart"* ("*romský srdíčko")* as the workers put it, something that was warm and "ours".

The pressure for quality (from standards, competition, donors etc.) was so intense that organizations that had some capacities were concerned with doing the work "professionally" and often the reforms were embraced as something that can push the organization forward and make its services better. Old "amateur" times were remembered with some nostalgia but they also epitomised the "horror" of unprofessionalism – how chaotic, unregulated and improvised the things were and in fact, due to this situation, the organizations provided a "bad service" that today they would be ashamed of: "*Before, everything we did was good. There was nobody who would do it, so we couldn't learn anywhere. But there are more exigencies today and everything is not perceived as excellent. The requirements rose.*" Leaders of institutions reflected on the institutional process for example in following ways*: "We have raised quality […], before, there were two people working here, one of them was an amateur. The amateur left and we have taken in, because there was a demand for it, two professionals."* or: "*Of course, the programme changed in a qualitative way, firstly due to the gradual modification of the team, […] amateurs left and professionals were employed, secondly due to a continuous supervision, and thirdly due to continuous education, which has been running with some breaks all the time, five days a month. Last year and the year before it concentrated on teamwork, work with the client, structured work with the client, and this is actually the biggest change in the quality of the service, because before the service essentially had a reactive character*." The amateurs were no longer transformed to professionals (only the most hardworking stayed), but were rather replaced by them. The amateurs were just "re-acting" to clients' needs, but professionals are able to be more "active", and also "activate" the clients because they knew the necessary techniques. Thus the professional skill is not only to fulfil clients' wishes, but to direct and support the clients.

What happened, together with making the access to job more difficult for less qualified people, was that the word "Roma" gradually started to disappear from names of some

NGOs' projects. If we look at a concrete example from one NGO, the names of its terrain programmes chronologically mutated from *Romani projects* which started to comprise also "*terrain social assistance*", to *Terrain social work in socially excluded localities*, to *Terrain programmes* (that, apart from terrain social work, included also social counselling), and finally to *Programmes of social integration* (that include many diverse activities from educational support to targeting local institutions). When I asked about these changes, the most frequent explanation was that the organization does not want Roma to be associated with social failure, and so they consider their work to be rather a social service for the defined target population than a "Romani project", because any definition of a Rom also proved so difficult and controversial that it obscured solving the situation of people. A TSW coordinator: "*It seems to me far off to stress Roma in that. We don't want to do that, there are good many Roma who do not have <u>any</u> problem.*" The TSWs should be able to react adequately to different situations of their clients, the discrimination on the basis of being considered "a Rom" included, together with the interaction of multiple other discriminations.

Considering Romani labels racializing, unnecessary and turning away from them was not what networks using Romaniness as a resource or wanting to do advocacy for Roma wanted to see. According to them, the disappearance of the labels concealed that these people were mainly Roma, and thus meant the disappearance of focus. Many people talked about "de-ethnicization" of social work which ranged from considering it a complot of non-Roma to take over the terrain social work, to the necessary step in de-racializing the discourse around it. The former leader of the Council office, Roman Krištof (Sdružení Dženo 2005), who was strongly in favour of letting "ethnicity" go, argued: *"Confusing it [*the TSW programme*] with the employment policy continues till today and is counterproductive. Therefore I think that it is important to stress professionalism – if we want to help someone, we should know how to do it – regardless of ethnicity. […] This is not the Czech or the Romani problem […] this is a problem of that town or all the society."* Thus de-labelling should bring a wider acceptance of responsibility for the situation by municipalities and the "general society". However, this process caused that the only official coalition of NGOs proposing educational policy reforms partly split because of disagreement on the level of ethnicization – two large and strong "non-Romani" NGOs left the coalition.

The critique of Romani NGOs surprisingly did not target the social work departments that were pushing for social work reforms. Critiques similar to the one written by Jana Balážová

(2006:28), who worked as a Romani TSW herself and later completed a BA thesis on the topic, were rare*: "Specialized and elitist know-how concentrates in the hands of the majority, whose human capital has a permanent lead and advantage, and advances constantly in time. Currently, the real possibility of obtaining the required formal educational level is very unlikely for a Romani applicant, due to his level of educational, social and cultural capital."* Nevertheless she thought the situation would improve, that crash-courses could not displace the minimum standard, and that *"the unqualified and non-standard conduct of terrain social work really devaluates its value and effects in practice and endangers its overall image.*" There was not an attack on "the system", but rather at the biggest competitor – a non-Romani organization (with at least 40 per cent Romani TSWs in 2005 and two thirds in 2003) that had some lobbying power and, in one period, was the most vocal in criticizing inefficiencies of Romani representation. This organization cooperated for some time with academics that argued for *"abandoning the misleading category of 'Romani' ('Pro-Romani') organizations and supporting projects based on their quality […] and not on the 'ethnicity' of organizations"* (Hirt – Jakoubek 2004:23) and supported the idea of quality and professionalism as the only category on the basis of which the funders should decide. This looked dangerous to many Romani representatives and networks.

Some "professionals" certainly did not have much sympathy for those Romani representatives, organizations and networks that they considered "ineffective". At times the tensions replicated also at local levels of the inter-organizational competition: *"I don't want to be prejudiced but we don't know of any Romani organization that would be effective here, we are not in contact. Money is disappearing there and they have the feeling that we are taking their 'Romani money'. But that money is for social work. One organization here copied a methodology from our website and put it into their project. They got x millions from the municipality and did nothing – and that was just because they had a Romani acquaintance in the council. Paradoxically, the Romani advisor is the only one who does not want to cooperate with us, he agitated against us. We are trespassing on his patch. He even boasted with our successes."* This conflict revealed an important issue of claims over the "ethnicity of money". Professionals felt that a regard to "ethnicity" is partly understandable when a Romani organization wants to organize a Romani festival, but in terms of any organization doing social work they wanted the "same standards for all". For people with such an experience with local "networks of Romaniness", the "ethnic" claims presented

rather a cover up for spending the money (sometimes even for private purposes) without changing people's situation.

The critique of "ineffectiveness" of representations started coming also from the Romani representatives, who saw that appointing some people to the positions based just on their "Romaniness" blocks the necessary changes or even the possibility to influence some municipality or state decisions, at the time when this influence is really needed. The old-new member of the government Council Jiřina Bradová (2010:54,18) wrote about the fourteen Romani representatives in the Council that they are nominated to the Council based on "putting in a good word for someone": *"They should have worked actively on improving the status of the Romani minority. Regrettably, I can write from my own experience (I was a member of the Council in 2006-2008), that the staffing of the Romani members was unfortunate. Except for a few responsible and hardworking members, the other members did not work well. They did not come to meetings, they did not do their tasks, and when they incidentally came to Council meetings, they did not know what is being discussed. It was a consequence of the bad choice of the Romani members. They did not have any education, they did not understand self-government and state government, they did not know anything about ministries, which grants are offered, and what is and what is not for Roma."* According to Bradová, the "ineffectiveness" of the Council was also caused by the "background conditions" – as this function is unpaid, and for some members from regions it presented a problem to come to the capital although the travel cost was mostly remunerated, but only retroactively – so there was a need to have a sum of money in advance. Also people with unstable jobs or working in the NGO sector had a more difficult access because they could not leave their work as freely as state or municipality employees. The past functioning of the Council thus resembles the destiny of many bodies that should have assured the "Romani participation": they fail to attract the Roma who are best "prepared to comprehend and influence the policy-making", and these bodies are not accorded much influence or support.[58]

[58] This argument was inspired by the article of a Romani activist Jud Nirenberg (2009:112), who analysed European Roma and Travellers Forum, where many participating actors had *"little formal education that would help them make sense of European politics and institutions"*, so this unpreparedness and not understanding of international institutions and international advocacy blocked their functioning – together with such "basic" things like reading materials before deciding on them.

5.6 Academics on the scene

While the Romani representation did not succeed in acquiring high trust and influence, the expert side gradually got into high-ranking positions and the oldest generation of Romani activists got slightly sidelined – this happened already during several international projects that favoured (and co-created) "young educated Romani leaders"[59]. It is necessary to say that there are generational tensions also on the "expert" side, where the knowledge of English and international contacts play an advantageous role. The arrival of experts contributed to the fact that the discussion on some materials, researches and texts became more academic, and several research organizations acquired a considerable power thanks to doing government-related researches whose number seemed to rise. The already mentioned company GAC, founded by a noted sociologist Ivan Gabal, can serve as an example, as its 2006 research attracted considerable media interest after identifying, mapping and describing hundreds of Czech "Romani ghettos", and coining the definition of "social exclusion" or "socially excluded Romani localities" which is now widely used (see GAC 2006).[60] Anthropologist Yasar Abu Ghosh (2008:14) criticized the classifying nature of these researches as what institutions usually want from academics is such type of knowledge that "*eases identification of the subjects that are worthy of their attention*", researches first have to "discover Roma" for the purposes of politics and for the purposes of governing these people. Nowadays, new local studies of similar character are carried out under the Agency for Social Inclusion, although some of them try to counter that tendency by revealing rather how local Roma got constructed or governed – e.g. Grygar 2009. However, this researchers' counteraction against institutions' expectations is not very common.

[59] Nidhi Trehan (2001:139) recognizes that as a Europe-wide trend: a small cadre of young Romani professionals "*have been able to leapfrog over veterans of Romani emancipation, as donors and intermediary organizations favour younger, degree-holding, English-speaking Roma* [...]". See also Nirenberg (2009:102) and his argument of "supplying Romani leaders" on the demand of the international institutions and the fact that these young leaders were "unelected" or "unrelated" to constituencies in the similar way the "old guard" was.

[60] Other important research actors are "research and policy" NGO Socioklub, Sociology at Masaryk University in Brno, or Anthropology in West-Bohemian University in Pilsen.

Nowadays, part of the NGO work, if any of them wants to influence policy-making, is to read and comment on these reports that are difficult to understand due to their scholarly language. Government integration conceptions are becoming longer and more complex. Academics were not very opened to discussion either, they did not consider activists to be equal partners in the discussion and got quickly tired of explaining what was actually written in their reports when being attacked. An NGO worker, who also participates in researches: *"This is how it works: we publish some researches, some research reports and studies, and then a critique erupts, but this critique […] was for instance very unqualified and we did not even reply to that, yes, because there's no point in replying to a critique of someone who criticizes a book he did not read, there's no point."* The behaviour of academics was interpreted by Romani activists as a "lack of respect"[61] not only to activists but also to Romani people in general. The main part of the more complex debate about the "problems", which can sometimes have a "circular" character, is thus restricted to the non-Romani networks. The same worker/researcher: *"Here and there, the exchange of ideas had even a funny character of continuous self-confirmation, you actually talk about it with the same people all the time and you all the time confirm to each other that you see it in that beneficial way."* The networks that "make the researches" are not very huge so the same people frequently meet all the time, and certain theories and interpretations circulate in local scientific discourses.

In the Czech Republic, expertise is still considered to be largely a-political as Zdeněk Konopásek (2006:5-6) argues: *"Science is characteristically not seen as part of the society. On the contrary, it is perceived as something which is and should remain above it. Experts of various kinds are taken as neutral arbiters in quarrels over political issues. The authority of science is generally high and unquestioned. […] The deficit model dominates the relationship between citizens, experts and science-policy makers: citizens are thought to be actors whose eventual suspicion towards science and technology should be overcome by education and information campaigns. If problems are framed as expert issues it automatically means that no public involvement is expected*." Although this was written about "hard" sciences, the "softer" ones also claimed this exclusive position. They were in a more difficult position in this respect as during the socialist period they were thoroughly

[61] "Respect" is also an important category evoked as part of the construction of Romaniness and a general value that should guide behaviour of people to the others.

politicized by party ideology and lost their credibility. As a result, the "antipathy" to being very political was obvious after the regime change. "Romani problems" are typically researched by sociologists and anthropologists, but educational scientists, economists, psychologists, demographers or criminologists are not an exception. Many of the researches go unquestioned, unnoticed, or are criticized mainly within the boundaries of the individual disciplines. Only the most openly racist texts are sometimes problematized in the media. Thus, the academic networks can still conserve their relative closure, there is not much pressure for opening up, and activists who try to question the academic work do not have a large audience.

On the other hand, the concepts academic networks are coming with largely influence politics and the NGO sector. External presentation of some NGOs changed according to these academic discourses. An article "*How to Fight against Social Exclusion*" by an NGO worker/anthropologist published in *Work and Social Politics* monthly, the journal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, says:

> "*The point of departure for field social work and other social-integration projects is the concept of the so-called new poverty or social exclusion. […] Most of their [*poverty enclaves'*] inhabitants are Roma, some of them self-identified, but mostly they are recognized as 'Roma' by the society on the basis of their assumed 'race'. […] The result of this labelling process is the emergence of the aggregation in one neighbourhood of mutually unrelated and unacquainted nuclear and extended families […]. We can generally say that on the one hand, in the so-called 'Romani ghettos' some of the elements of traditional culture of Romani settlements survived; these are on the other hand overlaid and heavily modified by the culture of poverty. […] Help must be individual. If it is to be efficient, it must take into account the process of exclusion as well as the personal situation, needs, capabilities and personal characteristics of the client. Practice shows that 'ethnic' affiliation is not pivotal in this respect. The main goal is to help individuals who are capable and willing to cooperate on changing their situation towards social advancement, integration into society and liberation from the poverty trap, which for them means the redistribution or mutual sharing of all income and outcome within the scope of an extended family*" (Mikuš 2006).

The main explanatory theories used at that time that spread out from the academic discourses circled around "social exclusion" and "culture of poverty", with "cultural explanation" still having some currency (e.g. in the critique of "ineffectiveness" of "large families'" redistribution systems) but not being considered strictly "Romani". It was rather the labelling that was pushing these people to localities considered "for Roma", and that further strengthened their already disadvantaged position and survival mechanisms.

These concepts were thus used as models that could be illustrative enough even for the "state administration" in order to explain what is going on in the localities. The models for explaining what happened "with Roma" were actually chosen from the international social science repertoire. Michael Stewart (2002) shows how particularly the United States' scientific tradition has influenced local discourses. While activists were prone to use racial discrimination explanations and evoke the U.S. civil rights, academics were using underclass and culture of poverty discourse – the concepts that are considered to be connected rather to liberal politics. There are related concepts promoted by international bodies, and legitimating solutions offered by these bodies like "poverty trap", "dependency trap" used by the UN Development Programme (UNDP 2002), and "unemployment trap", "dependency on benefits" or "activation of unemployed" used by the World Bank in its Czech Roma research (World Bank 2008). The amount of reports describing only the catastrophic situation of Roma is worrying for some activists and academics that do not see much "positive" images or agency in these reports. British sociologist Thomas Acton sees the UNDP 2002 report as covertly racist (2005): *"Racism is acknowledged and formally condemned – but seen as an understandable reaction to the way Roma are, an increasingly impoverished under-class. Although the UNDP report does not draw explicitly on right-wing American "under-class" theory, it propounds the same causal theories and the same demeaning solutions. The new twist, however, is that based on its 5 034 sample, it claims that these solutions are also what Roma themselves want. This is likely to be one of the most important official documents on Roma for a generation, and unless some of its assumptions and conclusions are deconstructed rapidly, it may prejudice the tone of debates on Roma, not just in Eastern Europe, but even more inappropriately in Western Europe and the Americas, for decades to come."* However, there are not many people in the whole Europe that would devote their time to deconstructing these concepts and presenting visible alternatives. If there is some critique, it usually does not get to people that formulate policies based on these reports.

The concept of the culture of poverty (first employed by Oscar Lewis in 1959 in the context of Mexican families) has been relatively popular in the works of Central European authors in general. The concept describes how people get socialized into the situation of poverty and by trying to survive in this milieu, they further support their marginality and hand it over to next generations. The concept has been criticized as rather static and not explaining well the context and roots of marginalization – i.e. the fact that the reasons why so many Roma lost their jobs during restructuring was the consequence of the socialist education and employment policies that survived the regime change. When adopted by the administrators, it easily slipped into "blaming the victim" mode and into considering that actually people do not have "culture" apart from this one, or that they have their own unique ways of survival that cannot be easily fitted to this model.

The concept that should somehow balance the disadvantages of the culture of poverty (see e.g. Toušek's 2006 argument) is the concept of social exclusion that describes the multi-dimensional and more dynamic causes of people's exclusion. In the Czech context it was supported by such actors like e.g. the International Organization for Migration or the European Commission, who asked the states to fight with the above-mentioned phenomenon by integration through employment. This form of integration is one of the main ideas of the European Structural Fund, the richest source of money available to NGOs. Considering its wide promotion, the social exclusion discourse has a very strong power position. Critiques of the concept of exclusion like Andries du Toit (2005:16) claim that it again hides the fact that actually, people are not excluded, but included, just on inequitable terms – they are produced by the same "system" in which the richer and more educated people live. Thus the concept of social exclusion can well justify the introduction of social policies of integration or, newly, "inclusion". Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant (Bourdieu – Wacquant 2001:108) view the concept as one exported together with the neoliberalism and EU newspeak, blocking out the older concepts of poverty and inequality. What happened in practice of administrations and municipalities was that the concept of social exclusion also often lost the stress on its dynamic character (and descriptions of actually how this exclusions work) and became just a label of population. Academics that have the capacity to explain the reality on the basis of these models are welcomed by the government, because studies of "creative resistance" and "use of identity" are not much helpful for formulating some general policies.

Passaro (1997:155-156) who encountered similar theoretical divisions in the context of homeless people shows how even the side criticizing the "culture of poverty" models and proposing models that do not "blame victims" actually falls into the same epistemological trap – people are still "victims", but now just "blameless" and still without any agency. If she approached her field with the idea of going to the "victims", she would push away narratives that any "activist" would be afraid of – actually that some people "chose" to be homeless and that this choice helped them overcome domestic abuse or unrewarding roles in their nuclear families (although the choice was very narrowly constrained by the context in which they lived in). That pointed her to study the imperatives of the nuclear family, and she found out (which contradicts her previous understanding that women should be the least powerful) that this imperative works so that women, particularly those with children, have more chances in the system than single men. The theories that are used to explain people's situation can thus prevent seeing the situation in an alternative way and themselves create hegemonic explanatory models.

The non-Romani NGOs have much better access to these expert resources as their social networks are closer or overlap, and they have more academically educated staff. With the institutionalization of the social work at universities, the "theoreticians" become more distant from "practitioners" and from the reality of the everyday work with clients. Academics, according to the one of the few critiques of this process (Syrový 2009:7-9), do not have much to offer to the practitioners. He gives an example of a worker in an old people's home and asks how can she be helped by the topic like "*postmodernity as a space for existentially sensitive social work*" discussed at conferences and PhD theses. However, the practitioners do not pressure academics to change their focus, they rather consider themselves "too uneducated" to understand that and read their texts, so actually both groups finally support the model, and the (often awful) practice in the old people's home does not change very much. It is also uncommon that the graduates of these academic programmes would actually implement the things they learned at school either because of their impracticality or because of the institutional inertia, where an individual worker does not seem to have the power to change the structures. The topics generated by the social work academic sphere are more often orientated towards seeking the recognition from "social science colleagues" in the disciplines that can be even further from the "everyday work with clients", so this creates a tension in the discipline.

The new model of social services has thus limited alternative access points to the newly constituted profession and prefers higher-educated graduates instead of "learning through practice" and searching for the most useful support of this method, which can allow greater participation in social services. The social work has been "normalised", professionalism gained high currency and is required "immediately" as a pre-condition for entering the job rather than "created" through experience. The class divisions in the social work were reinstated. Volunteers and amateurs now have access only to very clearly delimited tasks without huge responsibility. The organization is now built on the managerial model with qualified employees that are trying to sustain the survival of their organization by writing new and new grant applications and seeking funding in different domains. Their "services portfolio" grows and financing diversifies in order to increase "stability of the organization". The possibility to do TSW as a social service attracted some new actors to the field and further increased the competitiveness of the sector, pushing away weaker players.

The professionalized players came with the new value-laden dichotomy of professional versus amateur, that started to dominate the scene and that helped these organizations to acquire power. The older legitimation schemes building on originality, alternativeness and sensitivity could now be labelled as amateur, underdeveloped or non-professional. TSW as an "alternative" to standard social work was translated as "unprofessional" TSW. There were transformations from one mode of legitimation to the second one even inside organizations – with the arrival of a new management. Educated employees were able to draw the line between what is considered to be professional and what is not, and create a new interpretative scheme. They reclaimed an area that was outside their scope and pushed through their normative ideal. Failures of networks based on "Romaniness" strengthened the conviction of some actors that it is the professionalism that can save the whole sector from failing projects and "disappearances" of project money, and that it will only be beneficial if these actors lose in the competition. Nidhi Trehan (2001:139) comments both on the "technocratic" changes and "ethnic tokenism" as dangerous for the whole functioning of supportive and advocacy sectors – a very similar process goes on in organizations supporting human rights or "Roma rights": *"The values traditionally associated with voluntary sector and public interest work such as altruism, community service, alliance-building and cooperation, etc., face the danger of being diluted and marginalised by new emphasis on technocratic ability (of mainly non-Roma) and tokenism (of Roma)."* However, such an ideal is difficult to defend against the above-described pressures.

6. Age of separation

6.1 Embryos of a new order

In the meantime, in Amaro these changes were not perceived very acutely. At the time when other organizations were frenetically working on the standards or already functioned according to them, Amaro was busy dealing with its projects, which were much more urgent than the "standards' deadline" several months ahead (1.1.2007). The two "educated" social workers in the organization were aware of the need to meet the standards, but Lucie was busy with her family and lived far away – so she at least tried to prepare weekend workshops at her house that concentrated on the future of Amaro, and Simona was occupied with her prison practice. As a volunteer she did not feel too motivated to push for changes. However, it was obvious that she struggled with what she was told at school and what went on in Amaro. It was more difficult for her to celebrate the togetherness and interconnectedness of people in Amaro, but she did not say so in front of everyone: *"Amaro offers services that are social services according to their definition, but it does not offer them by far..., according to any customs, let alone according to some rules, standards, it is, due to the character of the organization, very enthusiastic […] spontaneous and as if amateurish. I think that, on the one side, it opens the way to the clients, but on the other side, it is sometimes harmful, because the professional side and the work with people – it is not just helping in my leisure time – so here nobody reflects upon this work. I am used to that from school and other practice to somehow analyse and reflect upon that approach to people […] and I try to implement it a bit to the prison programme."* Although she was still a volunteer, she thought about her help as "work in social services" or in "something that resembles or should resemble social services" as they were described at school. Work is something else than "volunteering".

The normative pressure of the school and of the official concepts of social work was strong, and the fact that there is no one reflecting much on the work and supervising her for her school practice troubled her. She needed the practice because it was required by the school, where she would be taught "how to do it" in a way acceptable for her school supervisors. In Amaro, there were not many people to learn from: *"Martina was here only since summer and Josef, if I should polarize it as such, does that in such an intuitive style, not that professional one."* The school practice is designed in such a way that the students are sent to

"more experienced" practitioners to learn something and report on that. Now she was in a situation where the help was somehow "done", but not much reflected on, so she could not use these reflections to report to her school and to prove she actually learned something. She also feared that Amaro can harm clients if it is going to work poorly. She wanted to see some "form" of conduct that would not be different from one meeting to another and from one worker to another one. In her speech she started to separate the professional and amateur/intuitive/spontaneous category, which was not so frequent in the speech of other people. The professional is the one who can reflect on his/her work and assure that the clients get the service they expect.

After she came to the organization she wanted to write about the standardization of Amaro for her BA as she expected it would be running, but nothing much was happening. She had a broader idea about what the standardization means and that it is not implemented by just writing the standards down: *"We are getting behind, or better we already got behind the times, because we cannot meet the standards only on paper, and even that – to write all the needed documents, clarify the rules – would be a work for at least two people for a quarter of the year. Let alone to be functional, that everyone absorbs it, goes through it and understands it, I think we should have started long ago."* The organization has to start to live and function according to the standards, everyone has to understand them, and so the standards are actually not a piece of paper, but an instrument that has to be "socialized", because if an inspection comes, it has to see that the members work according to these standards. She actually suggested that to adopt the discourse on the level of speech and text production was not enough, but that the organization had to adopt it also in practice. Only such adoption would be "valid" also for the inspectors in front of whom it is difficult to "hide" the organizational non-normativity. There is no other way than to internalize those norms. She actually nicely summarized the thesis about the working of the discourse as a system of knowledge implemented at all institutional levels, which was put e.g. by Lie (2007:52): *"A discourse refers not only to oral and written statements, but also to aggregates of social practices, and works by inscribing itself into individuals and institutions whereupon it becomes more or less normal for those internal to a discourse, hence the notion of normalization and discursive formation."* Social services thus can be implemented appropriately only in certain institutional context with which they are intimately interlinked, or we can even say that they contribute to the materialization of a certain institutional character. When I took interest in Simona's desire rules, she backed down saying that she

would not be glad if I would portray her as if she wanted *"purely standardized social work, no, I stay in Amaro, because I like that it is so diverse.*" I said: *"But you cannot deny that you want to bring some rules into it.*" Simona: "*Indeed I want.*" She did not want to be seen as someone applying a textbook model to Amaro.

Simona has actually started to "standardize" prison counselling not so much by talking about the need to standardize it but by implementing small things into the practice. Before going to the prison and often in the car on their way there (the journey takes about one hour) she and Josef tried to go through what was done, what was needed to discuss with clients in order to "*be unanimous and look serious*" and to gain their trust. When they went back by car, they discussed what happened and actually did a sort of "*substitution of supervision*". Back in the office, she tried to divide their work for the clients (from contacting families to helping with some documents, etc.). She started a file where she stored all expense documents so that expenses could be differentiated for each project, and bought a mileage log book in order to know how much petrol was spent. People did not start to use it immediately, but it was there physically and they could be reminded that "*there is that book*", and she demanded that others gave her all the bills they had somewhere. Things started to have their "places". The presence of these small items thus helped to start some standardization processes. They were kind of "embryos of order" that needed a lot of care in the future to grow. With them the organizational safety and stability would grow, because these items could be presented to controlling bodies. Without them the organization would be "suspect". The fear of "inspection" was significant in Amaro, because people were more or less aware that the organization does not function as the donors expect. There just was not any centralized mechanism to implement the changes and to check that they are implemented – people functioned as a network and a flexible jigsaw, and Anna, despite her exclusive position, did not have "a clear organizational pyramid" with defined responsibilities below her. Only a meeting where all people were present could have greater impact, but still, if there was no one to check, people forgot about it rather quickly.

The changes thus came rather through roundabouts – another new small change was introduced when Anna offered Simona a job and she wrote down a job description for her own future contract. She included in it a special "accord of silence" (i.e. confidentiality agreement), because the "silence" was something that protected the clients' individuality and privacy. She and Josef often discussed some client's cases in the small office, and Amaro did

not have a dedicated space for meeting clients (if there was something more serious to discuss a meeting room had to be borrowed from the neighbouring organization), so she felt that such an agreement should be extended to the whole Amaro and added to every future contract: "*I hope that it may spread further and I also think that by this some borders will be defined and that it is possible to define them, even though it is just a piece of paper."* This small agreement again was to become something that "helps the change" or at least that gives hope for a change – Simona considered Amaro promising exactly due to this potential for change.

The organizational change thus does not have to be directed by the organizations' leaders, but it can be introduced by bringing in small items and procedures by the employees themselves. This process takes much longer than taking a central decision, and it can go rather unnoticed. The changes in Amaro obviously went in the direction of "bringing order" – to find "places" for bills, addresses, files in computers, but also for people and their roles. Ordering means also separation, e.g. of clients from employees by means of the mechanism of "silence" or by means of creating a special "space" for clients. Clients should no longer be "part of Amaro" with the possibility to talk to them freely about anything, but their place should be defined, special protective and safe "professional language" should be used to deal with them, and only those who directly work with them should have access to their cases, because they have professional mechanisms to be able to keep the necessary distance and discreetness. After assuring this silence, clients can be still invited to a St. Nicholas party or other events, but their "problems" cannot become part of gossip or compassion. Their problems become guarded by social workers in their special files that should be locked up in a filing cabinet or in computer files under a password. Making friends with prisoners was considered to be even more risky because of a potential pressure to break some prison rule – it could destroy the relationship with the management of the prison and the whole service could be suspended. In organizations there are not only "people", but special kinds of people divided into a "team" and "clients", or even "service users". In general, professionalization often introduces more hierarchical relationships between the worker and the client, and goes against being "friends" as such category disturbs the idea that the social worker has to have "a boundary". Liz Bondi (2005:12-13) notes similar ideas among British social workers: "*Professionals have to maintain greater distance and cannot be peers to their clients"* being a common position. Volunteers that were peers to their clients were partly replaced by "professional counsellors" and the nature of the service changed. Both professionalism and

managerialism that intertwine in the Czech social work reform promote "neutrality" in relationships towards clients – in terms of not having "favourites" and providing rather a sort of "professional empathy" to each of them.

Social work was kind of a culture that needed to be implemented throughout Amaro. First, because more areas became officially defined as such by the outside regulations, second, they were increasingly defined as such also by members of Amaro themselves. In this process the people educated in social work started to have a decisive word, because they were in possession of a special knowledge of "how to do things", or even in possession of a special vocabulary. To perceive the changes as initiated only by Simona and Lucie would be misleading. They had certainly better access to how the discourse works and they were in a position to use it, replicate it and implement it more easily than other people. However, all the people in the office were somehow involved in the normalization process as they thought it would make the functioning easier, and sometimes they were very happy about these ideas and "discoveries" (e.g. that they actually could find what they are searching for, or that the functioning of the office became more predictable). Defining Amaro work as "social service" was equally threatening and relieving – despite being far from "standardized" it was possible to say "what we do" without much explanation, and to look for some inspiration about how this work is done elsewhere.

6.2 Coping strategies – translation

In order to cope with the "cracks" in the Amaro legitimation strategies and their "problematization" by different actors, the organization had to invent some new survival mechanisms. It was clear that the internal changes will not be so quick, but it was necessary to be more careful about how the organization presents itself – i.e. about organizational public relations. Amaro should be able to present itself according to structures and procedures expected by outsiders. In order to do this, some "translation" was needed, which is a process used in all organizations; in Amaro it just needed some more inventiveness. In the process of translation the presenter chooses the facts about an organization which in his or her opinion the visitor will be interested in, and during this process s/he tries to legitimize the existence of the organization by explaining its "vision" and mentioning its successes.

A group of social work students from abroad with their teacher came to the Czech Republic. They were interested in "Romani problems" and visited different organizations. Last year they already contacted Anna through one migrant Romani musician, who was repatriated back to the Czech Republic, and this year a new group of students came. Anna knew that of all the Amaro people my English is the best, and she gave me the task to present the organization and talk with the students about the general situation of Roma in the Czech Republic and about her struggle for improvements. We borrowed the meeting room from the other organization and I prepared a PowerPoint presentation (it was necessary to show also some technical competence to the "visit"). Almost for the first time, this presentation allowed me to get a general overview of Amaro, as I needed to consult with many people about their respective projects, and about what they want to present to "outsiders". I summarized the history, the presence, and outlined the future of Amaro in a nice "structured" way. There were things that I did not mention like the fact that one of children's activities was "a visit to McDonalds" (which children wished a lot as McDonalds was a positive status symbol[62] for them), because according to Jitka it did not sound very serious; a visit to the zoo was approved as it looked more educational. When Anna presented me to the visitors, she stressed my university title and our cooperation with Americans and Frenchmen that I have never met – these were people from Amaro's past, but Anna still considered appropriate to mention them. The organization had to look as prestigious as possible, and in Anna's interpretation, this prestige was assured also by titles and presenting "powerful and broad contacts".

Being aware that in terms of presentation of Amaro I am more on the side of letting the carefully chosen "facts" about work of the organization speak for themselves, I did not feel very comfortable with the presentation of "contacts and titles". The "contact" model was replicated also on Amaro web pages. Apart from one black and white photo from the consultation with a client, there was a series of powerful "guardians" of Amaro on the left and right border of the site. Two of them were Romani: a picture of a famous Romani music group with a caption that it *"plays for us on our journey*", and a picture of a Romani TV

[62] Far from being a fast-food for lower classes, McDonald's in the Czech Republic were established at prestigious places in centres of cities and were expensive compared to meals in some Czech traditional restaurants. In the first years, eating there was a bit festive event. It was one of the first non-smoking restaurants, which contributed to its popularity. Children in general were quite attracted to McDonald's by its successful marketing and they often initiated family visits to the restaurant.

moderator who was our "*media patron*". Both of them actually participated at Amaro cultural programmes and the group was called whenever there was the need to make some cultural programme or promote a new Amaro project at a press conference that was followed by a concert. It was a mutually beneficial partnership – the group usually did not play totally for free and could connect its image to "social responsibility", and Amaro got some attention thanks to the fact that such a group plays at its events. Then there was a link to a Romani Internet radio with an explanation "*we listen to*". The most powerful person on the web site was the President of the Czech Republic standing next to Anna with the description: "*chairwoman at a meeting with the President."* In fact, the meeting was not only with Anna, but it was organized by some other representatives who were cut off from the picture. Under the presidential picture there was Anna's description of Amaro's goals and her signature. In the upper part of the page there was a group of smiling children with Anna, her sons and some past members of Amaro. All these people seemed to belong to "Amaro family". In the middle of the site there was information about what is going on in the organization. The whole page was much personalized – it was a presentation of Anna and particularly Amaro's contacts to persons in the media, entertainment and politics. It was an image of social networks of Amaro, or rather the "desired social networks", as the visit of the President took place a long time ago and did not have any continuation, and the TV moderator was lost from sight very quickly despite staying on the website for several years. The whole page could be also read as an image of "successful Roma", who made it in a "non-Romani" world, the image that Anna wanted to show to Amaro's clients.

My "discomfort" showed again how much I am already part of the "professionalization mode" and "discourse-centric" (as parallel to ethnocentric), and how difficult for me it is to see other ways of presentations as "legitimate" for an NGO. It was not that contacts were not important. They were extremely important, but there were some that NGOs usually did not disclose immediately (contacts with politicians were rather left to background lobbying and the show business was important only where it was connected to some campaign) and others that were possible to publicize – usually a range of collaborators on projects or even "who is sitting on their board". Board people were usually rather public figures and intellectuals; however, the interesting fact was that they could be as e.g. honorary members of the board elusive in the same way as was the TV moderator on Amaro's web pages. In both cases the contacts are important for establishing credibility of actors, and organizations are using their social networks to pick up credible people; what differs is mostly the choice and availability

of these contacts and their presentation. The probability of Amaro knowing a "Romani music group" was higher than its cooperation with an academic. In comparison with other NGOs' sites, the most common model was not many photos and personalities but rather references to programmes, the latest news and "mission" of the organization, sometimes accompanied by unidentified "smiling children", a potential client (rather a woman than a man) or a picture of working TSWs. Prestige was constructed by means of project descriptions, annual reports, networking with other important organizations or by disclosing where the organization succeeded in getting money.

In Amaro there were rather two coexisting ways of constructing prestige, and it seemed that people are not much able to switch between them. Moreover it looked that the "professionalizing" mode is so strong that it excludes and drives out the "personalizing" mode. It also promises greater social mobility for those who are able to navigate it. The visits preferred rather a mode based on projects and methodology descriptions, and so "the girls" increasingly got the task of producing this side of institutional image and translating the inside functioning into some "appropriately looking facts". For most of them, myself included, this presented a difficult task, and they felt that they present something that "does not exactly exist" in reality (some felt even ashamed), which again pushed them to do some efforts to change Amaro according to the dominant discourse. The power of this discourse thus strengthened itself cyclically. Nevertheless, presenting what was happening in Amaro just through the "discourse disciplining" lenses would be a too simplified, lifeless and agency-less account of what was actually going on. Lie (2007:56) warns that: *"No single theoretical approach manages to grasp the full complexity of what it sets out to describe. Theoretical selectivity leads to a conception of discourse as a monolithic, hegemonic and homogenizing system of knowledge that neglects and undermines humans as reflective individuals and rather sees them as subordinate and merely bearers of a discourse."*

6.3 Weekends at Lucie's house

During 2005-2006 Lucie organized several "working weekends" and a New Year celebration at her house. This was an opportunity to have all the Amaro people together in one place – as the meetings in the office were not much effective – and prepare them for the future changes. Amaro was putting together several grant applications that, if successful, could change the

organization fundamentally. The weekends thus served to discuss what should the organization prepare for and where all this should lead. These weekends equally strengthened the sense of togetherness and made people know and appreciate each other better than it was possible in the office. The coherence of the group was also strengthened by a racist attack of the Lucie's neighbour that threatened to pull out his gun and shoot us, because one of our dogs peed on the fence of his house, and as the guys and Anna lose temper and started to swear at him and called him a fascists and a maniac he, without our knowledge, called the police testifying that we wanted to burn his house down. The police arrived to Lucie's house insisting that "*they came to solve the problem with a gang of gypsies"* and behaved so incorrectly that everyone was shocked. Lucie then continued to face attacks from the neighbour even after we left (on other occasions, he actually shot with live ammunition, pierced tyres, blocking the road to their house and put signs around that it is prohibited to walk a dog around his house) and the whole affair had to be solved at a civil trial. In case Lucie and her husband really adopted a Romani child, as they considered, they could be in a constant danger... In these circumstances, the Romani members of Amaro recalled some other attacks that happened to them and were a bit less surprised that such things can happen. For the rest of us, this event presented a sort of initiation into the insecurity of "being different" in the neighbourhood, in public places and in front of security forces. Driving car in the city as guys did and avoiding public transport then seemed much more meaningful as it could also prevent similar incidents.

During breaks in work, Anna was describing her life in a mixed but nevertheless quite "traditional" family, where as a young girl, she was closely guarded, Josef, Anna and Viktor told stories about *mule* (revenants), witchcraft and divinatory dreams they had. A boring Romani lady working for one municipality turned out to be a powerful witch that helped with epilepsy. Josef frightened us with his half-joking and half-serious visions of *mule,* as the house was situated next to a graveyard, and the rest of Amaro made fun of the fact that he and Viktor, both big and muscular guys, did not like the idea of leaving the house at night. Supernatural tales were mixed with delicious meals starting with breakfasts: Josef prepared *marikl'a* (simple Romani flower salted pancakes), cod liver with onion and stewed pepper with potatoes, and Anna cooked soup. During the evenings we sung to a guitar, and thanks to my musical abilities I heard the first words of appreciation from Anna. Going around the village Amaro made some memorable photos at local playground naming them jokingly "Working weekends of Amaro for children with disadvantaged background".

Spending weekends far away presented also some difficulties in terms of equipment and relationships. Anna did not have a sleeping bag, so she took some blankets from home. It was a hard time especially for guys that left their wives and girlfriends at home. We kept quiet about the fact that Josef had to sleep in the room, where there were some other women, because there was not enough space. After Josef returned home, he found that his wife escaped to her mother because he had left for the weekend. Dominik's girlfriend preferred to come all the way to stay with him and closely watched him although she got bored with our work. Next time Viktor's girlfriend also appeared. When children were around, the girlfriends also helped and cared for them.

In such an environment, SWOT[63] analysis initiated by Lucie did not seem "strange", but was rather tamed and domesticated by the whole context. Amaro was a safe place that should be guarded and the changes would be proposed and discussed by everybody. Some of the propositions for future seemed equally supernatural as the previously-told tales (like owning a house that could be used to share with other organizations that appeared under the list of "opportunities"). This method helped all the people to share their opinions and Anna stressed that although the need of official documentation and inspections could present a "threat", Amaro has to be bulletproof, professional, and as a Romani organization it does not want any concessions. The applications will be successful because they will be good. The only problem is that the employees do not have experience with writing "European grants" and should someone external write it, it would not easily fit into how Amaro functions, and moreover it would be very expensive. External fundraisers seemed to be useful for other types of organizations. To train someone from Amaro would also be very expensive – the courses at that time could cost up to 50 000 CZK (1760 euro). The hope was to find someone who would be sensitive enough to Amaro, or that some people from Amaro gradually become more skilled. Different ways of learning were also discussed, and it was stressed that the new people would not be able to learn just by looking at others and that they would probably need some written methodics to learn more quickly.

[63] Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This analysis is used as a part of strategic planning and comes originally from business environment. In the Czech Republic, it became hugely popular also in the non-governmental and social work sector.

Amaro will "make the changes" with all the people it has and these changes will be monitored by everyone. During the first weekend many things were suggested, but only few of them implemented. During the second weekend a few months later, it was already clear that more things have to be implemented, as Amaro got a big grant of European money worth around 10 million CZK for a prison carpentry workshop. This rather unexpected success meant that this grant itself raised the organizational budget ten times. Together with the announcement of the grant a directive came about conditions the whole organization (not only the project itself) has to fulfil, and the organization could be subject to inspection right from the beginning of the project implementation. The organization now had to change very quickly, employ several new people, find an experienced accountant and new offices. Some of my ethnology colleagues working in government structures knew very well that Amaro got some money, and first there was some disbelief that Amaro wrote the application for the grant itself, and second that it will be able to cope with such a grant, as an unsuccessful large grant can ruin the organization. People in Amaro now felt that many eyes were looking at them.

First the organizational structure had to resemble the one described in the founding papers and in the new directives – membership of inactive people had to be cancelled and regular general assemblies organized. The executive committee and the director had to be "really" voted. The auditing commission had to be filled by people that would really audit something and have some prestige and trust. Special outside control body also had to be established to control the project – the implementation and the control had to be separated. Also money had to be separated – one project's money should not be mixed with another project's and operational money. After being withdrawn from the bank account, it had to be in a special cash register managed by one person, payments approved by someone else, or even by two persons (and controlled and spent by still another persons). The leaders of projects and of the whole organization had to have their proxies to substitute them in case of illness – Viktor suggested he could be Anna's deputy. Each project would have its separate meetings apart from general Amaro meetings. Well-defined *positions* had to be established for which people should be sought instead of searching for "some work" for different *persons*. The work that Jitka was doing had to be identified as belonging to certain positions occupied by someone (it was not "her work" just because she had always done it) "piece by piece". It was acknowledged that she had been doing much work that did not belong to her position. Such

combined positions would be no longer possible as they do not correspond to what was formerly written in the projects.

Many of these changes were deemed to be a bit too complicated and their nature had to be thoroughly discussed (e.g. the control body had to be composed of people from the outside – does it mean that donors don't trust me?), but going through the requirements people started to become more aware of the unique character of Amaro. As also Amaro could not find a new office for a long time, especially whenever it was announced that clients would be coming up to the office, the whole organizational joking "folklore" developed around the "strangeness" of Amaro. The most common topics were that: "We look as mafia, the state is worried that we will lose their money," or "Landlords are worried that Amaro will make a fire from the parquet floor". Such joking played with the most common stereotypes and strengthened the common feeling that, with all the people around, Amaro would manage it. It mirrored jokes about common popular stereotypes concerning Roma and the common belief that if a Rom wants to be successful, s/he has to be much better than others. In the Czech proverb used in Amaro – with a similar meaning, but that can be used also with a lot of irony – "*We have to be more Catholic than the Pope*." The new regulations seemed to be compatible with what Amaro is, because Amaro was in constant change anyway, and people saw it as a place where they can learn something. This was another opportunity to learn something, to prove that the organization is competent and that it deserves to be funded. Anna said she was happy that such quality, motivated and educated people were helping Amaro with the process.

6.4 Division through money

The changes in Amaro were triggered not necessarily by people's effort to change; the strongest impulse came with the arrival of grants. Apart from the prison work project, a smaller project for organizational education was "won", and finally a large grant for the social terrain work in several regions arrived. "The money", or rather "the promise of money", was accompanied by regulations about how to deal with it, the change thus happened "through money". Elisabeth Clemens (1999:8) mentions how money can be "marked" for particular purposes – they can be used only for some tasks and only in some organizational forms. The coherence of the money and form is usually supported by some

legislation – in our case the Social Services Law that regulates which subjects can enter the competition for certain kinds of money and how money should be handled. In this way they create "legitimate" combinations of organizational types and ways of dealing with money. In the case of social services, also business firms are eligible to be providers. Such a rise in heterogeneity of the status of providers nonetheless increases the need to control the money and to assure a "similar environment" in these diverse organizations – so while the diversity in the legal status of providers increases, the control mechanisms rather tend to homogenize the way organizational environment looks like. John Clarke (1998:248) mentions that in such a case, there is "*blurring between the evaluative functions of audit and the concerns of 'organizational design'*." The control comes with the idea that there is one best way of how organizations should look like – "*this tendency is the effect of demands for organizations to possess systems that will generate comparable information to facilitate the process of evaluation*." It seems that the way to "compare" a company with a public institution or an NGO is based on making them comparable. The auditing techniques thus have consequences in organizational structures. The attention to standards and monitoring of outcomes follows a diversification of subjects in the field that the state explains by "letting other subjects" into the competition in order to increase quality (Clemens 1999:10-11).The social control of these subjects becomes more difficult, so other forms of control are established. Donors, e.g. the European Fund in our case, sometimes had even stricter requirements for the ways "their money" should be dealt with than the state itself. The European Union is so large and the subjects asking for ESF money so diverse, that it requires stronger control mechanisms. Municipality grants were on the other side of the formalization scale – the direct social control and the knowledge of "who is who" is easier in local settings.

Thus the regulations not only want to improve control of the organizational environment, they want to transform the organizational environment if it does not conform to them, and they want to change it – so that it is more easily controllable. When an organization enters into the space of ESF, the "risk of failure" about which I was warned by a government employee, rests not only in "not being able to help people", but also in the failure to report about this help and about how the money was dealt with inside the organization. Although an organization can deliver the goal of the project and spend the money on it, it can be found "non-standard" in some of the categories. In such a system the meaning of success can shift to "spend the money and meet the indicators". The money opened the organizational space for more detailed scrutiny and asked for different ways of separation. Positions had to be

clearly defined – they could even acquire more importance than persons occupying them at the given time. The "old Amaro" was more about persons, and although there were strong hierarchies they could not be described easily in an "organizational chart". Dealing with money became a whole process involving several different employees, meetings no longer comprised all the organization's members, because each team now managed its own money and also grew in numbers, so it would not be easy to organize meetings of the whole organization. The direct peer-to-peer control (together with undisturbing observation) became less possible in the four-room space which was possible to rent thanks to the new resources – that is why other mechanisms had to be implemented. It seems that the change in scale that was initiated by the grants also contributed to the fact that Amaro at least had to appear similar to other organizations. Alternatives are more easily maintained in smaller organizations that are not dependent on project financing.

A few weeks after the camp in Croatia I went to the new office and a new secretary opened the door, and I felt my research had to start again from scratch. I was surprised how quickly the organization can change and how "frail" the research in an organizational setting is. The concepts around which I organized the description of my first year in Amaro could not be seen so easily now, and sometimes I found they shifted a lot. Jitka was gone and there were many new people in the office, and even more new TSWs in four different regions and in the prison workshop. Amaro had more than forty employees now while I knew only some of them. The financial growth was mirrored also in the number of office employees. In addition to the secretary, there was a new PR person working part-time; Lucie moved back to the town and worked full-time in the TSW project together with Mirek, a young Rom she already knew from her husband's organization. Martina reconsidered her leaving and was employed full-time as the leader of the children's club. Simona worked part-time in prison counselling and directed an association of organizations working with prisoners. Viktor became the head of the prison work programme, got an assistant, and Dominik became an economic director. Although there were open selection procedures for some of the positions, not all things changed completely – older volunteers were "given" jobs as promised, and some of the people still came from the closer social networks of Amaro – like Mirek who once showed up at the Lucie's country house and played in the music group Amaro cooperated with, or Jan, a young Romani also helping with PR, who worked as a prison social worker for Amaro in 2004. A son of one friendly Romani female activist was expected to help with the website and Anna brought him there "because his mother was helping us

with something". Prison counselling was strengthened with Petr, an older non-Roma, academic painter who Anna knew and who cooperated with Amaro for some time. In this quick growth Amaro preferably mobilized people close to it rather than to search for complete strangers. If someone was expected to work in the office, Anna liked to be present during the selection procedure to see if she could cooperate with such a person. In some cases also not enough qualified people applied for a position, and it was hard to choose anyone capable among those who applied – Amaro was still not a well-known organization, so it did not have such an "attractive force".

An interesting process took place in the TSW project, which in fact was proposed in this form by Jitka who wrote it a long time ago – instead of building the whole organizational structure of the programme from scratch, Amaro used its strategic networks and contacted four already established Romani NGOs that did the TSW in other regions and paid some of their social terrain workers as workers in the Amaro programme; these NGOs could enlarge their local team or, if they did not get money for their own TSWs, such people could become employees of Amaro without losing their "local job". Directors of the other NGOs became local coordinators in Amaro TSW programmes and they also got some resources for this work. Such arrangement had several benefits for Amaro – it strengthened its networks in several regions and attracted people who knew the localities well. Such a large project could attract European money. Amaro became the leader of the programme and structurally had the other directors "under" its command. However, in reality some organizations were even stronger than Amaro, methodics included, so they did not want to be much "directed" (and even refused to come to coordinators' meetings), others benefitted considerably from the possibility to share some experience with other NGOs and to become part of a larger collective. It also helped to raise the trust of local municipalities in these organizations and improve their office equipment – for example like receiving computers, etc.

This solution was again celebrated as the way a Romani organization can grow and not become as the non-Romani ones, giving regional NGOs and their workers a chance to "get better". The idea of Romaniness thus continued to exist in this domain, now broadened by "helping other Romani NGOs" to do the work for the benefit of Roma. The project was evidently written in the mode of Roma as a qualification and was presented as such later on at a press conference: *"Programme of terrain social work will be targeted at clients from the Romani minority and will be implemented by Romani organizations and through Romani*

terrain social workers. In this way a natural knowledge of the specific needs of Roma, their cultural and linguistic specifics will be used." There will be Amaro's own educational events for TSWs apart from the accredited courses that had to be studied elsewhere. Amaro will not fight with other NGOs and try to drive them out of the business "as non-Romani organizations do", but it will offer them some resources and expertise and will stay independent. However, such an arrangement was seen risky by some non-Romani NGO representatives as they feared the whole system will lack quality, because its control would be difficult. In an external monitoring of this project a negative opinion appeared that the project can be also perceived as an exploitation of partners' know-how and their people, against which Amaro protested as it did not want to take anyone's employees. The work of Roma for Roma was seen as a positive example for everyone, because now there are Roma that have such a niveau that they can help others. Some of the ideas around which the "old Amaro" was organized were transformed to new spaces and gave "sense" to them. Amaro now did projects with a special "Romani touch", and more than 80 per cent of the employees in the project were Roma. Lucie stressed that the help is "culturally sensitive" as terrain workers speak Romani during their consultations.

However, due to the growth it was more difficult to maintain the idea of togetherness – a direct personal control and common decision-making. The organization started to have employees on many structural "levels" – directors, coordinators, assistants and terrain workers, and large part of its activity went on in the "regional" offices. As many people were far away, Viktor suggested that people start to fill in work control sheets. Anna first wanted to continue with her direct control of the people that work in the office, but Viktor supported by other employees said that it should be the same for everyone and that this system will help to see retrospectively how each employee works and to compare different workers. It was clear that there were differences among employees in how much work was done, and that it could become a source of conflict in future especially in the situation when positions and their responsibilities had to be much more clearly defined, or when the work of two people in the same position could be compared. Amaro also planned to establish some employee support – supervision for programme leaders oriented at personal and management problems, and also a client-oriented supervision, where TSWs could discuss their difficult cases. Instead of having a team build up "naturally" which takes time, a "teambuilding" was organized with the help of another NGO during which games on the "role division" and "strategies" were played.

It seems that Amaro is on the path of "sticking together" rather by structures it has established – as if the stability of organization did not stand "on people" but rather on these structures that have to be established – on hierarchies, on positions that can be held by different people, and on files that document past histories of a project, when there is no longer anyone who had actually worked on it. The coming of people to the organization now did not depend on their interest to help, but on the fact that an organization gained money and opened some new, and usually short-term, position – although later there was a fight to keep this position and support it with a new grant or to keep "skilled people" maybe on other positions in Amaro. For an anthropologist that gains its access to the organization thanks to "knowing people" (not thanks to his/her knowledge of the structure) it presents a methodologically interesting topic. Returning to Amaro several years later is not returning to the same "village", it could mean that yet another new secretary will open the door and tell me that all those people I knew are long gone, although the employees will still be using some materials that I prepared several years ago. Only now the definitions of NGOs "in constant change" and "projectization" that usually brings quicker change in organizational membership and build up of organizational structures, etc. were making more sense. Durability of texts (that will describe what Amaro is and does) and structures now has to support the construction of Amaro.

Within this new organizational arrangement a character of my volunteering changed. As I was frequently given some tasks others did not have enough time to do and that usually needed dealing with texts or writing, I was now assigned to a group that prepared standardization. The group consisted of Simona and Sára (a newly employed student of BA in social work and later of MA in management in social and health organizations. She formerly came only to an administrative position – the flexibility of employees in doing other tasks was thus also partly maintained) and sometimes Lucie. Our task was to read the standards' guidelines and prepare them in parts for discussion at meetings. During the meetings we should explain what the different points of the standards are, let them be discussed and take suggestions from all the participants of the broad office meeting about how to fulfil them. After the meeting we should prepare the first version of the standards and prepare the two mutations of standards – for prison work, and for TSWs. These will be further discussed and commented on in the respective teams. The change of the organization

was now no longer "underground and gradual", but it was made the subject of the broad discussion.

6.5 Standards

The discussion of standards of quality was not a very easy task – we had a non-negotiable methodics of the Ministry (supported by the law; see Ministry of Labour 2002) in front of us that was quite general, but required that we "fill in" the given structure with the description of some concrete organizational procedures. At least the document "looked non-negotiable" as all the regimes of truth look like – it looked as something to implement rather than something to be questioned. One worker from another NGO even likened them to "internal regulations" that now every service has to have – and if Amaro has 80 per cent of its projects in the social sphere, they are "*the matter of life and death of an organization*." Chris Shore (2008:279) describes how: "*The power of any political order often resides precisely in the unquestioned nature of the classificatory systems that govern our thought and action."* At that time I had not yet read much about "cultures of accountability" and the regimes that are being constructed through the introduction of such systems. This body of literature connects accountability systems to disciplinary technologies that are used to govern not only the organizations but have important implications for people working in those organizations – who are constructing „techniques of the self" (Foucault 1991 [1975]) by abiding and subordinating to these norms. Not knowing a lot of this literature before I was not much reflexive about the process of standardization when it went on. It was just another job that I was assigned to do – the methodics had more than 100 pages, people were overwhelmed with their new projects and they seemed to have even less time than before. Today I would be rather oversensitive to such processes as they seem to be omnipresent in the institutions around us – universities about which Shore writes (being a university professor himself) included.

The methodics explained how to define standards, how a well and badly defined standard looks like, and how to define criteria to recognize if a standard of the service is fulfilled or not. The text distinguishes three types of standards – procedural standards, personal standards, and operational standards. Procedural standards are the most important ones as they directly concern how a service looks like, how people are dealt with, how their needs

and rights are respected, and how "protective measures" look like – e.g. the ways complaints or conflict of interests are dealt with. Personal standards concern people providing the services – their experience, education, support and conditions for their work. The operational standards aim at describing the place where the services are provided, the accessibility of such a place, economic resources for the provision, and how the quality of services will be improved. The standards were prepared at the Ministry by a group of motivated employees[64], consulted with people from practice and academy. The methodics is an example of the most recent shift in the social services that puts "a person" into the centre of the service and that tries to reorganize services around individual needs rather than to force people to accommodate to the system. The law of 2006 promoted the concept of help that should be individual, active and activating, and develop people's independence to such an extent that some called it an invasion of the concept of help (Šveřepa 2008:242). Although the standards do not state it in the first place, they clearly aim at change in the older "control" mode of service provision. Many of the institutions in practice still do not respect clients' rights, dignity and decisions, and treat their clients (especially in the institutional care, where some institutions have reputation of having almost "prison" systems with frequent misuse of psychopharmaca, etc.) as "children" that have to obey the employees, and use demeaning categories to describe the clients, clients are not informed about the nature of the service and the ways they can complain about it, etc. Many standardization movements in former socialist countries were presented as correcting the "old socialist" way of dealing with people, production, etc. (see also Dunn 2005), and the controlling social service institutions are seen as relics of these times. The new methodics tried to present the standards as something everyone should naturally embrace and really implement into practice, as there were fears that many of the institutions will have standards only as a PR document. Therefore, at the same time (as standardizations usually do), it promoted "measurability" – meaning, rather than numbers, a detailed description of how a standard is being implemented (2002:5): *"Measurability of criteria is important for you, the providers that are interested in quality of your own services, and also for the external evaluators of your services. Through comparison of the criteria with the reality, it is possible to see quite easily what is alright in the institution and what needs to be changed. If you will be doing the evaluation in your institution yourself, this is called self-evaluation."*

[64] The changes in the system are frequently not a direct result of the wish of ministries to reform the practice, but a result of long-term pressures and lobbying of certain groups that find their political opportunity in some moment. Standards were prepared for a long time, but they were only "voluntary".

Anna began the first standards' meeting by saying that we need them and cannot continue without them. We discussed the fact that "someone thought them up" and we now have to deal with them, and that we will rather try to make the standards help us (e.g. also having some common background for writing applications) and our clients rather than place a burden on us. There was a question if we could prepare this material in a way clients would understand because one of the first points was to define the organizational "mission, goals and principles" of the service. Seeing these abstract terms Viktor mentioned that he himself would have problems with them, so first he would like that we explained the differences between those three terms to everyone. The whole material did not look very accessible to someone not used to "read". It also used complex clusters of words and concepts. The language was commented on as "horrible" – e.g. the formulation: "*people that are finding themselves in existing or objectively threatening conflict with the society*". The law wanted that the social services should prevent social exclusion and promote self-reliance of people. Anna said that this is inacceptable: "*The Gypsies would kill us for that, they are not insane*." Finally, a wording of "*looking for ways of improving quality of life of members of Romani minority*" was agreed on. Petr protested against writing all this down as "*everyone of us knows these are normal people and this is clear"*. However, the problem would be with new people that might not have a similar approach. In general, although the language of the standards was much more sensitive than in some older documents, it was still largely unacceptable and deemed disrespecting. "*Clients*" were kept instead of "*users*" as it looked more dignified, "*people with decreased self-sufficiency*" and "*people that survive through socially unacceptable behaviour*" were again commented as describing people as "*idiots*". People tried to find words that did not say someone is "lacking" in something. The general code of ethics was also reformulated in more accessible and positive words.

To a certain extent, the standards could be filled with words that suit the vocabulary and ideas of people, so they could be at least "linguistically domesticated" to show that Amaro does not share the general concepts and that it has other ways of approaching people. Standardization brought an introduction of some measures that were promoted already for some time – an accord of silence about clients, slowly introduced by Simona, was now adopted because the chapter about clients' rights asked for assuring their privacy, and such instrument helped to maintain it. Finally some consequences of the 2006 law could not be negotiated even though some people opposed it – the law also defined that social workers

and workers in social services could not have a criminal record, which Viktor commented as betraying our mission of helping those people to "rise" – he saw "clients" not as people only helped by the project and then left on their own, but as even "candidates for work in Amaro". For him, the "border" and "hierarchy" (as the projectization usually implies definition of the "client" and "employee" position and strengthens boundaries between the two categories) between clients and employees were not so distinct. In his social networks "having some record" was not so uncommon. However, to ignore this regulation was deemed to be too dangerous. Amaro at least did employ people with criminal records on other than social work positions.

In comparison to standards that had some level of "personalization" and could serve as a learning tool and a topic for common discussion, things that could not be ignored came rather with the "money management" requirements. These measures were "stronger" but much less visible. Project inspections were feared much more than standards' inspections (although one standard also dealt with economics and the need e.g. to publish an annual report disclosing the organization's budget), which in their first months were rather benevolent if the organization showed that it at least made some effort to abide by the standards. Through employing them the organizations become more and more alike and are allowed to differ in some rather minor things like PR and signs of organizational identity – after becoming more alike organizations later invest part of their resources into this domain in order "to differ" again, but in a more superficial manner. Dunn (2005) describes standards as internalized discipline (or even part of the global order) that not only makes institutions alike, but makes them alike "in one way" only, and this way is often determined without participation of people that have to implement these standards. She uses Latour's conception of *immutable mobiles* for them – they cannot be changed, but they have high transformative potential. With the participation of the former socialist countries in the European markets, only those items could be sold there that had been manufactured in a certain "certified" way. This certification assures their marketability, guarantees their safety and makes them comparable to other products. However, products of Eastern European companies that invested in the expensive changes in production lines usually still could not compete with the "Western" companies in their quality, and if they were not bought by their competitors, became only second-league players. The fact that these companies are now almost "alike" makes them more vulnerable to be taken over by international giants that need the standardization in order to produce "the same" products in all their companies. Small

companies that produced "non-standard" products went bankrupt, or they reoriented to a black-market production, as they could not "sell elsewhere". The process that should have lead to a democratic competition excluded many actors from access to that competition.

Dunn was describing the situation in Polish pig slaughterhouses and meat production, but the situation of NGOs is comparable in that being part of the competition for European grants, they have to have certain knowledge and organizational structure (or to change quickly) in order to obtain and process a grant. They have to become part of a homogenized organizational space that stretches out across the whole Europe. To prove they process a grant well, they have to keep records – in Dunn's case of measuring temperature of meat every five minutes, in case of NGOs writing timesheets and recording every client contact and spending. Just by looking at the records an external person can tell if the project is successful or unsuccessful, and if it is well or badly managed (as a manager should be the one who checks the records). The records are a credit of managers and should increase transparency of the whole institution and decrease the risk that the money was spent on something else. There are organizations that are excluded from the competition altogether. They do not operate on the "black market" as small Polish farmers selling their "too fat (but biologically very diverse) pigs", but rather choose the areas of work that are still not so regulated or orientate on smaller local grants. Non-standard "things" find themselves out of the competition. Dunn (2005:181) tries to show that by introduction of standards, the actors that apply them are automatically considered "better", and that standards can function even to distinguish different social groups: *"The hierarchy of value that standards lay out quickly transmutes difference into impurity. Standards thus act as more than technologies for organizing and regulating markets, and express fundamental social relations between groups."* NGOs that are non-standard, "not transparent", can be suspect that "something dirty" can happen there – if they would like to be transparent they would implement standards as any other organization. If they are not, they cannot even be "compared" to any other organization, so it is not possible to say if they have the quality or not. Introducing standards and thus reducing the "difference" does not necessarily raise the quality – but standards usually claim that it does.

It seems that such homogenization does not make NGOs so much prone to "takeover" by some other NGO (although international NGOs and donors gave unequally high support to organizations that resembled their own organizational structures), but opens them to

managerial ways of directing as if they were something "natural". There are two main discursive tactics of promoting these ways of directing (Clarke 1998:238-244) – claiming that all organizations are essentially the same (a need to be coordinated to be efficient), and that a successful model can be expanded from the private sector which functions as a norm. In the "older Amaro" many managerial techniques failed or did not make sense. Now they were given the sense and thus legitimized ("they can help us in this and that...") and even called for. "Change" had definitely a positive meaning intertwined with the current growth of the organization. Clarke describes managerialism in three ways: as an ideology expanding the right to manage in the effort to be efficient, a calculative framework that controls inputs-outputs (people have to think all the time about the budget), and a competitive position (organization has to clearly state its focus, mission, targets and audit itself; the "outside" world is full of "competitors", "opportunities and threats"), and finally a series of even opposing discourses on how best to manage. A successful organization becomes the "well-managed" one. Managerialism brings certain concepts like customer, motivation, needs or quality. In Amaro these concepts and discourses were challenged only selectively. Although Clarke points out that the introduction of "customer" instead of "client" discursively empowers the client and the manager, and challenges the authority of "professionals", in Amaro the reason for not taking the word in the debate was rather the perception of the term as undignified and thus disempowering the clients, and that it did not correspond to the image of relationship that the worker and client have between them.

The need to produce some "quality" was not challenged. If we look at how managerialism treats quality it is rather that it tries to systemize it through the production of indicators of quality, because quality itself is a concept that is difficult to "seize". Although people complained about the rise of administration and spending more money on control, and many of them did not believe that it can really help their work, they still tried to accommodate to these practices. People in the office said to me ironically that now they have to count the time that they spent chatting with me and write it down to time sheets. Clarke explains this paradox of "behaviour compliance" and scepticism at the same time (1998:246-248) through the concept of "no alternatives" and pressure of the organizational and interorganizational field of relationships, that punishes those who fail to comply in the sphere of resources and competition hierarchy. Especially problematic for some was the introduction of a written contract by the 2006 law, which a client has to sign and where his/her "commission" is specified. In another contract an accord to handle private data is given, which gives TSWs

the possibility to act on behalf of the client in the institutions. An Amaro TSW coordinator explained: *"People do not understand that they are completely or partially illiterate, and now they are signing something that they do not know what it is and there are their personal data on the paper. We are now like those officers. We won't be distinguishable from them. Who thought that up?"* He was concerned that in this case, Amaro is rather losing trust by introducing procedures that some clients have problems to control. Being confused with the officers who give hardly understandable documents to people, was another source of concern to him. Some TSWs were reluctant to let clients sign the papers, although the central office asked to have certain number of contracts each month as a "proof" of the TSWs work. Contracts that should have made the client-worker relationship clearer and "fair" can in certain case raise some distrust. However, they are part of the organizational law-abiding image and working of management.

Some Amaro teams wanted to supplement their work by helping clients also materially – which is not contained in the definition of the TSW or in the idea of the contract that should bind the client to make some activity. Just "receiving things" would probably not fit in the claim that one should primarily help clients with institutional contact and help people to be able to find work and buy things they need themselves. Some organizations assume that the material help can "spoil" the clients and make them less motivated for changing their lives, especially when they get something "for free" or confuse "social work" with "humanitarian work". Some TSW teams, mostly Romani ones[65], nevertheless collected and distributed clothes, nappies, curtains, blankets, schoolbags and stationery. It made them feel more "useful", especially when they saw some overcrowded poor flats without much furnishing, and knew that the clients would not be able to buy school accessories, winter clothes, or were short of heating. Advising a lone mother with many children each week and ignoring her material situation they saw would be too hard to bear. They therefore noted the age and gender of her children to find appropriate clothes for them and asked if she needed anything else. Once I saw how this material flow was reversed and a client family gave the TSWs some potatoes from their "field collection" and a chicken they got after a night shift in the

[65] The significance of this remark would have to be further explored, as for example Katherine Pinnock (2002:246) in her study of Bulgarian NGO sector noticed about Romani NGOs*: "Although they expressed a formal concern with ideas of integration, civil society and human rights, informally their main concern was with finding ways to directly improve the living conditions and cultural autonomy of surrounding Roma/Gypsy communities."*

slaughterhouse (as they were paid in chickens). TSWs expanded their help beyond the standards of the service. However, in the view of the standards, material help stayed invisible and "improper" to the goals of the service. It was not subject to any auditing, it could not be part of quality standards, and its status also diminished when an external advisor noticed that Amaro probably should not count it among its programmes. The fact that it was sometimes hugely valued by the clients did not raise its importance in the organization.

All the standards, audits, records and annual reports purify the institution (in case of Dunn also "purifying" pig meat – it makes it less "risky" when it is produced according to the EU standards) in the eyes of others, and in case of Amaro also in front of its own employees. Here we have a combination of the three main assets that make standards "efficacious" and interesting for many to implement: they bring legibility, commensurability and hierarchy (Dunn 2005:183). Soon after the start of projects and less than three weeks after the real start of terrain social work Lucie said to me: "*We were everything: non-transparent, ineffective and incompetent, but it changed by itself*" as if the change of structure, etc. was so "powerful" to accomplish all this. At the beginning of the Amaro TSW project, a large opening press conference was organized where the project was presented, media and both friendly and competitive NGOs invited. The new co-leader of the project, Mirek, who also played at the event with his band, talked to a non-Romani NGO member trying to convince him that he can for sure ask about money: *"Why do you not ask anything? You don't want to know how much money we have? How much we have got?"* The bewildered guest was thus forced to ask this question (on many occasions, money is also a taboo topic, when you do not know each other). In this exchange there could have been some boasting in front of the "competitor", but also the wish to show publicly that we have nothing to hide, the wish to legitimate publicly the trustfulness of Amaro. It was just done in a bit bizarre way, rather as a kind of a public ritual, as the guest could quickly find the information at the ministry website, and it was also possible that his organization applied for the same call and knew rather well who got which project. Anna joined the discussion commenting on the fact that: "*The terrain social workers make the hardest work of all and would deserve more money*." Amaro is the organization which gives work to people and tries to pay them well. Anna was particularly proud of this fact, as she knew from her own experience how hard it is to find work.

6.6 Tensions inside

The easier comparability of people and a quick intake of people during the "time of change" meant that some were found rather ineffective – or, to be more precise, some even visibly, without any need to control their work sheets, did nothing. The son of a "friendly activist" surfed and chatted on the Internet instead of looking after the grant he got to care about after Lucie took other duties. After some attempts to bring him to activity, the people around him resigned. A PR girl, a daughter of another Anna's (non-Romani) acquaintance, did some work, but was found too slow. Jan also spent too much time and money on his mobile phone. Anna was forced to deal with that situation and also with the complication of personal relationships that it entailed, and with a possible threat even to the organization – as it might endanger relationships with other organizations. She first tried to do it through using other people to speak to them: "*Lucie, talk to her and ask her clearly, or she will have to go, even if she is the daughter of my friend."* She also had to show being tough on Josef: *"For some time, I have been dissatisfied with him, but I will deal with that, if he was three times my son, he cannot diddle, he cannot come late.*"

For the first time people had to leave Amaro not on the grounds of personal relationships, but on the grounds of doing "bad work". Even the sacking of Jitka was retrospectively reformulated not as a personal conflict, but "*because she did not do some things right*". As it happens in other spheres of employment, the sacked people have tendencies to criticize or at least dislike their (or their children's) former employers. In the case of the "friendly activist" the relationships were not so warm afterwards. In case of other people that had to leave later for the same reasons, like Mirek, whose work was often taken up by Lucie and Sára (which made Anna angry), the consequences were more serious. He interpreted that as a fact that "*Amaro does not want Roma*", he created some gossip, and his music group no longer played at Amaro's events. To sack people that were "complete strangers" is indeed easier, but even in this case an organization sometimes does not avoid gossiping that can endanger the organization's reputation. The pressure on Anna to help some people of her social networks and friendly Romani organizations was considerable, especially when previously these people could help Anna in the similar situation of being without work (and would do it in future), so there could be expectations of reciprocity.

The changes in the structure of the organization meant that the space of "learning together" was minimized – there was less time for it, and when some people helped others, they did it at the expense of their own duties at their projects and became overworked because of that. Some new people "did not learn quickly enough" and the patience towards them was lost after some time. Learning was rather outsourced to different trainings by other NGOs, but these tended to be rather specialized and could not supplement the skills needed in the office and project work. Paradoxically, because of the growth of amount and complexity of work paradoxically the "educated social workers" Lucie and Simona considered leaving Amaro as they did not have from where to learn and they felt they were stagnating professionally. Simona left from her own decision at the beginning of 2007, because her prison project also did not have much financial support, coordinating Josef and Petr was difficult and she wanted to grow professionally. The positions and powers of people became influenced by projects they had been directing or they had been working in – e.g. by the fact if these projects had a lot of money, if they were innovative, and if the organization wanted to develop in that direction. Simona's position was "bad", because her project was small, inflexible, and there were only small chances of getting support in the future. Martina, who all alone directed the whole leisure activities/club programme, felt also quite weak and isolated, compared to such giants as a TSW programme with more than twenty employees. If Simona and Martina wanted to be stronger and have a greater say in the decision-making, their projects would have to be larger and more important for the organization. The people became bound up with their projects. Although Lucie was a co-leader of TSWs and had a "good position", she feared to be losing her professional competencies. Seeing how much there still remains to be learned, she wanted to further study an MA programme while working. This was unacceptable for Anna as Lucie was actually the main person now that advised on all projects, although she had now only three-quarters-time job. At one time it seemed that Amaro will lose most of its more educated employees exactly at the time when the organization grew and needed them the most.

The structural reorganization and creation of three organizational "levels" also brought different expectations from the positions of authority. People "at the top" were now expected to provide advice, coordinate things, assure the smooth run of the organization and office services to project teams. When Viktor became the executive director and started to give orders, in the mode "*you will..., you'll do..; I want...*", some people found it disrespecting especially when he did not have some things well thought out. They wanted that he earned

the authority first by showing he could manage the organization successfully rather than "going around with the suitcase", driving cars and wearing nice clothes. The position and status markers of "distinction" that he tried to implement did not help him to automatically acquire the same kind of authority that Anna had. The change in the structure was reorienting the whole organization towards the merit-based view of authority. On the basis of this concept of authority Lucie, that unofficially functioned as a sort of a general organizational advisor, would now "deserve" some higher position. However, Viktor tended to interpret her real authority as a power conflict with his position, and when Anna told that to Lucie, she was quite surprised. At that time she worked very hard and did not have much time for her family, let alone her friends. This contributed to her thoughts about leaving as she did not want to fight for power with anyone. People also wanted to feel their work is respected and appreciated, so they were more sensitive when Anna spoke about things in Amaro as "her work".

At this time an "NGO expert" that was formally invited to advise on leisure-time activities, when seeing the situation, offered Amaro to do the strategic planning instead. Such an exercise is a process that takes several months and requires several all-day visits of the planner. He was a man with some extensive experience from leading positions in non-governmental and governmental sectors, he was active in advising NGOs on management questions, and also previously sat in some grant commissions. When going again through strengths and weaknesses exercise – a sort of organizational "diagnostic" instrument – it came out that although there is now a different structure than before, many things do not exactly work – including competencies, internal communication, control mechanisms, substitutability of people when they are unavailable, etc. When coming up with these things, he had a difficult position, given the fact that Anna took some of his remarks about the organization as a critique of herself. She said to him: "*You did not understand it, here everything is all right. We already have a plan, we have been thinking about it*." The problem was that when he did ask what was planned and how things function, the responses were unclear and sometimes even diverging, and the "plans" were rather ideas about what to do, rather than "how to do it" (like buying a house, but having no money). What constituted "a plan" for Amaro was not what he wanted to hear. The planner even criticized Amaro's employment strategy: *"You do not help Roma if you employ them inside, but when you help Roma by your work. You have to be an enterprise that will function well, the donors will be going to ask. The successful organization is evaluated according to what it does 'outside'.*

No nepotic employees. Are these people not only Roma, but qualified Roma?" He was opening one topic after another, and from that meeting I listed around one hundred items that Amaro needs to do urgently, the most stressed ones being those that concerned dealing with money. The less important but not to be missed, was e.g. naming the positions in the organizational structure according to "the terminology of the law" in order to be intelligible to outsiders. So even the part of terminology, where Amaro fought for some space, was regulated from outside.

Through all his performance he tried to show, cautiously but firmly, that in the current state, Amaro would not still be considered a credible organization – although so many things had already changed. Because of his experience from grant commissions, he was able to give some very concrete examples about which things are checked in the projects. The NGOs in these months did not have a very high level of trust in general, as one big non-Romani organization was just found to have "mistakes in accounting" and had to dissolve, and one Romani businessman was found to cheat on donors who supported his school. The recommendation then was to show that Amaro deserves the trust because it is "*clean*". Amaro should present an "*isle of positive deviation*", an exception among so many Romani and also non-Romani organizations.

People in Amaro felt that the external pressure on "Romani organizations" is stronger than on non-Romani ones. This was a topic of discussions not only of current employees, but in the years to come also of new employees who could compare Amaro with organizations in which they worked previously. One Romani TSW said: *"The smallest problem of the organization gets immediately into media. My brother in law has an NGO and he rather does not write any grants, because an inspection would come and find something. So he finances it with his own money. The people are constantly asking – and who are you? A Romani organization? What is that? And someone even said we have a stupid name."* A non-Romani TSW coordinator mentioned: *"Everyone is looking at us. In the former organization they took their stand on professionalism. When I left, they could not understand that. We are extremely watched, that's why I don't want any problem. I do not want to ruin my reputation on that* [meaning on working in Amaro]*."* The second citation brings in a new phenomenon – apart from inspections and media, people are watched by their former colleagues from other organizations. As some of the new employees identify themselves primarily with the profession of a social worker and not with the organization, the

"professional reputation" is an important factor for their work, because in future they would still like to work as social workers. They count with the fact that Amaro is not their only option, and they would like to have other employment options open, particularly in their region. Also, they would like to keep contacts with other social workers in the town. They are thus more careful with what they do and are against projects that are "nice ideas", but that are not well thought through and for which there is not enough organizational capacity. People that came with these ideas then might feel offended as analysis of their ideas is thorough and critical.

The projectization opened the way to a never-ending race to be better, cleaner, and more trustful – in the way the professionals and donors needed. After the first days of strategic planning most people were depressed from all the things that are needed to do, and how the organization was still "lacking" in the eyes of many. The carefully nourished image of Amaro as the "best organization" collapsed easily (at least for some time) after such critique. An organization of such size and budget is "expected" to perform in some way, inexperience is not an excuse, but rather a reason for closure of the organization that now gives work to so many people. Anna decided that in this moment it is vital to keep Lucie in the organization and Lucie became the official programme director of Amaro. This move proved to be very beneficial, as Lucie also knew how to approach Anna with an opinion different from hers. Anna understood her critique as work-related and usually was not offended by it. Lucie was finally able to reduce some tensions, but her role in the organization stayed rather unique and hardly replaceable.

6.7 Truth of papers

To be better, cleaner and trustful meant producing more "proofs" that Amaro was all of this; as Dunn would say, the organization had to sell the product in a "certified" way. Sometimes it was even said, that the organization has to be "legible" – indicating what is the actual source of production of this trust – a practice based on producing documents and on their reading. EU project inspections are most interested not in the idea of the project, but in the relevant indicators proved by "papers". Viktor commented with disbelief: "*They really are not at all interested in what we do*?" after he said to the ministry inspection's ladies that they never came to see the programme in practice and they laughed at him. The inspections were

indeed interested in the formal indicators and were not convinced by any great ideas about projects or "integration of Roma", things that were so much appreciated in the mutual discussions and sometimes even "stolen by" other organizations in the competition to address the problems from different angles, or to use some source of funding that was previously unavailable for Romani-connected topics. The social construction of the project for the purposes of control was done through things many people considered to be "formalities" not going far enough into the understanding of "the work itself" and its "purpose" for which most of them did such work. Especially for people in direct contact with clients "the administration" was something they would like to minimize. What Amaro "does" is for the most people "helping other people", not "producing files", although such an activity takes more and more of people's working time. Markowitz and Tice (2001:8) described this trend as "*spending more time with paper than people*" and noted that it usually comprises three main processes – abstraction, objectification and quantification. The "kinds" of organizational papers thus fulfil these three main functions – they inform about plans of and processes in the organization in a well-arranged and shortened way, they make things visible and "real", and they count organizational performance. This usually implies to use some categories that are thought up by some external actors. In the administrative process the "facticity" of projects is realized – the inspection would not believe the project without these "small proves", especially if the goal of the project is to raise someone's social competencies, and not anything that could be touched and seen like building a house. No NGO would put the paper production in its mission, although it is a significant part of the everyday "doing" and a significant part of the legitimation process. "Doing good" thus should be extended with "Doing good with good accounting", which reproduces the survival of an NGO.

In EU projects the control is present already in regular three-months reports. People often spent weekends writing them and most of the first "monitoring reports" were actually written by Lucie or at least with her help. There "had to be paper for everything". Where there was not "a genuine paper", there was a threat of "loss of trust". Papers function as shields of NGOs against their controllers; they have to be fabricated with considerable effort in order to bring the protection. The organizations are the more transparent, the larger amount of the expected papers they produce. Papers with numbers have more power than papers with texts. The planner said: "*The words without money are only words. When you give money to words, the truth appears*", and he added that usually he reads annual reports from the back,

first looking at the budget that needs to contain not only some balance, but a "*hard data that could explain to everyone what is going on with the money – else you are hiding something*." Such data legitimate the organization; it constructs "the truth" about it. Not having it is suspected to be an effort to cheat. NGO representatives are thus not credible "per se", only as "persons", but they are credible by the way they handle important papers. Their credibility can be also undermined when some other people from their organization do some mistake as the organizational credibility cannot be easily divided. In the environment, where some NGOs are "personalized" and "confused" with their leaders, the organizational mistakes then can also be attributed to the leaders (although the frequent leaders' strategy is to claim the ownership of positive things, while co-workers are responsible for failures). The notion of credibility that combines beliefs which are closer to psychological and personal dimension, with accounts, that are on the other hand closer to dealing with texts and money, was proposed already in Bruno Latour's laboratory study (1986 [1979]:238). Such a combination seems to work with some modifications given by different procedures and contexts of credibility production also in other organizational settings.

NGO credibility production is also "costly" – it takes a lot of time, a large part of the project money, and requires certain levels of socio-cultural capital. Organizational administration is usually presented only as a technical and necessary requirement, not thinking about the effects of its introduction – about what gains and losses its introduction might present and how the inner structures and hierarchies are reconfigured on the bases of that. The issue of "transparency" legitimates introduction of more administration and internal control – and as such it remains quite unchallenged. It is one of the major organizational narratives of the recent time. Michael Power (2007:viii) mentions that: *"Just as we are being told that grand narratives are dead in the post-modern age, it may be that they are alive and well, have vacated academia and now reside in conceptions of managerial practice."* Managerial and administrative practices legitimated by the narrative of transparency are thus hard to challenge. The newest narrative recognized by Power is the notion of risk, which only continues the audit explosion in a new clothing (2007:4-5) and asks for production of visionary materials that try to pretend that we know the risks we face. Risk also resurfaced during Amaro planning exercise. According to the planner, the organization should combine resources for funding its long-term programmes and have balanced „portfolio" of the topics it addresses. Having 80 per cent of projects in „social services" was considered risky, because this topic is dependent on similar sources of funding. Amaro could stress

educational and human rights programmes in order to have more diverse founders and a more stable portfolio.

To minimize risks, an organization should have some plan about which areas to develop and where the money could be found and when. It should create a kind of hierarchy of plans – the broadest one being a strategy for years ahead (e.g. six years), then an action plan for three years with defined responsibilities and set dates, then a one year working plan, then a project realization plan, and then a personal plan of each employee. Personal plan gets updated, and usually six hours from eight of a working day should be planned and the rest is left for some „unexpected events" or for the planned work that takes longer than expected. In the planners speech, the space of the „unexpected" got completely minimized. These plans of course have to be controlled, else they are „futile". If they work well, the organizational life becomes more stable and predictable. Being used to organizational chaos we stared at the apostle of this new narrative, and I thought how much time it needs to plan all these plans. At the same time his arguments sounded „rational" and looked important for the survival of the organization. It was decided that Amaro needs some planning, albeit it never reached any planning virtuosity as people did not want to be enslaved and the internal functioning still seemed to resist overregulation. Petr once glossed with some irony: „*It is not important where, but the main thing is that we keep going.*" Reflecting on the planning exercise three years ago, Sára mentioned: *"I think that his performance back then was mainly full of his ideas about how an organization should function. Yes, we plan our work, but not in this way."* There is a strategic planning today, but such a strict hierarchy of several plans was not created. The planners ideas demanding "a quick change of everything" did not seem to be very well optimized for Amaro, and the organization picked only the things that it considered necessary and useful, and other things could come later with the necessities of projects. However, the whole exercise presented a useful insight into some people's views of the „normativity" of organizational designs.

Organizations are expected to be rational and systematic – in production of plans, documents, etc. Controllers do not have to see all the papers, but they can rather look for "mistakes" in the production system. Even a small mistake can present a problem, as it can make also the genuineness of other papers "suspect". There has to be a clear process of handling the papers and certification of their "truthfulness" usually by one or more signatures. For each paper, there are one or several responsible persons/positions, so that the

inspection can directly identify them. Papers have to be stored in the archive, mostly locked up – five years for bills and invoices and ten years for papers concerning wages. All these years they rest there waiting for a possibility to be checked. The credibility thus has to have "a history". When the son of an activist tried to explain why his project was not moving forward, he also mentioned that "by mistake" he deleted his file with the work-sheets. He thus deleted the whole area, where he could be checked, which did not help at all in his claims about how he was "trying" to work, but which presented a serious problem for the accountability of the project.

Papers or electronic texts have their ("ideally") prescribed ways of circulation – an invoice has to be approved, signed and archived. In its cycle to become a proof of credibility it needs attention of lot of people, so a production of some papers is a very collective endeavour. In case of meetings, there could be a text describing preparation of a meeting, then there is a new text or a list of tasks created from the debate, which is approved by the people attending the meeting, signed by an executive director and sent to people who are entitled to get the information (the information now becomes to be shared selectively according to the positions), people then have to work on the tasks described in the meeting and they are controlled that they do so. In such a way, meetings acquire more power than chats over a cup of coffee/cigarette, although these are still irreplaceable events for sharing some information about what is going on, criticizing, gossiping, swearing and getting advice. The informality of the former small office becomes concentrated in these short moments. Meeting memos contain tasks that should be done and cannot be ignored. The texts are made powerful and the organization becomes directed in a significant way through them. They document decision processes and leave traces for the possible internal or external control.

The control system expects that the materials of the organization are genuinely produced by that organization at the given time. Inspectors have to see the date and "authorship" of materials and the clear match between what the materials say and how the organization functions. "Mismatch" is also suspicious. Materials that describe organization for external purposes, and materials that describe organizational functioning should be upgraded each time they do not conform to reality. Years ago, the founding papers of Amaro were partly copied from another Romani organization and were thought of as a "formality" that one should have to start an organization. Anna wanted to start helping people, and for her that was the most important. Papers were something that rather bothered her. Only after the

organizational change, when the founding papers were very often demanded as an annex to the applications, they were found outdated (in the goals, clarity, but also there were people in the organization's organs that we never met) and in need of some "upgrade". Amaro also asked some other organizations to send their standards, to get some inspiration, as at the beginning of 2007 the process of writing its own standards still was not finished; to be more precise there were more urgent things than standards (like monitoring reports), and some people, that were originally in the discussion process, did not seem to be interested in it. Finding that out, the planner urged that the concepts realized in the standards really have to be "ours" and cannot be copied from anywhere else.

Whereas descriptions of how an organization works have to be appropriately upgraded (also on web sites, etc.) – or made to match the reality, the relation of the project materials and "the reality" seems to be rather opposite. In projects, you have to "make" a reality from the project description – even if the project is "written badly". Lucie complained that in the project of TSWs written by Jitka and Dominik, there were mistakes or not very logical things (like forgetting that the project needs administrative positions, or promising to produce a manual for the public that she thought was not very needed and for which there were not professional capacities). Even the badly written programme, when approved, has to be implemented in the most accurate way – as here the match between the project written months ago and the reality is scrutinized. Not many changes are possible. Making them, the organization would also show its "incapability", it would damage its reputation and bother the overworked (and from Amaro's point of view also incompetent) officers at the ministry too much. Such officers were "sending the inspections" and therefore had a lot of power.[66] Some organizations had their projects written by outside fundraisers, but afterwards they were not able to implement them according to what was planned. In 2004 it was estimated by the government Plenipotentiary for Human Rights Jan Jařab, that thirty per cent of applications that were supported "*failed on the basis of incompetence*"; Jan Černý, the director of the largest NGO TSW programme in the Czech Republic estimated that it is even

[66] Amaro had somewhat bad reputation among them, when demanding from these organs that they should also keep their promises and send the already approved money, otherwise people would have to be unemployed in winter. Officers proved to be "dangerous", sending inspections that Amaro interpreted as a revenge, so the care for, papers had to be stepped up. Later Amaro even had problems getting grants from the ministry despite scoring high points.

fifty per cent (Vávra 2004:30). To get the money proved to be sometimes easier than to implement the project.

The latter grant programmes tried to be stricter in scrutinising the organizational capabilities and reducing such a high failure percentage. The NGOs had to learn how to write "realistic" projects. The evidence that they are learning that quickly was shown by the increasing level of cut-off score that divided supported and refused applications. In one such programme the successful projects first had somewhere above 55 points from 100, and only half a year later the boundary rose to 85 points. Some Amaro employees commented on the situation: "*The grant applications that were 'winning' a few years ago would now fall below the line of projects acceptable for funding."* The competition between applications became tougher. The good application, as it was commented in the NGO sector, usually meant a detailed application that on the basis of good knowledge of the organization, of context of its functioning and of its "target group" (proved in the application) was able to present a "sensible looking" (based on perceived needs etc.) and logical text. Sometimes donors even preferred a "logical framework", which is a method thought out (and also much criticized) in the development sector and employing logically coherent hypotheses about reaching goals of the project that gives the preparation of the application a "scientific look". The text is matched by a detailed budget and an implementation plan.

For the evaluator the good application could also mean that it is written in an appropriate language with the appropriate depth of detail. Such characteristics help to produce a credibility of an application (together with factors like the previous successfully finished and "well-managed" grants). An external evaluator coming from the NGO sphere: *"I am able to tell which applications were written by NGOs and which by municipalities; their language and level of experience is different. Sometimes it was clear that municipalities really do not know what to do with people, so they wrote something general there. Some NGO applications looked like it was me who was writing that, very detailed. It was a pleasure to read."* Certain types of writing are thus appreciated by evaluators, but what more, there seems to be one absurdity of such a system that dwells on how a project looks like. If the project is well written, the evaluator had to give it the points (according to the criteria of evaluation) although the evaluator knows that the project might not get realized, because the organization "never did anything". There is no space to bring such an experience into the evaluation, and if the external evaluator does not know members of the decision committee,

such information might not get to them. So much credibility was attributed to the texts that one's experience has no space in the evaluation forms.

6.8 Power of writing

With such amount of "writing" and producing texts, we could see that NGOs are actually based on writing and creating documents. NGOs have to constantly create a lot of credibility-producing writing and their "management" is also dependent on that. The concept of "legibility" of the organization refers to "reading", so the credibility of the organization is "read" from the texts and documents. The demand for people that can "write well" is substantial, especially when for example application procedures are becoming more complex. In case of the European Social Fund, the application is even created in a special computer program – now in the form of an "electronic file". For such a program, there is a specialized training available – as well as for writing projects in general and understanding the new categories like "horizontal topics" that should go through all the project (like equity, environment, cooperation with local initiatives, etc.). Magdalena, after going through such a training, commented that she cannot hand in the application she was currently writing and that she has to rewrite it completely. It took long to Lucie to understand the ESF*: "It took me half a year before I wade through these Structural Funds of the EU, like the social fund and that system. Even on the seminars and trainings they are operating with these concepts and dimensions, so you already need to have some basics. I guess thanks to the fact that at least I have studied something connected to the social, [...] the people at the ministry do not advise us, they only say what to stress and which topics are admissible or if it fulfils the conditions that are given."* Lucie estimated that for someone who never heard of the ESF, the system could be quite incomprehensible – they would need some help with it. Organizations that have "European projects" have become larger, more powerful and stable than organizations without them. There were some Romani organizations successful in that, but most of them stayed "small". The ability to write well is essential for organizational survival in the "employees-based" organizational model.

From a stage where "papers were not important" and could be copied, when what was written was often not respected as anything binding (like the memos from meetings, etc.), Amaro got into the state when papers gained power. First, they were slowly introduced as

"being there" and as a "possibility" to be respected (like Simona coming with her "just a piece of paper"), but after the change they suddenly had to be respected very strictly. With this change, people skilled in writing also got more power – they were e.g. able to bring funds to the organization. These employees as "writing employees" became particularly valued. This was usually not said very openly, but the power to write and the power of writing was visible when a successful application was also considered to be an individual achievement with authorship – "my grant" or "Martina's project". The people that wrote grants for new services could become new directors of that services – and implement their ideas – and their former place would be open for a selection procedure. They were the ones that could give advice about how to carry out that project, because they were the ones who thought it out, they were the "authors". The money that was gained by some author was considered "my money" in terms of the money I got for the/my project – and e.g. not for the central office: "*I consider the financial director to be rather an accountant, who is the custodian of my money that I wrote.*" It can be seen that man can even "write money", money is produced by writing. The authors then claim some power over "their money". The funding coming to Amaro brings not only the institutionalization, but this institutionalization reconfigures the internal hierarchies, legitimation strategies, and even self-images of employees. This reconfiguration means that people with mostly university education are gaining more power in Amaro. It is they who write the applications, although they consult their work with their colleagues before and throughout the writing process. The colleagues contribute by suggestions about what should be "written down", but they are not the ones who write the application themselves. In Amaro, the idea was that each project leader should be able to write further grants to support his/her programme.

For the newly opened management positions, it was often stated that the people who were going to occupy them should be skilled in writing – that they would be already "fully qualified" for their positions. It was no longer possible to wait for them for months before they learn it, and helping them was "costly". Magdalena, who came to Amaro to direct the prison programme in what could be called "the third generation"[67] of employees, explained: "*Here I can get to many interesting things, there is no elite that writes projects, and the others only work. When I can do something, I will get it here, it is a great experience.*" She

[67] First there was a volunteer generation that I had not met, then the first employees were created from the volunteering body, and the second generation often came from closer social networks.

previously worked in an organization where there was a level of "directors" that were hierarchically very far away, had "cars and service apartments" and only wrote grants, and a level of other people who took care for clients and never got into a higher management position. The Amaro combination of managing, contact with clients and directing suited her well. However, the claim that there were "no elites" in Amaro was not so exact – it was just much easier for her to "become that elite" – having BA from social work and years of experience in social services.

The third generation (and further generations) of employees were people who came from the organizations that were (apart from administrative forces) usually worked in social services, so they had their ideas what an organization was and how it should function. Their ideas about organizations were often formed by the university curricula that now prepared social workers for their professions. Amaro was around already for some time, so people could look at its project history, or they knew the organization before – positions that Amaro offered started to be interesting and the organization looked more stable. Also people from "larger organizations", where the level of formalization was often more profound, started to come to Amaro. After all the changes in Amaro, they still perceived it as chaotic as they had less "tolerance for chaos". Magdalena*: "I have come from a totally structured organization to total chaos. But it is very exciting."* The reaction to this first impression was to bring some more "system", which again could be connected with introducing some more writing. In general, writing is considered an "order-creating" operation (e.g. Latour 1986 [1979]:245). The new employees were generally more critical towards how the organization functioned, complaining about the lack of education of the membership, and further pushed the organization towards more intensive work with clients, from the idea of "help" to the idea of professional "support" based on skilled and systematic counselling, and from the organizational competition towards partnerships.

The new employees try to demarcate and defend their competencies. When Dominik asked Magdalena to write for him a description of a prison work programme for an application he was responsible for, she refused to do it although he promised her a pay rise. She defended herself that she did not know his programme, it was not her work and she did not know exactly how the programme worked. She could speak only about her prison social programme. She was very angry that he even asked her to do something that was not in her competence but is in his responsibility, and considered that the misuse of his position in the

leadership. Only after she saw that he had some serious problems with the application, she agreed to help him. Finally they stayed in Amaro over the weekend sleeping in the office, and Anna came to cook for them. Magdalena hoped that such a situation would not repeat as she had her family to care for, and she needed "standard working hours". Asking for help was not responded to as automatically as before – writing should be done by everyone. New people defend their "working topics" and feel their responsibility towards them. Their work should not take longer than usual working hours, and if it does, they seek some compensation in reducing their time of work during some other day.

People that were still not independent enough in their writing were usually helped by the "old employee" – Lucie. One type of comments concerned terms and concepts: "*You cannot write like that, it can be said from that that you do not orientate in it. You use the concepts in different meanings*." In Amaro some words were used differently than in the general social work discourse and thus they were incomprehensible – like "social sphere" used by Anna, or other words that even sounded "expert-like", but were not used. It was a sort of domesticated language that had to be cleaned for external purposes. Thanks to their training, the "professional" social workers were able to use the right kind of words, and usually they had the capacity to distinguish between different words and concepts and tell which one would fit best into the description. They started to serve as "translators" when the project language of goals and strategies had to be implemented. Lucie: "*I was the first who tried to describe in writing what an organization does – to differentiate concepts. Before, there were only 'children and socially weak', and we were doing 'something' for them."* Interestingly enough, the concepts and even exact wording and parts of texts that Lucie thought out years ago still circulated in the organization, and no one changed them very much even after she left Amaro to care for her second child. After all these years she still finds them in many circumstances, for example in annual reports (like the set of "principles of our work"). Back then, she created these texts with the help of textbooks and her knowledge of "the social work environment" trying to adapt them to the Amaro reality. The reality changed, but some of the texts remained. Her power to influence the organizational discourse stays even after she had left. In Amaro many discourses had to be "professionalized". There are now both people who use "our children", and others who use "socially disadvantaged youth" (or both when needed). There is a meeting of several discourses which Norman Long (Long 1999) calls an interface. He used that topic mainly to distinguish the conceptual apparatuses and knowledge of "developers" and "locals". However, similar interfaces exist even inside

organizations whose membership is more diverse. The translation goes on between two different ways of representation which takes a lot of energy of "translators".

The "meeting of discourses" is of course hierarchical. The new concepts brought by professionals are the ones that are now presented on web pages and in the applications. The oldest texts still in use are founding articles, because changing them would require organizing a general assembly and having the new articles approved again by the Ministry of Interior. They are not used as a source of inspiration, they are only copied as a stamped legal document that is supplemented to applications written in a "newer language". Comparing those two a shift in discourse can be seen. The articles also do not mention the main activity of today's Amaro – the social services. The basic mission of Amaro according to the articles is (shortened version but precise wording): uniting the citizens of all nationalities, especially citizens of the Romani nationality, Romani children, establishment of a centre, spreading the civic legal awareness and creating space for communication in the society. The main activities are: supporting the rights and freedoms of individual citizens and rights of minorities in order to obtain equal treatment from the majority, fighting racism and discrimination, supporting the civil society, education, publishing, cultural and arts activities. The new updated mission from the web pages simply states: *"promoting the rights and integration of persons endangered by social exclusion."* This is implemented through several principles, e.g. "*to get to know the environment in which a family lives*", "*to solve the social situation in a complex way as a set of interdependent causes and consequences*", or "*to search for those solutions that will lead to client's independence*." Whereas articles have a very general wording concentrating on the Romani citizens' rights and culture, and Amaro as a meeting centre (Roma were constructed as a specific minority, but inside the general citizenship), the current mission is formulated simply, precisely, and in the language of social exclusion. The focus is no longer on uniting people assembled also inside the organization, but on integrating the clients outside of Amaro. Citizens of the Romani nationality and Romani children were replaced by "endangered persons". The nationalist, civic and minority/majority imaginary was substituted by individuals and families. Actually Amaro is proud that it keeps the focus "on the family" among its principles as this category was not so often used by other NGOs (today it is again becoming more fashionable as organizations are trying to "solve the situation in its complexity"). This is one of the above-mentioned focuses that were once formulated by Lucie when she was thinking about how Amaro's social work could be specific. The change in the discourses is affecting the

possibility of realizing the old goals. With the new language the old goals became less fit for realization, less thinkable in the current organizational environment, excluded to the periphery and to applications' attachments.

Some of the new people coming to managing positions find this discursive and team diversity difficult to work with. One TSW coordinator, who previously directed a young team full of university educated non-Roma, directs now an Amaro team composed of Roma and non-Roma, people from their twenties to their sixties, men and women, people with extremely diverse educational levels. The new coordinator had to compromise his image of "the meeting" and how things are discussed there, and also his idea of a perfect administration. The communication with such a diverse team is challenging: *"It is problematic that one of our BAs would like to have more professional meetings and she feels that I talk to her like to an idiot, but I have learned to maximally simplify my speech, so that everyone understands it. The meetings that I know from my previous work would not be possible here. The people would not understand*." In general, people with university titles are used to discussions where the nature of the service is analyzed in more detail, and when they do not have these discussions, they tend to be unsatisfied and complain that they cannot "grow professionally". What they learn for sure is using different communication styles. The professional satisfaction is partly supplemented by external educational courses. The weaknesses of the diverse team in administration and "professional discourse" according to the coordinators seem to be balanced by the high motivation of workers vis-a-vis their clients. The tasks that the teams deal with usually exceed what is defined in the "social services" descriptions. It involves being active in different causes of municipality policy, acting against a sale of houses where Amaro clients live, etc.

The processes of writing and presenting well and in the appropriate terminology partly de-legitimate the language of closeness used primarily by Anna, and put more pressure on the "less educated" employees. Their language rather "stays inside" the organization. This presents a challenge particularly because Anna is the main public figure of the organization – appearing in media and sometimes at conferences, where she is asked to explain Amaro programmes in detail. In some events the personal talk and presentation based on the life experiences of a Romani leader is what is expected, in others it is rather the "social work" language. "Providing services" needs another kind of language than "activism". There were cases when Anna's representation was considered "improper" because of being

unprofessional, and some of the employees attributed her success rather to "her personal charm and charisma" and her persuasive skills. Amaro thus has to think strategically about whom to send to which event and how to support Anna. The legitimation strategies of people in Amaro are different and people are not skilled in the "other" legitimation strategy. There are several ways to combine these legitimation strategies or to "mask the internal interface" – like discussing with Anna in detail her upcoming appearance in media or preparing a PowerPoint presentation for her ("*I need a high-level presentation which I will show them"*) – usually by some employee with a university background in social work. In such a way people in the audience could get the expected terminology and descriptions from the presentation, which would be supplemented by concrete examples in the speech. In one university conference I attended, Anna talked about a case of immediate assistance provided to poor Roma by Amaro and behind her on the screen there were slides talking in deethnicized terms about social exclusion and long-term methods used by the organization[68]. Somehow, such a mismatch between what was shown and talked about seemed to work. Amaro even prepared a programme of one regional conference which was attended by some of my former academic colleagues. There were positive references about Viktor, who spoke well and to the point. When I returned to Amaro with the references, Lucie and Magdalena giggled: *"We also prepared a good presentation for him, didn't we? He did not have to read the theoretical jargon; he was speaking about his work programme, the concrete thing, which is no problem for him*." The composition of Amaro members thus created this fragile symbiosis of the "background specialist work" and frontline presentation.

6.9 Texts and persons

Texts are not powerful per se, they are rather made powerful in different ways. After serving more as an "external expert" in 2007-2008, I returned in 2008-2009 to serve regularly in the office as Anna's secretary. My position was not announced as such, but I did mainly some work for Anna – she could use my writing in the way she wanted and to support her position. Having no official contract, I was the only "unregulated" person in the office. At that time Anna also returned to the position of the executive director. There were still shortages in administrative positions, so some help "came in handy". Anna could be partly freed from her

[68] Some points discussed in this chapter can be found in Synková 2010 article.

administrative burden and had more time to carry out some of her ideas that were even slightly independent of Amaro – like running a children's camp she bought. It seemed as if I were getting back to my work in 2005-2006 – primarily writing letters and requests to sponsors that no one had time to write in the projectized organization, as the energy is put rather into writing projects whose success can be to a certain extent controlled through a reflection on the quality of the application, than into writing letters that depend on a "chance" and are usually left without any response. Projects also have a clearer authorship than other written materials that were produced. The authorship is known inside the organization, although externally these are Amaro's projects ("Magdalena's prison project, Sára's educational project", etc.). In comparison, "secretary's" work largely goes without authorship that internally is much acknowledged. I again wrote to "millionaires" and other rich and powerful people, while feeling as an office curiosity. Occasionally I also translated some materials that were needed for the applications of the "writing people" into English. Our collaboration with Anna worked in such a way that she first explained to me to whom she would like to write and gave me just a few hints about how to do it. For example, Anna instructed me: "*Especially write there that it will be socially weak children using this."* I wrote something and Anna checked it. Then she signed the letters and I sent them out. In this way Anna could privatize the writing as she was signed as the author. Anna always preferred that others do the writing for her, so she could concentrate on meetings and representation. Writing was too time-consuming for her and she was worried that her writing "did not look good" because of the style (finding "the right words") and potential grammatical mistakes – "*it would look bad if there was a wrong Y or I*"[69], and she explained to me that she is not good in Czech and that "*she does not pretend that she is some intellectual*." Sometimes, it was also hard for her to decide which one of the seemingly synonymous words would better fit into a letter. The "girls" had so much of their own work that she did not want to bother them with her texts. What she stressed was that the most things she got in life were through talking to people directly, and so she was able to convince people in an alternative way to writing.

While in the case of the official institutional letters it was I, who formulated most of them, there were times when I accommodated to Anna's style – especially when some mails to

[69] In Czech these are considered "serious mistakes" of orthography and must be learned as the pronunciation is often the same.

fellow activists had to be quickly written and she dictated them to me. I was surprised how much she differentiated the style of the letter according to age of the person she wrote to and not only according to how well she knew the person. She said she would never use singular "you"-form when writing to Mr. Holomek, who is in his 70s and represents the oldest activist generation. She addressed him as "Dear Mr. Holomek" and ended her message by saying that she has her highest regards for him. To an activist younger than her, on the other hand, she used "hi" and a diminutive of his name. (I also noticed that from the new employees, the only one who could call Anna differently than "Ms. Šťastná", was Magdalena, who earned the respect by being older, having a family and working over time.) With younger people, even some joking in the e-mail messages and comments about their relationship was possible. These personalized e-mail messages mirrored ways Anna spoke to people and reflected the age hierarchies as no other organizational writing could do.

The quiet office life spent in "translating" Anna's wishes was disturbed by the developments on the political scene. The Vice-Premier of the Czech Republic and the Minister for Regional Development Jiří Čunek came with his concept of "dealing with socially excluded localities" (see Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj 2008), which was partly based on repression, on losing housing for minor offences like not sending children to school regularly, on putting people by the authorities (local policemen included) into three categories, which determined "ways of handling with them" according to their willingness to integrate and "neediness", and even attempts to split up families in the third category – moving people to guarded gender-separate lodging-houses etc. This material divided the NGO sector with sympathizers to the conception and its critiques. It also presented a document in partial competition to the Council's Romani integration plan that was being updated at that time. Čunek did not tell who was in his preparation team, and only the leader of the team, a head of a successful Romani NGO, was known. In such a way he tried to legitimate the conception and attracted some Romani and non-Romani experts and NGO leaders that mostly agreed to cooperate with him only if their names would stay "secret". Čunek was already negatively known for his eviction of Romani families from his city, but he was a powerful person and it seemed that his conception could be approved. Some NGOs claimed he was one of the few that wanted to deal with the situation and that he could provide some ministerial funds to build houses for "the best families", or bring long-term funding for the "worst families", others just did not want to lose their access to money and to the government. It was also not an exception to meet Romani representatives who supported the text without having read it, as

the language of the document was not the easiest one. In this situation, Amaro was asked to give some "secret comments" to the conception, and a "secret visit" from the preparation team was expected to come to Amaro and have a meeting with Anna maybe to convince her to cooperate. It seemed that the "secret team" was individually contacting many organizations, and especially the Romani ones.

The mood in Amaro was excited and I got a task to prepare a commentary. When we got through the comments, Anna concluded that it reminds her of a concentration camp system and she was shocked that the conception is so radical. She even imagined that Amaro would present an alternative conception (a document containing dozens of pages), that I would be the one who would write it and *"we will go with it to the Parliament."* Her ideas about my power, contacts and competencies differed from mine, but at least we went to one conference where the minister presented his vision which I criticized, we networked with some people from the state administration and academia. I organized a discussion about the material at the university. We wanted to discuss the conception broadly in Amaro and invited regional TSW coordinators to join the discussion, before the "secret delegation" would come and to be present during its visit, but it still proved to be difficult to make most people read the document. The insufficient "reading competence" of people blocked the possibility to effectively criticise such documents, and people were left just with my comments. Some of them did not even read those ones. The regional coordinators, understandably, still preferred personal communication[70]. I was frustrated that a more democratic discussion cannot be initiated in Amaro as people were blocked from a direct contact with the text, and that I had to "be the one who read it" together with the few office "writing people".

The other problem were the social networks existing between the actors – Mirek (TSW co-leader) did not want to criticize anything, as we all know "Pepa" (the Romani leader proposing the Čunek's conception) personally: "*I would not argue with him, because we all know each other. We will just chat a bit...*" The personality of Pepa and contacts with him were considered more important by Mirek than some "totally irrelevant" document. Why then should he read it? Texts that were dividing "experts" and that lead to fierce conflicts among them could not change his perception of Pepa, until he personally harmed Mirek. We

[70] Because of the continuing preference for personal contact over writing, Amaro often struggled with the control of phone bills.

had differed considerably in the perception of the people-text connection – I had problems with separating the text from the person who wrote it – if I perceive the text as "dangerous" then my evaluation of the text is extended to the author (the socialization in academia might contribute to this perception as "the theories" in social sciences are rather intertwined with people's personal political positions). Mirek could easily separate the two and was looking forward to the conversation with Pepa.

We differed not only in the perception of texts but in the amount of "threat" and "power" attributed to them. This proved when Mirek had to leave because of not fulfilling his work duties, which were considerably connected with "handling texts". Sára, the next coordinator of the programme, found a huge pile of papers and letters on his table. Many of them were very important and required a quick response, others could be connected to sanctions of losing credibility or inviting a project inspection. We could not understand how he could have survived the "paper pressure" for such a long time, but evidently, he did not consider the papers to be so threatening. Some signs of this approach to papers were shown already when he did not want to continue working on standards because "*it is all clear*", and when I once heard him talking to some other Romani NGO person that "*the gadže will do it*" – the administration was something that he, the famous Romani musician, would not deal with. In his case "not handling the texts" was not caused by the fact of having an inferior schooling, as in the case of many others. He was able to write long and sensible documents, he just considered that "unworthy", and instead of the work in Amaro, he rather concentrated on his profitable music career based on strategies of Romaniness and large social networks. People in Amaro also did not like his approach of distinguishing the worthy work – going somewhere personally – and unworthy work (like writing which can be done by the unworthy gadje). Although theoretically it constitutes a very interesting reversal of usual power hierarchies, such approach was not "useful" organizationally and did not contribute to building a positive work atmosphere in the office. Sára spent half a year by going through the papers and putting everything in order. Thinking about Mirek, I remembered one ironic comment from a non-Romani NGO coordinator about why he prefers non-Romani co-workers – "*they can do better reporting."* It seems that to do the reporting, the "competence" is not the only necessity. The willingness to "give the papers their power" is also an important factor.

Before Pepa's visit, the coordinators quickly went through the comments and found them reasonable; however, when Pepa and his team came to the visit, he, as a very likable person, convinced many people, Anna and Viktor included, that he was "trustworthy" (I and Lucie could not be present at the meeting and Magdalena also had some other work to do), explaining the categorization mainly as a "cosmetic fact" that is needed there for political purposes, and their secret status "only" as a measure against their fear of being criticized (even this reason sounded suspect to me anyway). The personal beat the textual in this case, and it seemed that the people who a few moments ago were critical of the nature of the text now supported it – or rather it did not change their loyalties towards Pepa. The paradoxical development of the whole situation was that Anna then told Lucie (who together with Magdalena and me strongly connected the texts to their authors and was not convinced about the whole issue) that if the invitation came she should go to the conception consultation meeting, because it was she who was able to comment on texts, and Lucie then wanted to send me there instead as I should be even better in conceptions than she.

Two weeks later we were preparing Anna to go to a TV discussion with Čunek. It was not known before what other people would participate and if Pepa would be present. Anna wanted to be critical mainly towards Čunek as he was finally the initiator of the conception, and as we learned, he actively engaged in its preparation, and he did not want to delete some of his favourite sentences like the one about breaking up the families. Finally there was not only he, but also Pepa, other "important Romani representatives" (as was stated in the programme by the moderator), a TSW, local municipality representatives and non-Romani inhabitants of one "media-famous excluded locality". Neither inhabitants that could be labelled as "excluded" were invited, nor "Romani" inhabitants of the locality, rather some Romani representatives who did not live in the locality themselves. The discussion started by complaints of local non-Romani inhabitants about "unadjustable citizens" and their behaviour, and the whole discussion centred on "misuse of social benefits" and concrete steps to be taken by municipalities. The discussion of nine people was very emotional and centred on things that troubled local "adjusted" inhabitants (Why the unadjustable have cars if they are on benefits? Why do they spread litter and make noise? Why don't they work compared to those Vietnamese who adjusted well?"). Comparisons of "unadjustable" to the ethnic category of Vietnamese, invitation of "Romani representatives", the conception being for "*deprived parts of cities inhabited mainly by the citizens of Romani ethnic group*" and the choice of the city motivated by the recent neo-Nazi marches again showed how the "ethnic

other" is inscribed in all the discourse. Although the "conception discussion" was advertised in the description of the programme, it got sidelined and the moderator introduced it only in the last minute, when finally it was not criticized by anyone, apart from one remark of a Romani representative that "it does not concern only Roma". The concrete measures in the conception were not discussed. The conception looked much less radical compared to many things that were said before, and Romani representatives finally nodded to Čunek's message that "we need more work with people early on" and supported tough measures against anyone who "breaks the law". The nature of this TV programme did not allow much discussion on the "texts", but it was drawn to the "just complaints" of inhabitants, without the possibility to reveal the structural context of the situation. This concept was ideal for having "a TV show", and the conception discussions seemed to be interesting for a restricted circle of people in a different "format".

Still Amaro was unsure what to do with a potential invitation to work on the conception and wanted to get more information on it and on reactions of other NGOs to better coordinate with them. Despite Anna's disagreement, other Amaro people agreed that I should contact a friend from my studies and scout organization that lead the biggest TSW programme and was considered "an enemy" by Anna. When he told me over the phone that "*he no longer trusts us*", it was not only I who fell into depression, but the whole office. Anna mentioned that she expected that reaction. I asked my colleagues what could have been the reason why he did not trust Amaro, as I did not have enough information about any possible incidents. Several incidents of competition in some localities were brought up, but none seemed to be so crucial, and there was also some cooperation between TSWs. I spent a sleepless night thinking about consequences of this telephone call for the position of Amaro, for my friendship and for my possibility to interact with other NGOs if I were connected to an "untrustworthy organization". At that time I hated doing home anthropology and its consequences.

Finally I was able to arrange the meeting between the leader, Lucie, Viktor (Anna would not like to meet "this man", and her distrust seemed to be quite personal and difficult to change) and I. We started by discussing the reason of the distrust, and it showed that one Amaro coordinator said to the municipality that the other organization ends its services there, which was not true, and it endangered the programme of the other organization, as the municipality trusted the Amaro coordinator. Lucie offered to investigate what happened and to secure

some communication links between the organization by exchanging contacts and instructing regional teams to tell her about any possible misunderstandings and conflicts. After getting over the initial issues, we thoroughly discussed the conception and the dangers and possibilities of its implementation. Lucie and the leader became to agree on many things, they discussed grant systems, coalitions, and even the controversies of "Romani hiring", which created distrust from the side of Romani organizations. The leader explained that the laying off of some Romani TSWs from their side was not deliberate, but the fact that they could not cope with the work, and he stated that they still have preference for Romani hiring. Lucie found out that some TSWs laid off by Amaro were previously laid off by the other organization. They started joking about some workers, management problems, and the meeting ended in a positive mood. Amaro position on the text was coordinated with other NGOs and some conflicts were clarified. The invitation finally did not come to Amaro, and the whole conception was forgotten when Čunek resigned pushed by his party members criticizing his corruption affair and, paradoxically to his agenda, his "misuse of social benefits". The text which took so much energy of people who tried to improve it and criticize it, days of discussions, and which mobilized many people was "buried" without any public excitement. It was too much connected to its political author.

6.10 Ties and ties

However, the meeting illuminated some other serious issues. When negotiating the meeting I made one mistake for which I got told off by Anna. I said on the phone that not Anna, but her son would come to the meeting. What I should have said, according to Anna, was just his surname (that was different from Anna's) and his position. I forgot to be careful about my code-switching in such an important moment! When Viktor came to the meeting neatly dressed in a suit and with a well-bred dog at his side, he presented himself as an executive director and gave the other director his business card. I have never seen Viktor speak so seriously and use so much of foreign vocabulary. He tried to create an image of a well-behaved professional deserving his position. He had to leave earlier, so he was not present at the socializing part of the meeting. While he was leaving he asked the other leader to be invited to some official opening of a programme or to a St. Nicholas party. The leader smiled and said that apart of one largely unofficial Christmas party, they have got nothing similar to what Amaro does. It seemed that his organization did not need many formalities, it "stood

for itself" through its quality service and did not do any "programme openings" with the local press and politicians. He was dressed in green army pants with big side pockets. Apart from the greater Amaro use of "formalities", Lucie had a remark I already mentioned in the chapter about "who is Amaro" – the leaders in the other organization were changing positions after two or three years, while the leadership structure of Amaro was very stable.

Anna was well aware of the fact that employing family members could be criticized from the outside and that it brings some dilemmas and dangers. The possibility to create self-employment in an NGO is quite a logical one, due to the fact that finding a job is a difficult task. Working for an NGO can be a sort of work that is not so much attractive for its financial rewards, but for the status and the nature of the job. Although TSW is exhausting, the TSWs that had to leave Amaro after one region refused to fund social work there, later found work only at a factory line. Josef, Viktor and his friend Dominik left their manual work and "quick business" professions to do office work, management, accounting and people counselling in Amaro. With the professionalization the pressure on their positions increased, but Anna's presence helped them survive in the organization. Anna once said to new employees: "*Josef is my son and he will be here till I will be in the organization*." At this time Lucie mentioned that only now she understood how the organization is important for Anna, and that there were much stronger relationships of dependence than in other organizations. The organization creates options for people that they would not have in some other environment. Anna was glad that she had her sons "under control", and that it was "*better than to have Josef on social benefits and Viktor in jail*." However, Viktor mentioned to me how he felt stressed while working as the executive director and leader of the work programme – he was responsible not only for the organization but for the job security of two other members of his family. After a period which he called a "rebirth" of the organization he changed his position to a less demanding management of production and sale of products made by clients. Because of the stress, he commented that he was now "*glad not to be in the management*", but the chance of working together in the environment of high trust was evaluated very positively together with gaining experience and having had the opportunity to try such positions. Nowadays, Josef serves as a driver and handyman after feeling burned-out. Josef and Viktor, together with Petr (who would like to keep his job till his slowly approaching retirement) and Anna are the only people that have stayed in Amaro from the time of the old office.

Lucie considered departing for a long time, as Viktor again fell into the power struggling mood of negating most of her suggestions and even shouted at her. When she announced her departure, he regretted what he did, as she was one of the key persons for the organization – not only for her "professionalism". Lucie knew the organizational history, she was on good terms with Anna, was able to motivate most of the people in the office and was the one who could mediate misunderstandings between Anna, Viktor and others. Organizational scientists would say that she had a strong bridging capital – the one that can link different social networks. Sára, who assumed her position of a programme director and became now one of the longest serving employees, felt that Lucie's skills gained by her long experience with the organization would be missed, and that actually the "old guard" lost their most important ally. After a young Romani with a university degree came to Sára's position of the TSW coordinator and started to direct in a rather managerial manner, Sára said to me that maybe it was good that these changes happened and she too would have to leave. She was too much connected to "what was before", and that slowed her down in her work as she had too strong bonds with people and directed the TSW programme through these bonds, which allowed differentiated treatment of certain TSW coordinators. The new people would not have such a problem to implement new things and be tough on everyone.

The family ties were no longer stressed in Amaro and pictures of some persons that "assured the credibility of Amaro" disappeared from the web site, one after the other – the singer and the band; some general "children" pictures remained, as well as the picture from the presidential meeting. For a long time the black and white picture of the prison counselling survived, until it was replaced by general Romani news taken from other media, and by organizational news. There are no more "unnecessary pictures" like the ones from the "organizational team-building" even documenting the evening pubs, there is rather a collection of texts – year-end reports describing programmes and number of contacts with clients. CV-like descriptions and photos of people in Amaro disappeared to make place for position descriptions and just a mail and telephone contact. The organization was a bit "de-personalized"[71] together with the delegitimation of the strategy: "*Everything I say is given by*

[71] Other organization's websites sometimes became totally abstract – no director or even children pictures, rather pictures symbolizing the organization's mission, like a lighthouse, or photos that do not even have much connection with the mission, but are aesthetically pleasing (like a yellow flower photo connected to a programme that cares about drug addicts). In one "abstract" organizational presentation, team descriptions could be found that presented a "typical" employee and employee statistics, but in a slightly joking manner:

experience that I have since my childhood." Anna rules by "telling", and in the beginning almost everything was "told" in the organization. Some theories (Bělohradský et al. 2010:135) say that the more the experience is subjective, the more he/she is involved in it and guarantees the experience by his/her "own body". "Professional" experience is much more generalizable and "less personalized". The professionals are no longer so much involved. They have their own personal experiences, but the general body of knowledge that is "written" somewhere helps them in their work.

"Personal" corrupts "professional". After getting scolded by Anna, the new Romani leader of the children's club felt very depressed, so Magdalena said to her that she should not be so emotional about her work and that it is important to separate home and work and that it seems that she has her whole life in her club. If she is not able to separate these two, it is bad and she should think about if she wants to stay under these circumstances, because similar things will come in future and she takes it very personally. It was meant as a well-intentioned advice, but the club leader thought about it and really wanted to leave the job and took her notice back only after being praised by Anna for some other work. Her leadership of the club was criticized for being too motherly, attracting younger children than needed, and she also invited one of the young mothers to help her in the club, while this mother brought her own children to spend afternoons in the club. Having a part-client in the club was not seen very positively and especially the fact that the mother brought her children to the club with her "to entertain them". The mother was neither an official assistant nor a client, and when spending the time with children at the camp, her position was again problematized as she did not identify totally as one of the leaders of the camp and did not want to criticize some children's behaviour and lose their friendship.

"People with university or higher education. People with high moral and ethical sensitivity. People with high working morale, performance and results. People who love themselves, their environment, life and learning. People with breadth of views and humaneness. 10 men, 17 women, from that 6 married men, 2 married women, 10 children, 2 expected, 11 dogs, 6 cats, 5 spiders, 4 scorpions, 3 horses, 2 parrots, 1 goat and 1 gecko." While Amaro was trying to create a very seriously-looking annual report even up to hiring once a professional PR organization and shooting BW pictures of all the people in the organization, another organization issued a report in the form of a tabloid, however containing all the important information about programmes, sponsors and the budget. As if the organization first needed "*People with university or higher education",* and only after that it was sure that it can make jokes on its web pages and in the "obligatory" reports.

Professionalism does not like continuities and fluidities. Stanton Wortham and Margaret Contreras (2002) described Contreras's set up of her English as a second language room for Latino students in one US school. Contreras, herself a part of Latino community, first noticed that in Latino families many activities are going on simultaneously in one space – cooking, music is playing, neighbours come, children are doing their homework, small children are playing. Children were even horrified when they were asked why they did not do their homework alone – they would feel lonely and no one would help them. This household functioning was designated as "spatio-temporal fluidity" and described in many other ethnographic researches. In such an arrangement people are able e.g. to do paperwork and simultaneously react to some ongoing conversations. This model is influenced also by the size of space in which people got socialized – it is more common in rural and poorer families, where people are crammed in small spaces. In "Anglo" families people were not doing so much activities simultaneously – children did their homework separately, TV was switched off when some other activity arrived, etc. Contreras tried to re-create the image of the Latino home in her ESL room – she did not have any clock there, students could enter and leave whenever they wanted, the space was not arranged for any frontal teaching, students could talk off-topic and then return to their work, they helped each other with their work. The room was very successful with Latino students, but the Anglo personnel mostly suspected that fluid boundaries mean lack of substance and professionalism. The room was described as "chaotic" and lacking in any serious academic work. Students were just "hanging around". Also the way she behaved towards the students was suspect, as Contreras was "too social" (2002:68): *"Some of them complained that in her quasi-maternal closeness with the Latino students Margaret was 'not professional.' By this they meant that she inappropriately blurred the boundaries between school and home. Margaret sometimes visited the students at home and she invited them to her home occasionally. A professional, according to other school staff, maintains distance from students, both in order to maintain authority as a representative of the institution and to avoid possible legal liability."* Contreras finally had to leave because of conflicts with the administration. As a paraprofessional she did not have much power to convince others that she is doing "culturally relevant pedagogy" by different organization of learning.

What people have experienced in Amaro were signs of fluidity, the reaction of the most people who came to the organization was similar to the "Anglo teachers", and signs of "maternalism" also became criticized, especially when they were supported by the real

presence of some "kin" together with playing grandchildren in the office. Fluidity got gradually uprooted. A professional is also imagined as a bounded person. Such person builds his/her expertise largely by his/her own work and is capable to do things individually, based on merits rather than connections. Relational or others-mobilizing models and personality constructions do not have such value for the construction of professionalism – apart from mobilizing other equally self-competent and auditable professionals. It is not enough to have around "people that do it for me", to mobilize capacities of others and to "have acquaintances". Dunn (2005:187-188) suggests that network- and others-mobilizing models were common during socialism, where reciprocal exchanges and networking were important for survival: *"Dependent upon one another, they emphasized their abilities to mobilize others to give or to act rather than their own abilities for autonomous action*." Such competencies helped some people to survive also in transitional periods and remained important for those who were excluded from the "professional" models. In this relational model, kin metaphors of organizational settings were common, and Dunn in her other research (2004) of a Polish baby food company showed how women workers interpreted their work in the company in connection with their mothering or how employees imagined the merge of their company with the Western one in the metaphors of marriage, and instead of a professional welcome that was expected by the representatives of the Western company, they organized a great "marriage banquet". New professionals in Amaro were sometimes even hostile to this relational mode, and when someone suggested that *"he is able to get things done*" through some favour connection, they said that this mode of thinking is the best way to get oneself imprisoned. Things should not be done through favours but through official canals. Professionalism thus needs a different personality mode – a self-mobilizing one first.

The relationships between relatives and friends are celebrated as an ideal of solidarity mainly if they stay in "their" private sphere and do not "contaminate" the public sphere or the image of a professional NGO that builds on moral implications. "The social" behind organizations seems to be delegitimated by the ideology of professionalism that likes to see public and private spheres isolated[72]. We can see similar development in the case of "amateurs". The term "amateur" has also some private connotation of being very much involved in his/her

[72] Except for cases where the personal story of a leader is at the foundation of an organizational narrative, e.g. the cases of some organizations created by hardworking businessmen, ethical celebrities and famous activists. These biographies then represent the moral legitimacy of organizations.

work, but sometimes not doing it in a standardized way. Amateurs have not much space in a professional structure, they can become "volunteers" whose place and tasks are more clearly defined and who are controlled by professionals. In the middle of 2009 I found that a new secretary was hired for the office and that actually, I am supposed to explain and hand over my work to her. I was joking that now they no longer need me, if there is a girl to do all my work. Anna protested against my interpretation but actually this was exactly what happened. I no longer had a place by the computer. The only unregulated place in the office that was based on the "acquaintances" with the people in the organization was "professionalized" and taken by a young student of social work, who was later expected to move to some more specialized position. This was a symbolic closure of my involvement with the office life – my position became obsolete and since then I could only play a role of an "external expert" or an occasional visitor.

Dichotomies of public and private play a role in some famous definitions – e.g. of bureaucracy by Weber (Gerth – Mills edition 2003:197): *"In principle, the modern organization of the civil service separates the bureau from the private domicile of the official, and, in general, bureaucracy segregates official activity as something distinct from the sphere of private life. Public monies and equipment are divorced from the private property of the official. This condition is everywhere the product of a long development. Nowadays, it is found in public as well as in private enterprises; in the latter, the principle extends even to the leading entrepreneur. In principle, the executive office is separated from the household, business from private correspondence, and business assets from private fortunes. The more consistently the modern type of business management has been carried through the more are these separations the case."* The bureaucracy is based on separation of these domains, and the definitions of corruption follow usually the same dichotomy – for Transparency International corruption is "*the abuse of public power for private profit*" (Harrison 2006:18). Corruption can happen when the boundary is "corrupt", when it does not divide clearly, and there are blurred areas of opaqueness. The dichotomization of the public and the private is frequently rather a description of an ideal (promoted e.g. by the World Bank and the anti-corruption movement etc.) than a reality in many states. By anthropologists, categories like corruption are considered to be rather a category of thought that are culturally relative, and they prefer to look at who defines these terms, which practices are considered inappropriate and why (Haller – Shore 2005; Harrison 2006). At the same time, there is a caution about the total deconstruction of the term as some "corrupting

behaviour" can have serious consequences for establishing and maintaining unequal power relations, helping some and harming other people. Definitions of morally inappropriate behaviour usually come from people that are more powerful, and thus corruption is not only behaviour, but functions as a normative concept. The attention should be thus directed to: "*how different people are differently positioned to claim that a particular practice is corrupt, or indeed to partake in corrupt activity"* (Harrison 2006:26). The inter-organizational critique often came from the organizations that could, because of their resources, more easily construct "a perfect bureaucracy", and targeted the "deficient ones".

The blurring of the boundary itself can also be used to acquire power by "the privileged" themselves. Janine Wedel (2007, 2004) describes how the blurring of boundaries between the private and the public, bureaucracy and business, national and international, formal and informal, the state and the non-state or even legal and illegal in the states of the former Soviet Union enabled the birth of some organizations she calls "flex organizations". Many of these organizations have an official status of NGOs. Their power and resources come from the possibility to use these blurred boundaries and control of interfaces between them. When trying to study them, she could not do it by studying their statements of purpose, she rather asked: "'*Who runs this organisation?' 'Who founded it?' 'Who is on the board of directors?' 'Who visits here?' and 'Whose word counts?' After as few as a dozen interviews in a half dozen different organisations, I was able to piece together the beginnings of a rough social network chart on who was connected with whom and in what capacities. I found the same set of names coming up – no matter which organisation was in question"* (Wedel 2004:223-224). Such networks are able to use public and private resources strategically. People in these networks are "institutional nomads" who cross the private and public divide. In comparison to Russia where these organizations have much more power and independence, Wedel shows that the role of different networks is important also in Poland, where the boundaries of the "state" etc. are better guarded and cliques do not run the state but rather nominate their members to the positions. Her remarks can be used to illuminate the situation also in the Czech Republic. It is evident that networking across the boundaries occurs also here, but it seems that there is a difference in the visibility of different networks. Families and "clan" structures of Romani organizations and political parties are mentioned quite frequently as if the non-Romani organizations were also not full of lovers, spouses, friends and sometimes parents and children. Networks of "strategic Romaniness" were criticized for being too essentialist etc., but there were not many analyses of how networking works in

Czech organizations in general. It does not seem that this situation would be caused by a larger number of Romani organizations or exclusively by a work of stereotypical dominant discourse. There is probably also a difference in the construction of the acceptability of private relationships.

6.11 Hiding the private

It is not that the private links would not exist in any organization, quite the contrary. Organizations, as Wedel shows (2007:13), are often "*dominated by or composed of members of a single informal group or network.*" They are the domain of people connected by friendship, acquaintance, similar social background and experience. These informal circles might be very important for running not only organizations but they play important roles in politics and business of the respective states. Sometimes they are even source of decision-making, people consult with each other. The loyalties of the members could stay within the network rather than with the organization providing the new job. Donors, in the effort to fund "civil society", frequently actually supported those transversal networks. Far from being present only in the post-socialist context, such networks exist in any state and according to Wedel they were poorly studied together with "*mediation, informal systems of communication and resource exchange*" (2002:3). Disclosing the social between "formal institutions" around us does not present a very popular subject of study. Also public institutions do not let themselves study easily as Abrams (1988:61) in his famous essay on "difficulty of studying state" notes: "*The presumption, and its effective implementation, that the 'public sector' is in fact a private sector about which knowledge must not be made public is all too obviously the principal immediate obstacle to any serious study of the state*." To let people know that public institutions are in fact often created from background power networks would diminish the popular belief that something as autonomous "state" exists and it would deprive the state of its legitimacy. There is then a need to hide the state's fluidity, its constructed nature, and propagate instead the "naturalness" of its power. Abrams (1988:77) calls a state "a triumph of concealment" – such a mechanism prevents us from reflecting the political processes "behind the state". Even "private institutions" hide their "backgrounds" as they too want to be seen as essentialized and stable entities, about which there is "no doubt".

Before Christmas of 2009, I attended a party held by a non-Romani NGO. I was invited because being an external collaborator in one of its projects. There were a number of my former fellow-students holding positions in this NGO, in NGOs networked with it, in government offices, and research and development agencies. These people were part of my own social network of friends, and at the same time they were professionals. Together we were fulfilling the network characteristic of the multiplexity – of having more roles towards each other. Sometimes the network was just loose, but kept together by some mailing lists. The NGO I visited was once started by a group of friends/colleagues, there were couples inside, but it seems its private networks were less visible. The organization was able to "hide them" better. Interestingly, some of the new employees in Amaro were also part of my networks of friends or were even my former students. These people continue to encourage their friends to apply for newly opened positions in Amaro, so another generation of friends might be coming. The main difference is that these friends are at the same time professionals that are usually fit for the job and no one can question their professionalism. Such professional-friendship links are highly evaluated in the office, because people can talk with their colleagues more personally if needed, they are more motivated to help you, and as they know each other better, establishing trust between them is easier. It does not differ much from the construction of trust described by Viktor for the "old" Amaro. Also Anna, when I discussed with her the paradoxes of kin and friendship, likened her relations with kin to our relations to friends: "*In the way you have friends, we have a family."* This did not mean that Anna wouldn't have any friends, but this was her response to my question about the presence of her family in Amaro that she generalized as the difference between Romani and non-Romani social networking. Rather than having an organization created 100 per cent from "complete strangers", there is today a replacement of dominant networks in preference of professional friends. The "new professional elite" finds kinship relationships definitely more illegitimate than friendship relationships, maybe precisely because it is used to build organizations primarily from (professional) friendships. Friendship is a more acceptable link.[73]

Professional friendships serve as knowledge-sharing webs; they provide good references and hiring tips, share information about job openings sometimes earlier than they appear "in public". For many people "professional friends" comprise a majority of their friendship

[73] This paragraph was reworked from Synková 2010 article.

circles. Being out of these professional friendship structures can be frustrating as some of my colleagues who came after several years from abroad noticed. Without being networked it was harder for them to find a job, they did not orientate in who belongs to whose network and who is in conflict with whom. Despite having "international practice" and sometimes even university degrees from abroad and the desire to help to develop local social sciences for a rather miserable pay, they were not always able to get positions in the Czech Republic (these were sometimes reserved for local networked scientists) and, disappointed, they often returned abroad, where they also felt a bit less pressure to be part of networks and where e.g. their "doctorate from Cambridge" was surely more appreciated. Know-how seems to be intricately linked to know-who.

As to the kin structures in recent organizations, both private and public ones, these are problematized, because kinship and economic domain are imagined as separate (although in fact they often mix and the existence of small family enterprises is rather common) and particularly the public domain is built in contrast to the private one. Antónia Pedroso de Lima (2000) who studied large Portuguese family corporations described that the family has to deal with a contradiction of their business activity. Even her interviewees were protesting against the suggestion that economy would have something in common with their family: "*In a world of meritocracy, the financial élite cannot afford to give the impression that it is perpetuated by blood criteria*" (2000:174). The wish to keep business in the hands of their family means to have family members at the top-executive positions, but the company should be kept profitable and any "poor management" would endanger it. The families resolve this not only through very intense children socialization to their collective project, where family and company narratives merge, but by huge investment in the professional training of their children in the best world economic institutions. In such a way the family recruits its own members to the top positions, because they are the most competent professionals around: *"The élite succeed in informally closing their frontiers in a formally opened democratic social system and, at the same time, become able to recruit their own people under strict principles of equal opportunities"* (2000:171). In this case the fact of being professional and thus deserving the position serves to hide the fact that people in the company are linked by kinship.

Even in the meritocratic structures private links can survive if they are overrun by professional competencies. Whatever private link we take, it appears that professionalism

has a capacity to neutralize its critique. If the presence of kin or friends in the organization cannot be interpreted as a direct incidence of nepotism and patronage and people came through a selection procedure, quality professionals are less scrutinized and their presence is more "morally clean". Competition morally cleans up the private and it makes it less threatening. "Professionalized private" does not endanger the processes of competition and meritocratic structures. On the contrary, those relationships which cannot be legitimated via the need to have professionals around seem much more inappropriate. This system thus legitimates rather the private links of elites that can invest in their professionalism and enter into the official competition. Olivier de Sardan (2003:11-12) uses Goffman's notion of membrane (1961) to explain the fact that the private finds its passages to the public, it interferes and overlaps with it. However, the passages of the private depend on context and the membrane filters differently according to situations or regions, and also different things are filtered. The presence of professionalism thus eases this filtering and entering of close people into organizations, it decreases the intensity of the private.

Conclusions

How much Amaro differs from the time it started and what its case says about the way the NGOs function? For the people that started the organization, the change was enormous. From a closely intertwined family model, where people learned from each other and did not have very distinctive roles to play, Amaro transformed into a large bureaucratic structure, where dozens of its employees from different regions do not know each other. In such a structure the need for the management and control through writing rose significantly, which brought power mostly to professionalized elites. In the last years Anna found the leadership position increasingly stressing and she was often very exhausted up to the point the others were concerned about her health. Her ideas were constantly challenged. She considers leaving the position and moving to the board of trustees, where she could still influence the job security of her sons. Such development is nothing unique in terms of organizational change. Other studies like Lisa Markowitz and Karen Tice (2001:6) describe very similar processes in the case of women organizations in the Americas. The organizations "from inside" become to resemble the "outside world" copying its inequalities and social order, creating different interest groups: "*These dynamics relate directly to the sort of institutional facelift involved in formalization. Dealing with broader publics requires individuals with certain capacities, typically consonant with privileged class background and higher levels of education*." The "formalization" thus seems to have comparable requirements all around the world – it is constructed in such a way that it needs an input of higher class and higher educated people at the leading positions. It is not surprising that the required ways of formalization are usually invented with the help of exactly these sorts of people. To respond to the exigencies of the standards of quality and social service law, the organizations attempt to professionalize. However, the most important incentive for change seemed to come not only from the general professional standards, but rather from the exigencies of different donors in terms of how the money should be handled, what constitutes a "transparent organization" and a "well-written project". This less official way of standardization executed the strongest pressure on Amaro, as it was directly connected to its ability to survive economically and receive grants. Those organizations that do not successfully professionalize are being sidelined. Social services were actually one of the last sectors where such process occurred. In business and politics, due to the higher profitability of these

sectors, the weaker actors were displaced much earlier and Romani political parties and companies often fell in this category.[74]

New employees who did not "live through" the organizational changes evaluate the organization largely on the basis of its "professionalism", as this became the prevailing discourse. To have an experience from the organization that has a "good name" values their practice and looks well in their CVs. Not only organizations build their prestige through professionalism, the individual social workers are also interested in "not ruining their reputation" by working in a "bad" organization. They too have to "feed" and prove their "legitimacy" as social workers as they are not supposed to stay in one organization during their whole career. Again and again I was surprised that what I considered already a quite "professionalized" structure was still lacking in their eyes. Sára kept saying "*we are still far from being professional*" and wanted to leave to let the floor to "new people" with no institutional memory, and one new TSW coordinator is still worried if Amaro will withstand the pressure of the large grant he now writes. One external tutor doing some training for Amaro TSWs repeated (in 2010) how "*it is at the crossroads and now it is important, where it will go and if it will sustain the pressure".* Only some new employees questioned the established norms of what "quality" means: "*In other organizations they take only university educated people, they have excellent evaluation system and when you wake up their employees at midnight, they are able to describe the organization well immediately. They have great indicators, they can sell themselves well and have promotion materials and methodics. Only when I compare it with what we are doing, albeit we do not have such a system, we are however giving more to those people, something else. However, this is not possible to account for in those figures*." It is hard to define what this "more" means. When asked, people speak about the respect and their involvement beyond the official definition of their social service. However, the organization's position in the NGO sector is based largely on things that can be "accounted for".

For some employees, this slightly critical discourse is probably important for building their organizational identity in the environment in which I hear for the fifth year in a row that Amaro is "at the crossroads". Would it choose the "good road" if it lost their less educated employees, who rather try to stay in the organization as their chances to get into a similar

[74] I am grateful for this comparative comment to Zdeněk Uherek.

position elsewhere are much weaker?[75] I would say that for Amaro this "crossroads" is rather a permanent state created by the surrounding evaluative environment. This environment is not only evaluative, but also "evolutionist". The successful organization is expected to become formalized, thus leaving the in-formal and unaccountable ways of functioning to "amateurs". At the same time people who promote the professional discourses often highly value the informal relationships they have with other people in the organization. However, the tension in their discourse is resolved by their ability to look primarily as professionals. Harrison (2006:23) says that: "*Legitimate behaviour is not so simply because some people accept it as such, but claims to legitimacy are usually closely tied with ability to exercise authority."* Professionals have more possibilities to legitimate informality and even to use it as an advantage by creating large professional friendship networks.

In Amaro, the whole process of transformation had its effects on how the organization perceived its Romaniness. In the beginning the organization employed mainly Roma and based its identity partly on that fact. Through the professionalizing process it lost many of its Romani employees in the office and also "in the field". The first generation of TSWs in regional programmes (2006-2008) were "Romani" from more than 80 per cent, the second generation (2008-2010) is around 44 per cent Romani. Amaro thus copies the development in many non-Romani organizations that were so much criticized for "not wanting Roma". When one fellow activist came to visit it, he criticized Anna for the fact that there are so many "palefaces" in the office – that Amaro is no longer Amaro, but he would call it rather "*Amaro gadžo*". Anna defended Amaro that the people do excellent work, but when discussing the reasons behind this shift, there were several suggestions why this happened – apart from the educational structure of both Roma and non-Roma, it was assumed that there was a difference in the establishment of these two TSW programmes. While in the first case it was created by contacting fellow Romani organizations and paying some of their people, in the second case, in the new regions teams were established by finding first the possible coordinators and then building the teams around them through another selection procedure. There were not "enough" Roma who would apply. It was not possible to maintain the image of a Romani organization based just on the number of the organizational employees. Apart from Anna serving still as the "face" of the organization, there are preferences for hiring

[75] When looking at the TSW programme, it could also be seen that employees who stayed the longest in Amaro were Romani women, followed by Romani men, non-Romani women and non-Romani men.

Roma, and the organization is happy if it is to the leading positions. Here it could search in the very thin elite of predominantly young educated Roma. Another concept of having "specific Romani methods" of functioning and social work was undermined by the general need to adapt, at least to some extent, the standardized and controllable management instruments. Discursively also the image of uniting citizens of Romani nationality and creating the communication space was sidelined to the preference of the support and integration of people threatened by social exclusion. Through the process of changing the methods of work and discourses, the goals of the organization have been also reformulated.

Despite all these changes Amaro does not want to survive only "as an NGO", but as a "Romani NGO". Leaders of TSW still think that Roma have better insight into the problems Roma can face, media and funders still search for "Romani organizations" from time to time. As the central notion of effectiveness and professionalism penetrating the organizational world is hard to discard, Amaro rather tries to accommodate it. Professionalism and Romaniness do not have to be in contrast, but should be combined. In such a way, Amaro would gain the recognition of professionals and would not lose a certain symbolic capital deriving from its organizational identity. However, such a reformulation stays more on the surface level and does not mean that Amaro would think seriously of changing its methods of work back to the "intuitive ones", or returning to getting prestige through organizing prestige Romani balls. The return to these ways of functioning was made less possible by the need to closely monitor the process of social work, and also less desirable as the organizational prestige is built rather on such things as successful projects or data from annual reports. What is neither much probable is reviving the idea of a cultural and art focused organization running some minority media, as the dozens of employees can structurally survive mostly on the social service (or educational and more peripherally human rights) projects that get (and will get) the most substantial funding. The Romaniness can bring some "added value", but the organizational survival is not dependent on it. In order to be accepted by other NGOs, the reformulated version of Romaniness is built primarily on the background of professionalism. This articulation of Romaniness would arise primarily in larger organizations with more complex social service projects coming from other and more diversified sources than from the local municipalities, whose grants are smaller and where organizations are closer to different patronizing networks. The processes of professionalization and reorientation towards "social topics" I have described in Amaro mirror the general development in higher levels of politics (see further).

With the reorientation of prestige sources from local fellow Roma or some individuals from the municipality to the "project world", organizations are subjected to the perpetual self- and others-evaluation, where they are encouraged to change and develop in order to reach the hardly attainable ideal. Organizations are influenced not only by the discursive fields in which they exist, but also by their organizational histories that attract certain groups of people and form certain organizational identities. These fit more or less into the prevailing visions of what an organization should look like. They are also deeply influenced by the monitoring and reporting systems that funders ask for. Ebrahim Alnoor (2005) finds in these structures not only the one-way power relationship of a funder towards an NGO, but reveals how without these reports, funders would have problems with building their own prestige and legitimacy. They are also dependent on the good reporting of NGOs in order to get information and to show off with the examples of a "good practice" and "money well spent". However, the fact that the funders too have their ways of gaining prestige is rather disguised in the reporting process. Grant administrators at the ministry foremost want to deal with "unproblematic" organizations, which report well and do not ask too much questions. However, their seniors want to see "successful projects", that can be discussed at seminars as examples of "Romani integration" and which can benefit the image that the government knows how to bring solutions. Finally, as it is often "European money", the government is also interested in looking well as its distributor. The reports that organizations make thus serve to produce prestige on different levels – at the level of the person who knows how to write them in the organization, at the organizational level, where good reporting raises organizational credibility, at the level of funders who can enlarge their expertise, and even at the level of the state, whose bureaucrats search for any examples of successful practice that can be presented at international meetings or "transferred" to other countries. Maybe it would be better to say that on their way, the reports help to raise different kinds of capital of many actors that deal with them. They raise chances of promotion, getting new grants, or being seen as a wise distributor of money and policymaker.

It can be seen that these techniques of legitimation serve not only to „NGOing" (becoming, doing and staying an NGO), but to many other personal and institutional processes. What happens to organizations that cannot do or do not want to do so much "writing"? Elizabeth Dunn (2005:190-191) is sceptical about the fact that alternatives can be included in the system: *"Although normative governmentality claims to be totalizing and to be able to*

encompass whatever it touches inside its own system, it is often unable to digest social forms, cultural values, and infrastructures that are truly foreign to it." As the system is built on "comparability", the organizations that do not lend themselves to that requirement become so incomparable, that they rather stay out of the system of larger grants, social services and professional prestige. As Amaro understands the dangers of being "left out", it tries to combine different resource-access strategies and hire people that can bring it some prestige and that are better socialized into the professional networks. In this process it invests heavily, and in the view of some actors "excessively", in its external image. It has decided to be a professional Romani organization, one that can be pointed at as a "good example" in the current prestige structure. In such a way it tries to stay inside of the range of organizational forms that are currently imaginable for an NGO.

Some organizational theoreticians (Schneider 2009) promote the view of an organizational social capital that is independent of the individual social capital of its members. According to them, organizational ties and networks should survive despite the changes in an employee body, and also the trustworthiness of an organization should not change. However, when looking "inside" organizations in a close scrutiny, we rather find how individual and organizational capitals are differently interconnected. Some organizations are much more "personalized" than others, and if a certain individual leaves the organization, it can lose access to important unofficial networks. The trustworthiness of individuals is also not so independent of the organizational trustworthiness; leaders are often the ones who symbolize the "quality" of an organization, which seems to be transferred to the employees. We can illustrate this on the fear of some new Amaro employees that by working in Amaro, they will lose their professional trustworthiness. The research also shows that professional and employee networks can no longer be so clearly differentiated from the kinship and friendship ties, as in practice they often mix, and it means that colleagues are very often linked by multiple roles towards each other. These networks are central for an organizational survival and its capability to be informed, connected, and trustworthy. The dichotomization of public and private present in studies of organizations can be rather attributed to the discourses on bureaucracy and professionalism.

What was happening in Amaro throughout the last years was predominantly the establishment of divisions. Relationships with clients became less "friendly", the organization more strictly defined the roles and positions, professionals coming to the

organization stressed the need to distinguish between "work" and "life" and they tried to limit their involvement with the organization beyond their contract. Family model of interdependency does not appeal to them so much. However, at the same time they continue to foster their professional friendships and often spend their leisure time with people from similar profession, they love and marry inside the profession. It rather seems that private is not "banned" altogether, but made more acceptable when it does not undermine the construction of professionalism. The reason why the informal social networks that exist are not so visible is that the organizations legitimation strategies have to be built rather on their image of transparent and accountable institutions. Disclosing organizations as "social" formations that can be divided into different cliques supporting their vision of the organization and combining personal and professional networks to support their claims could endanger this image. This might also be a reason why there are still not so many thorough organizational anthropologies, but rather more researches that view organizational functioning only "from the outside".

Despite the rhetoric of professionals about the desired division between the public and the private, the research showed that in fact this division is largely instrumental and professionals effectively use their private networks for the benefit of their organization and their careers. They largely consider this "natural". Indeed it is often difficult to distinguish which one of their social networks is "private" and which one is "public", the networks often have a hybrid quality. This trend of the melting border between the work and personal life was described as part of the symptoms of the "new capitalism" (Maršálek 2008:1052). Contacts are evaluated according to their usefulness and people should use them to further different personal or even organizational "projects". We can see that it contradicts what Weber has expected from a credible bureaucratic organization.

Also, despite the official rhetoric that is built on Weberian distinction, the whole system of functioning of Czech NGOs actually favours the cultivation of private relationships, and in some areas makes them essential to the organizational survival. What was first refused by Lucie as "politics that NGOs should not do" became gradually acknowledged as very helpful – like having contacts at the ministries and getting first-hand information. The fact that

ministries or political parties do not offer many official ways of how NGOs can reach them[76] brings the power to the hands of individuals who are currently in some position, and makes NGOs dependent on building the relationship to this individual (who changes from time to time, so the process starts again), rather than establishing inter-organizational contacts. Grant procedures and the level of published information differ at each ministry or municipality – unpublished information range from the rules of decision-making, membership in commissions, regulations for becoming a member of a commission, information on voting of a commission, to why exactly the project was/was not supported. The list of all applicants with exact amounts received is often missing and doubts about the preferential treatment of some applicants arise very regularly. NGOs with better networks have more possibilities to obtain hidden information and they would be foolish not to use them in the system that lacks official access points. When decision commissions are composed of people that often favour their acquaintances, NGOs counteract by using also their private networks to get the information about the ways commissions tend to decide. It sometimes has no point losing time and sending an application to the commission, which has already its long-term favourites. These networks can be supported by the mobility of individuals into the state structures that opens up to professionalized individuals. Unequal position of NGOs towards the state structures is signalled also by the prevailing one-way direction of this mobility.

The Agency for Social Inclusion became one of the important actors that recently attracted some of the most professionalized cadres from NGOs – the former local coordinator from the largest non-Romani NGO became its director and some people (not only) from his NGO were successful in other selection procedures. These people filled the positions of the so-called *local consultants* that are directly working with the broad range of actors in 23 municipalities entering into cooperation with the Agency. These municipalities now prepare researches, inclusion strategies and projects with the Agency that can bring millions of Czech crowns from the European Social Fund. The new liberal-conservative government elected in 2010 that cut the budgets of many state bodies continues to support the Agency, and it grows. The government largely favours the social interpretation of the situation over the ethnic one. The current Prime Minister Petr Nečas when leading a meeting at the Council for Romani Minority provided an explanation based largely on the social exclusion

[76] At the governmental level there is only the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations founded in 1999 that has a "weak" consultancy status.

reasoning and indicated that he does not speak about all Roma: "*The unemployment is a dominant social problem of socially excluded Roma that consequently conditions their exclusion in other domains of life*." (Rada vlády pro záležitosti romské menšiny 2010:20). It seems that the most effective argument to reach the ears of the current government is not simply that "discriminating Roma is bad, because it is racist, or targeting a distinct ethnic group", but that "exclusion of Roma is also costly" – as they are made "unproductive" in terms of the job market. In the above-mentioned meeting, arguments from the 2008 research of the World Bank were reminded – the yearly economic losses in productivity cost 367 million euros and yearly fiscal losses because of low taxes, and high spending in social security costs another 233 millions of euros.

In its hiring practices the Agency declares a strictly meritocratic approach, which became questioned in Romani media, when a refused Romani applicant complained that it "*did not hire educated Roma despite being a 'Romani Agency'*" (Kováč 2010:3): "*I am sure that I, thanks to my education, work experiences, but also especially due to my Romani origin and knowledge of the target group and patterns of its functioning, can be an asset for the project of the Agency for Social Inclusion in Romani Localities. Moreover, as an employee of the Agency I could have also been a certain example for other Roma, because they could convince themselves that 'where there is a will, there is a way'. I was putting my maximum efforts, but unfortunately it again did not work out. Again, I confirmed to myself that even pro-Romani organizations promoting Roma do not care for Roma working there."* Motivated by one of the activists criticizing the Agency and previously connected with the Council, Ivan Veselý, he sent the article to the media and to many important personalities in the Czech Republic and in Europe working in this field. Kováč uses more complex statement than "being Romani is a qualification", which illustrates the possibilities of only a very small group of educated Roma in reformulating (and benefitting from) the discourse of Romaniness in direction towards the one of professionalism.

The director of the Agency replied to Kováč's critique (Šimáček 2010:6) that it is important to have Roma at key positions, and that Mr. Kováč is generalizing his personal non-success to all Roma. In fact, he writes, in the selection procedure for positions of five consultants to which sixty candidates applied, two positions "*were filled by educated Roma*": "*Apart from education we have assessed mostly practice in terrain and in the cooperation with local governments, and also charisma – or, if you want, the convincingness of the applicants*

during their presentation as the test of their ability to be good negotiators. We are playing a high game – it is important to put together such a team of local consultants that could convince mayors; who will have broad practical experience to succeed in scholarly debates, who could prepare grant applications for structural funds." Šimáček signalled that Kováč probably did not have these qualities and attempted to show that there is now a demand only for highly qualified workers, "Roma included".[77] Such development confirms the general technocratic trend in the higher policy levels. Changes affected also the Council, which nowadays no longer seems in such an opposition to the Agency; Šimáček also became its official member. The members that were inactive and were criticized for sitting on the Council only because of being Roma were replaced by more active members coming from established Romani NGOs and from the regional coordinators for Romani affairs. The Council became a ministerial-level body, which strengthened its position.

From Amaro members, these new changes created opportunities for people like Lucie. After spending a long time in management positions in Amaro and in supervision, she became one of the lower-level assessors of grants addressed to the Agency, and she gained further experience in how a well-written grant should look like. She commented that in the future a position of a local consultant would interest her, but that it must be really demanding. In the way the state and NGO sector work nowadays, she has quite a lot of opportunities after becoming a subject that is desired – an educated professional with practice. Organizations working "with Roma", "with socially excluded Roma" or "with the socially excluded", according to their different discourses of which the social exclusion discourse has become more dominant on the governmental level, do not form an exception to the general trend in the NGO sector.

One thing that remains to be mentioned is that despite the obvious processes of growing interorganizational and intraorganizational differences these issues are not openly discussed among and moreover inside organizations. If there is some individual "complaint" that people do not have equal access to mobility opportunities, it is rather dismissed as a complaint from someone who is showing his or her "incompetency", i.e. as a complaint that is "illegitimate" in the established system. Maršálek (2008) discussing Boltanski and

[77] He did not address another critique presented by Kováč that the interviewer allegedly told him that he would be invited to the second round of job interviews, and he was just sent a message that he was not invited.

Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism* points at their argument that the whole new apparatus of legitimation has been built, which is based on passing un/successfully the series of projects that assure the legitimate occupation of different positions. Part of this apparatus is the mechanism of assessment and hierarchization of the individuals in the social space. If the organizational functioning is based largely on successfully passing projects, no one should be surprised that NGOs do not attain their more general societal goals. Also for an "unprofessional" NGO founder such functioning does not make NGO the most ideal medium for obtaining a respected position. If this work has shown that the system pressures influence what NGOs actually do and that their actions and rhetoric is constructed with respect to maintaining their legitimacy, serious thoughts have to be given to the limitations of these processes. What consequences this project-regime has not only in "social services" but for example for participating in activism should be the subject of further discussions. Access to successful „NGOing" is definitely unequal.

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