The Impact of the European Union's structural policy on the development of civil society in Poland

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Abstract

This research discusses development of Polish civil society under the impact of the European Union's structural policy. After Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, civil society organizations became entitled to apply for funding from the European Social Fund. Basing on document analysis and a case study of a project carried out within the framework of the Community Initiative EQUAL, the involvement of civil society actors in the employment policy and its consequences are discussed. The analysis shows that enrollment of the civil society actors in the project of good governance has implications for the power relations between them and the European Union. Techniques of good governance orchestrate the settings for the actions in the field of civil society and enable the European Union to govern this field at a distance.

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Table of contents:

Introduction

In 1991 an official banquet of a conference titled "Economies in Transition: Management Training and Market Economies Education in Central and Eastern Europe" was held in the U.S. Department of Treasury. Janine Wedel (1998) in her book "Collision and Collusion" gives a short review of that event. According to her, the most frequently repeated phrases were "the need for transition to democracy and a market economy and the need for training, upon which everyone agreed" (p.1).

The collapse of the Communism, at the beginning of the 90s, has brought an issue of the future form of the Central and Eastern European countries. From the very beginning it was more or less clear for both sides, the 'newly recovered' and the old democratic and capitalistic regimes, which way to go. The way was supposed to lead to democracy and liberal economy. As Andrzej Rychard (2000) points out, the notion of a "transition to" implies a teleological perspective (p.10). The idea of the 'transition to' has become an eagerly repeated metaphor that indicated 'the right direction' and 'final destination' to be reached by the Eastern and Central European countries. As Attila Melegh (2001) points out, the target of this journey was the 'normalcy', and the 'normalcy' equaled the West.

One of the components of the 'normalcy' was a developed civil society. In the case of Poland, this development began in the 1970s with the manifests of dissidents. However, it was mainly thanks to the Western donors' programs and policies, which were established after 1989, that the current idea about civil society started to be associated with the realm of non-governmental organizations. The two major sources of civil society assistance were in the USA and within the structures of the European Union. From the moment of Poland's accession to the European Union most of the American funding opportunities ceased to exist and the importance of the European Union's policy for Poland significantly increased.

Therefore, in this study I find it relevant to give an account of the mechanisms of European Union's policy of developing civil society in Poland.

After 1989, many Western governments and agencies rushed to help Eastern and Central European countries in building democracy and a liberal economy. In 1997, the European Council decided to start access negotiations with ten countries, including Poland. As a result the European Union established Poland-Hungary Aid for Restructuring the Economy (PHARE), the largest aid program to the region. PHARE was supposed to prepare those countries for EU accession. It was primarily aimed at supporting the process of law and infrastructure adjustment, but it also delivered financial and technical assistance for civil society. In contrast to US aid, for example, EU assistance to Central and Eastern Europe was structured in the way that involved the recipients. Many of the PHARE programs were administered through Program Management Units, which were established inside the government ministries or in parallel with them. The EU representatives, assigned as experts to the programs, worked alongside their local counterparts and did not take the director positions, which were occupied by the locals. As the U.S. assistance for the Central Europe was diminishing, the EU's PHARE program continued to evolve in the direction of assuring support for EU pre-accession preparations. It implied assistance in adjusting the political, economic and legal systems with those of the European Union (see Wedel 1998).

There are two main initiatives in Central Europe that have emerged from the PHARE program since 1991: "social dialogue" and "civil society". Wedel reports that "social dialogue activities were designed to bolster NGOs in the region by providing information, legal services, training, and grants for projects, while under the civil society program, PHARE has supported locally administered NGOs with funds (…) administered through the EU delegation in the region" (Wedel 1998:85). PHARE has also financed NGOs working in social welfare areas through grants administered by the labor ministries in Hungary and

Poland, as well as financed cooperation and exchange between higher education institutions in nations of the European Union and those of Central Europe (see Wedel 1998).

PHARE expired when Poland joined the EU in 2004. From that time on, Polish civil society organizations have gotten assistance mainly from the European Social Fund and the European Youth Program, as many of the American or Canadian agencies ceased their help for the new EU Members and moved on to the East or the South. The European Social Fund is now the biggest resource of money not only for the Polish NGOs, but also for the local governments and the service institutions of the labor market. The ESF has a very clear agenda for improving the access to and the conditions on the labor market in the European Union. As the ESF aims at decentralizing the employment policy by brining it to the local level and involving civil society actors, I am interested in my thesis in the possible consequences of the European Union's employment policy for the development of civil society in Poland.

The object of my studies is civil society in Poland and its evolution under the impact of the European Union's structural policy. The terms – civil society and the European Union – are too vague for conducting a scientific research and they need to be defined and operationalized. Therefore, in chapter 1 of my thesis "A critical review of the literature" I answer the following questions: what is the history of the concept of civil society and what is the anthropological critic of it? Here, I position myself within these different debates and continue with the presentation of the recent history of this concept in Poland. The critical review of literature about civil society is of great help for me in the analytical chapter 4 "Analysis of European Union discourse about civil society", where I analyze the discourse about civil society as it appears in the European Union's official documents as well as in the everyday practices of the local civil society activists in Poland. The prior review of the existing definitions and interpretation provides me with a background for positioning the European Union's civil society discourse. My approach to the studies of civil society refers to

the anthropological critical tradition, which aims at unmasking the power involved in a particular understanding of the concept of civil society. However, as I proceed throughout my empirical analysis in chapter 4 "A case study: the EQUAL project" I move from the critical anthropological approach towards the structural one. I do it purposefully, as the structural approach enables me to give a description of the mechanisms by which a particular concept of civil society is constructed in local discourses and practices. In that chapter, I refer to the framework of the actor-network-theory and follow the process of enrollment of various actors into the project of employment policy, which, at the same time, involves enrollment into a particular project of civil society. Therefore, the application of the structural approach to my thesis is an instrumental one. It helps me, in the end, to return to the anthropological critical discussion about the concept of civil society as a constructed one. This apparent conflation of two different approaches gives me an opportunity not only to pose a critique of the European Union's concept of civil society, but also to account for the process in which it is constructed in practice.

In chapter 2 "Theoretical framework" I present a conceptual framework that equips me with an adequate language and concepts for discussing the process of making the employment policy and the power relations between the European Union and the sphere of Polish civil society. I suggest that the anthropological, critical approach to development studies that sees policy as a rationalizing technical discourse concealing hidden purposes of bureaucratic power of dominance (see Escobar 1995, Ferguson 1994) might be enriched by the organizational approach of governmentality studies and actor-network-theory. I join these three perspectives in such a way that allows me to account for power relations in the global local issues, which are of prime importance to development studies. At the same time, these joint perspectives allow me to look at the processes of translating political rationality of the European Union, into problems, which gain acute importance in particular local contexts. I

also account for practices of establishing links between ideas and concepts, enrolling and mobilizing other human and non-human actors for the common projects in order to make them successful, coherent and durable.

Further in my thesis, in chapter 4 "Analysis of European Union discourse about civil society" I analyze the European Union's discourse about civil society. In an attempt to disguise the normative and epistemological assumptions about of the realm of civil society I refer to the official documents issued by the European Commission and the European Social and Economic Committee and to the discourse and practices of the local civil society actors in Poland.

Next, in chapter 5 "A case study: the EQUAL project" I present the empirical material a gathered during me research in Poland. I give an anthropological description of one project conducted in Toruń within the frame of the Community Initiative EQUAL. Here I focus more particularly on the process of problematization, enrolment, interessement and mobilization of the human and non-human actors that ensure success and stability of the European employment policy. I investigate the mundane and technical mechanisms, such as auditing, monitoring, evaluation, which are deployed in this project. I perceive them as technologies of government, which aim at making up self-governing subjects and allow the European Union to govern them at a distance. Here I argue that the concept of good governance understood as a particular political project becomes a powerful non-human agent. Other non-human actors, such as the concepts of democracy, participation, empowerment are enrolled into the project of good governance in order to justify it. The concept itself has consequences for the actions of agents acting in the sphere of civil society. I claim that the political power of the project of good government is disguised by the fact of its seemingly technical character.

In the final conclusions of my thesis I turn again to the more traditional concept of structural power and redefine it. I show that the technical strategies deployed by the concept

of good governance orchestrate settings of the actions taken up in by the civil society actors. They acquire a hegemonic position as they slowly become a norm of social practice in the field of civil society. As far as the concept of structural power is, in a sense, a static one describing power inequality as a result of different processes, sociology of translations gives an opportunity to follow the process, in which the structural power is gained over a particular field. In this case, I argue that the process of enrollment into the project of good governance results in gaining by the European Union structural power over the field of civil society in Poland.

1. A critical review of the literature

1.1. A brief history of the concept of civil society in Western Europe

Like most of the concepts in social sciences, civil society has its political bias. It became an eagerly applied, utilized and discussed term not only among sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists but also politicians, activists and experts from international institutions like United Nations or the European Union. Joerg Forbrig (2004) notes that the evolution of the concept of civil society is a reflection of the changing historical, cultural, social, political and economic realities, in which human communities exist, function and develop. In this chapter, I give a brief account of the evolution of the concept in the Western European tradition in order to recognize differences between them and locate the roots of the civil society definition present in the European Union's official document. At the same time, I provide a critique of this concept that recently came from the anthropological studies of civil society in non-Western regions.

As a genuinely Western concept civil society has a long and diverse history (see Chimiak 2006, Comaroffs 1999, Hann 1996). It roots back to the ancient Greeks' discussions about the role of an individual, state, and society, while its early modern articulation in the eighteenth century has provided the inspiration for the contemporary debates. The thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, who are often considered to be the "founding fathers" of the modern concept of civil society, introduced an extended catalogue of institutions rendering the concept. They included a free market economy along with the rule of law and a limited and accountable government.

First thoughts about civil society as a private legal realm emerged in the works of Hobbes and Locke in England (see Forbrig 2004, Hann 1996). This modern version of civil society had its major advocate in Immanuel Kant, who perceived civil society and the state as opposing points of view. According to Forbrig, the Scots and subsequently Kant, equipped

both sides, the state and the individual, with competencies in a somewhat more balanced relationship. At the same time, they contributed to the introduction of a "great dichotomy" (see Bobbio 1993), that is the distinction between public and private, which later on developed as a dichotomy between state and society (see Forbrig 2004). Montesquieu located civil society between the people as individuals and the central power. According to him, it functions as a mediator and thus has the intermediary position between the intimate sphere of each individual and the state (see Forbrig 2004). The tradition of the Scottish Enlightenment and other eighteenth century philosophers is referred to in the European Union's official documents about civil society, which draw a thick line between civil society and the state. I elaborate on this in the chapter 5 "Analysis of European Union discourse about civil society".

Chris Hann (1996) suggests James Ferguson as a good starting point for the anthropological discussions about civil society. Ferguson, one of the great figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, set firm basis for an important distinction between an individualistic approach to civil society and the one that acknowledges the need for basic collective solidarity in a moral community (see Comaroff & Comaroff 1999, Hann 1996).

Later on, in the nineteenth century, important foundations for today's civil society debate were laid by Hegel. He was the one who first made a distinction between political and civil society (Howell and Pearce 2001: 17). He perceived it as a sphere of spontaneous and free economic actions of the citizens. Having connected this idea with the economic liberalism, he once again drew a thick line between civil society and the state.

Alexis de Tocqueville takes a pluralistic approach to civil society. In the Tocquevillean perspective, civil society is the realm where individuals associate in pursuit of some common goal. Tocqueville introduced the important notion of 'association', which is distinct from other forms of social life like family structures and traditional communities. Associations are voluntarily formed by individuals, who realize the shared character of a particular issue. They

11

are set apart from such forms of social life that are not a matter of choice on the part of the individual. Civil society, understood as associations, is both the bearer of a moral project and the prime motor behind the development of society.

Karl Marx takes a critical stand on the concept of civil society. For him, civil society, which occupies the domain of economic interactions through the market, is "an illusion that needs to be unmasked" (Hann 1996:4), as it serves to disguise underlying realities of class exploitation through state institutions. Later on, Antonio Gramsci saw the role of civil society in maintaining cultural hegemony of one social group over the whole society as the ethical content of the state (see Gramsci 1971). He argued for a careful analysis of culture and ideology among the masses of civil society as a means of the struggle to transcend the inequalities of class society (see Hann 1996). The critical Marxist Gramscian approach provides me with a possibility to put a question mark by the commonly held definitions and practices of civil society. I take on this invitation to critically assess the European Union's concept of civil society. At the same time I propose to investigate the process of its construction in a way that Marxian analysis, for a lack of analytic leverage, cannot do.

In the current debates the liberal strand, which underlines the opposition between the state and civil society, acquired an almost hegemonic position. Hann hardly finds any accounts that "leave room for exploration of alternative forms of social relationship to those assumed by liberal-individualism, of culturally specific patterns of generating trust in human communities that are growing ever more crowded and complex" (Hann 1996:5). The liberal-individualist understanding of civil society that emerged in the modern West sees civil society as "a concrete and quantifiable thing, usually with the implication that a large dose is indispensable in the general quest for good government" (Hann 1996:18).

This approach has usually conflated descriptive purposes of analysis with normative ones, and found its practical application in the development programs launched especially for the

Eastern European countries after 1989. Civil society has been utilized and materialized by the development experts in the form of NGOs (Howell, Pearce 2001; Sampson 1996, 2004), which compose a unified realm in opposition to the state. The European Union is definitely joining this trend and contributing to sustaining such vision about civil society.

There have been heated debates about the actual meaning of the concept of civil society. The usual definition of civil society as a realm between families and kin groups on the one hand, and the modern state on the other, does not suffice in all studied cultures. He points out that there is a need to recognize that other societies have organized their social and political life in terms of different ideas which and often incommensurable with the Western ones (see Hann 1996). John L. and Jean Comaroff (1999) write in the introduction to the book "Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa" that the idea of civil society "has proven impossibly difficult to pin down" (p.5). It is known principally by "its absence and incompleteness" and evokes "a polythetic clutch of signs" like "society against the state", "voluntaristic associations", "bourgeois public sphere", "democracy", "a domain of popular opinion", "moral sentiment" or "a 'new cultural fabric' capable of restructuring identities, of challenging existing monopolies of wealth and power" (Commaroff & Comaroff 1999:2-7). Its incoherence, promiscuity, and polyvalence might compromise the term as an analytical tool.

Anthropologists have, thus, a special task in studying civil society. It does not aim at measuring the level of its development or the organizational efficiency of civil society associations, but it indicates political biases of this concept and searches for a wider variety of phenomena expressed in everyday practices that are not of Western origin but are yet the manifestations of civil society in different cultural contexts (see Hann 1996). Anthropologists should take up the effort of understanding why and how civil society "serves as a tool of social imagination, in particular times and places; how these imaginations interact (…) with

the logico-philosophical traditions of Western intellectual endeavor; why it has come to dominate recent discourse" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999:8).

Chris Hann (1996), in the introduction to the book "Civil society: challenging western models", offers a straightforward critique of the western scholars that propagate the concept of civil society as a form of social organization that is barely adequate to the current realities of their own countries and was developed in historical conditions that cannot be replicated at the present time (Hann 1996:1). The claim Hann makes in his text is about considering and investigating ethnographic particulars without taking an Enlightenment stand (like e.g. Ernest Gellner, see 1994). The task is, therefore, to "particularize and to make concrete: to show how an idea with its origins in European intellectual discourse has very different referents, varying significantly even within European societies" (Hann 1996:2). Hann proposes a positive project of comparative analysis that would utilize a looser understanding of civil society, which refers to the "moral community, to the problems of accountability, trust and cooperation that all groups face" (Hann 1996:20). This approach equals all the societies in a capacity to establish their own version of civil society and takes the focus point off of the opposition between the state and society. Civil society understood in this looser manner inevitably possesses a political potential, as the communities are held together by shared values and ideals. Imagining civil society as a sphere free from politics is equally naive as perceiving transferring responsibility from state to 'expert' groups as a de-politicization process (see Hann 1996:24).

John L. and Jean Comaroff (1999) pose yet another a question related to the discussion about civil society. They ask about the elective affinity between the two seemingly incomprehensive logics of the neo-communal ethic of civil society and the individualistic and materialistic spirit of late capitalism (Comaroffs 1999:3). The issue of this troubling relation has also been taken up by Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce (2001). The authors discuss,

whether civil society's role is to support neo-liberal mode of development or to challenge the current system and look for the alternative solutions to the problems (see Howell, Pearce 2001). A strong voice in this discussion was given by James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer (2001), who perceive NGOs as a political realm in the service of the neo-liberal economy. The world of NGOs is employed in the effort to mystify and deflect the discontent away from direct attacks on corporate/banking power structures and profits (Petras and Veltmeyer 2001: 128).

In my work I would like to follow the anthropological tradition in this sense that I don't take the concept of civil society propagated by the European Union's policy as a given, universal and the only thinkable. I perceive the European Union's civil society concept as a Western project that is both at once: normative and descriptive, in virtue of its descriptive power. I argue that the European Union's civil society concept, referring to the Hegelian and Tocquevillian tradition of a realm of free associations and organizations projects a very impoverishing picture of social life. A strong normative assumption about the crucial role of civil society in the economic development of the European societies present in the EU's discourse deprives civil society of its revolutionary character. I show that rationality of civil society gives power to govern and ask about the consequences of this power.

1.2. The concept of civil society in recent Polish history

The first traces of the reawakening of civil society under the communist regime can be found in the events of 1956, when workers in Poznań protested and made claims for more freedom and bread. It was the major impulse for the revisionism of Communism in Poland. After two following protests, in 1970 and 1976, the "Worker's Defence Committee" (*Komitet Obrony Robotników, KOR*) was established to help prosecuted workers. KOR functioned as a platform of cooperation between workers and intellectuals, who were fighting for more civic

space in Poland. The other vital institution which contributed to development of a civic space in Poland under Communism, was the Catholic Church, which was especially active in the field of culture, education and self-help (Chimiak 2006:46).

The events of 1956 in Hungary and Poland, and 1968 in Czechoslovakia, showed that neither revolutionary nor reformist ways of changing the Communist system were successful ones. The social and political order that was established afterwards, aimed at transforming citizens into consumers and pushing them back into the realm of their private lives, made some critical intellectuals abandon any hope for an inner evolution of the current regime in the direction of a more humane socialism.

First inspiration for addressing such hopes to the society rather than the state came with Leszek Kołakowski's writings. He suggested that "resistance and pressure exerted by social actors, in the form of self-defense on the part of social actors did have the potential to counter the totalitarian tendency of Soviet-type regimes" (Forbrig 2004:62). Economics, church and family life were perceived as such domains, in which resistance was possible. Society was basically rediscovered and given agential power of making change.

In the late 1970s Adam Michnik went a bit further and crafted a more strategic and action-oriented concept of 'new evolutionism' (see Michnik 1983). He argued that civil society should liberate and organize itself within the limits of the oppressive political regime. By refusing the state apparatus the possibility of taking up any reform strategy, he underlined the potential of exerting a societal pressure on the Communist regime from below and strongly opposed society and the state.

His ideas were embodied in the ideology of the 'Solidarity' movement, which was something much more than a trade union. It was also a political party and a social movement. 'Solidarity' aimed at a moral revival of the society, refrained from using violence and promoted such values as human dignity, solidarity, national independence and the importance

of personal contacts (Chimiak 2006:47-48). These values, propagated in the dissidents' literature and discussions, survived even the underground period of 'Solidarity'.

As Forbrig notes, the term civil society was rarely used by Polish, Hungarian and Czech dissidents. They coined a vast range of phrases, which replaced the term civil society like "new evolutionism", "social self-defense", "reconstruction of society", "counter power", "anti-politics" and "secondary economy" (Forbrig 2004:77). It was thanks to outside observers who, by applying the term 'civil society' to the processes taking place in the East and Central European countries, created a conceptual link between the West and the East (see Forbrig 2004). Forbrig's remark indicates that the process of developing civil society in Eastern European countries is indeed marked by some intellectual and practical endeavors undertaken in order to translate some local concepts and ideas into those which are binding on a more universal, in this case Western European and American, scale.

This move was of prime importance from a practical perspective of implementing Western development models in Poland and in the other Eastern European countries. A prior, relevant definition and diagnosis of the needs and shortages as well as possible heritages and commonalities between the Western and Eastern world, global and local realities, allowed for practical implementation of the assistance programs, which in turn strengthened and legitimized those definitions and diagnosis. The Western civil society assistance programs, in order to map the sphere they were aiming at, defined civil society mainly as a realm of organizations and associations. However, as Janine Wedel (1998) writes, it was also a common approach to think of the Central and Eastern European countries as having no civil society, in which citizens were free to form organizations that functioned independently of the state and that mediated between citizens and the state. Basically, Western experts perceived non-governmental organizations as building blocks of civil society and important vehicles of technical assistance and training. Wedel notes that "donors had high hopes for this

'independent sector': it was to replace the discredited centralized bureaucratic state, decentralized services, and build democracy" (Wedel 1998:85). This approach was mainly propagated by American agencies (see Wedel 1998).

Michał Buchowski (1996) distinguishes between the Communist rationality of government, "which relied on the state's power to control every aspect of life" (p.88) and the post-Communist rationality of government, which is marked to a large extent by an increased differentiation of organized activity (Buchowski 1996:92). Those rationalities also had repercussions for the way civil society was conceptualized and put into practice. To recapitulate, during the Communist regime civil society was opposed to the omnipresent power of the state. This approach was expressed in the works of Polish, Czech and Hungarian dissidents. Later on, the intervention of the Western donors contributed to understanding civil society as a realm of NGOs and projects (see Sampson 1996a).

Since 2004, the moment Poland joined the European Union, a conceptualization of civil society has again been revised. Poland has become a beneficiary of the structural and regional funds distributed within different sectoral and regional policies of the EU. I focus on the European Social Fund (ESF), which operates with a language of employment policy, good governance and acts through and upon the realm of civil society. The concept of good governance, which deploys different sorts of strategies of holding actors accountable has serious social consequences for the sphere of civil society in Poland. The final aim of this thesis is to make a preliminary diagnosis of these consequences.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Governmentality studies and the sociology of translation: framing the policy making processes in the European Union

In the search for an adequate language and concepts for discussing the relations between the European Union and civil society in Poland I position my project within a theoretical framework of the government rationality studies and sociology of translation. Although these two perspectives have different sources of inspiration they have been brought together in a very creative way in the studies of liberal and neo-liberal governments (see Rose and Miller 1992; Barry, Osborne, Rose 1996).

Studies of rationality of government offer a new way of anatomizing political reason and try to overcome an awkward opposition between the State and civil society. Andrew Barry et al. (1996) argue that contemporary movements in politics show that both the Sate and civil society "demand a form of government that combines action by political and non-political authorities, communities and individuals" (Barry et al. 1996:1). The studies of rationalities of government aim at the analysis of political reason and draw on Foucault's concept of governmentality (see Foucault 1991). The term governmentality suggests not only a particular set of governing rules and practices, but also a certain mentality of politics that have shaped and changed throughout the history. Analysts of governmentality focus also on "the devises intended to give effect to rule, and the ways in which these have impacted upon those who have been the subjects of these practices of government" (Barry et al. 1996:1). In other words, this approach allows looking not only at ideologies but also at technical tools of government, like expertise, calculations or programs of reforms. As the targets of these devices are individuals, which make up populations, government rationality studies are also interested in a particular individual being a product of the government.

The other strain of my theoretical framework – sociology of translation – is mainly influenced by writings by Bruno Latour, John Law and Michel Callon within the notion known as the Actor-Network Theory (ANT). The original interest of the ANT lies in the scientific and technical practices (see Latour 1999; Law and Mol (eds) 2002; Callon, Law and Rip (eds) 1986). However, this approach has proved to be very fertile in studies in a vast range of fields, like markets (see Callon 2004), nature and animals (see Callon 1986, Latour 1993), gender (see Singleton 1993), organization and work (see Cooper 1992) and politics. I am particularly interested in the application of some ideas of ANT and sociology of translation to the studies of modern government. To be more precise I find it relevant to refer to the idea of government as a problematizing activity (see e.g. Nikolas Rose 1992, 1996; Peter Miller 1992; Andrew Barry 1996, 2002; Graham Burchell 1996; Mitchell Dean 1996), which means that the ideals of government are intrinsically linked to the problems that are being addressed (see Rose and Miller 1992). Governmental rationalities, in order to tackle those problems, are translated into programs or policies of government. Problem solving requires cooperation of various authorities: political, moral, academic, technical, etc. These authorities as well as other human and non-human actors are enrolled and mobilized into these policies in order to ensure their success and provide them with greater power and stability. This way political Leviatans are being built, which get legitimization to speak on behalf of the people in need, define them and propose particular solutions to their problems (see Callon and Latour 1981).

The idea of government as a problematizing activity shows the strong relation between the political and technical in contemporary contexts. Rather than conceiving of the relation between the technical and the political as an opposition, the authors of the government studies highlight the variable ways in which e.g. expertise plays a part in translating society into an object of government (see Barry et al. 1996). This perspective enables "studies of the

20

exercise of power at a molecular lever with strategies to program power at a molar level in such 'centers of calculation'" (Barry et al. 1996:13). I refer to the concept of government as a problematizing activity in the chapter "A case study of the EQUAL project", where I focus on the process of making and implementing European's employment policy.

The concept of political rationality helps me to organize theoretically the study of the European civil society policy. According to Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller (1992), political rationalities have a characteristically 'moral' form. They elaborate on proper powers, duties and distribution of tasks and actions between different authorities. They also consider the principles according to which government should be directed, like: freedom, justice, equality, citizenship, economic efficiency or prosperity. Political rationalities also have an epistemological character. They are articulated in relation to some conception of the nature of the objects governed. For example, they might have a particular account of the population as a 'flock to be led' or 'children to be educated' (see Rose and Miller 1992). Moreover, political rationalities are articulated in a distinctive idiom. This means that language should be seen as a kind of intellectual machinery or apparatus for rendering reality thinkable in such a way that is it amenable to political actions and discourses. To conclude, "political rationalities are morally colored, grounded upon knowledge, and made thinkable through language" (see Rose and Miller 1992).

Looking through these three components of the concept of political rationality I analyze the European Union as a particular type of a modern government. I am interested what the EU perceives as normal and desired in terms of civil society development. What does it say about the objects governed (European citizens, civil society organizations, civil society as a distinctive realm) and what discursive and intellectual apparatuses does it employ in order to render the realm of civil society amenable to its 'technical' programs.

In my study, NGOs and local partnerships represent the molecular level and the European Commission, 'A White Paper of Governance', the Economic and Social Committee and the opinions about the role of civil society organizations in Europe stay for the molar level. Such a perspective is useful, for it enables to analyze, without prior commitments, what is entailed in the shifting boundaries of the political and the technical (see Barry et al. 1996).

Michel Callon and Bruno Latour (1981), employing the term "action-at-a-distance" provide me with yet another interesting perspective on the issue of the role of experts in government. As Nikolas Rose argues, public authorities seek to employ forms of expertise in order to govern society at a distance, without recourse to any direct forms of repression or intervention (see Barry et al. 1996). Of key importance to structural programs of the European Union and the civil society development is the concept of good governance, which in turn is connected to the techniques of auditing (see Strathern 2000), accounting, evaluating and monitoring. I argue that these techniques have a disciplining potential for the civil society actors and become political technologies of the self; "a means through which individuals actively and freely regulate their own conduct and thereby contribute to the government's model of social order' (Shore and Wright 2000:62). As the process of making European projects is problematized in technical terms of accountancy, audit, monitoring and evaluation, the executors of the EU projects are gradually locked into the roles of technically fit 'good governors'. Their active enrollment into the project of 'good governance' and their final mobilization make them be spokesmen and, at the same time, 'the prisoners' of the technologies of 'good governance', to the creation and maintenance of which they contributed themselves. Therefore, I put forward a hypothesis that that these mundane strategies disguise the political power involved in the concept of good governance. In the next chapter I discuss the usefulness of Eric Wolf's idea of structural power as an analytical

tool, which enables me to account for power relations between the European Union and civil society in Poland.

2.2. Structural power: framing power relations between the European Union and civil society in Poland

In this chapter I find it relevant to discuss a theoretical framework that helps me to answer the question: how does it happen that some ideas are becoming possible and powerful and others are rendered impossible, are left on the 'outskirts of the discourse'?

In order to provide a preliminary answer to this big question I refer to Eric Wolf's concept about mutual relations between the ideas and power. Ideas are 'emblems' and 'instruments' of power relations, and "power is implicated in meaning through its role in upholding one version of significance as true, fruitful, or beautiful, against other possibilities that may threaten truth, fruitfulness, or beauty" (Wolf 1990:593). Referring to the theoretical framework suggested by Rose and Miller, political rationality is articulated in a certain idiom, which upholds the normative and epistemological ideas about the objects to be governed and relations between different authorities.

The EU, as a powerful and resourceful institution, is able to keep one version of civil society, social and economic development and democracy 'beautiful', 'true' and 'fruitful' by establishing and financially supporting new aligns for its programs. The concepts like: organized civil society, economic and social cohesion, efficient and competitive economy are some of the instruments that justify the existence and dominance of the EU. The ideas and language thus play a performative role in governing.

According to Wolf, there are four modalities of power, which are inscribed in different types of relations. The first one – the power of potency – is seen to inhere in an individual. Power in this Nietzschean sense draws attention to how persons enter into a play of power,

but it does not address what that play is about. The second one, is the power manifested in interactions and transactions among people and refers to the ability of an *ego* to impose its will in social action upon an *alter* (Weberian view). The third one, is the power that controls the context in which people exhibit their capabilities and interact with others. This sense calls attention to the instrumentalities through which individuals or groups direct or circumscribe the actions of others within determinate settings. This is a tactical/organizational power (see Wolf 1999, 1990).

The most relevant, in the case of the European Union and civil society discourse, is the forth modality, the 'structural power'. It is the "power manifest in relationships that not only operates within settings and domains but also organizes and orchestrates the settings themselves, and that specifies the direction and distribution of energy flows" (Wolf 1999:5). This kind of power allows to decide 'how' things will be done, or, in other words, to create a space of a regulated freedom (see Rose and Miller 1992). Individuals play part in the operations of political power, however the settings for the play of the seemingly free individuals are orchestrated and created by the government. Not to remain abstract and vague about the term 'government', I understand it following Rose and Miller as "a domain of strategies, techniques and procedures through which different forces seek to render programs operable, and by which a multitude of connections are established between the aspirations of authorities and the activities of individuals and groups" (p.183). These heterogeneous mechanisms are termed 'technologies of government' (see Rose and Miller 1992). Through these technologies of government; often humble and mundane mechanisms of auditing, notation, computation, calculation, procedures of examination and assessment, surveys and tables, standarized systems for training and the incalculation of habits, the inauguration of professional specialisms and vocabularies; political power is exercised and these technologies organize the settings for the action in a certain field. In the studies case, I look up to a vast

24

range of technologies deployed in the process of fulfilling the rules of good governance, as for the 'agents', which orchestrates the setting for the action in the field of civil society.

In other words, civil society actors might be equipped in agential power and the power of potency. They might also be able to impose their will upon others (other civil society actors or actors from different spheres). They might also be able to take part in certain organizational or tactical games within the field of civil society. However, the settings for these games are not organized by them but by the seemingly apolitical, purely technical and objective strategies of good governance, which involve both the practices of building partnerships and carrying out audit, evaluation, accountancy, etc. What is fascinating about this, is the fact that these strategies, mechanisms and technologies, which are articulated as apolitical and thus also not involved in any power relations are actually strongly political and enabling the acquisition of power and governing over a certain field.

I put forward a hypothesis that the European Union by crafting and promoting the concept of good governance, which deploy various technologies of government is gaining 'structural power' over the field of civil society in the Member and future Member States and is able to govern this field at a distance.

3. Methodology

In this section I introduce the reader to the methodological aspects of my work. I spent two weeks conducting my research in Poland. I set off with my interviews in Toruń on 16 April and finished in Gdańsk 27 on April 2007. I visited seven different organizations in Toruń and three in Gdańsk. Two of them are the non-governmental organizations, three are foundations and four of them have the role of intermediary institutions providing the local actors with information about the funding opportunities in the European Union. I also interviewed people from the Nicholas Copernicus University in Toruń, who are engaged in conducting an EQUAL project in partnership with a local foundation.

However, my research began long time before I took a journey to Poland. As I am interested in the official discourse of the European Union about civil society I analyzed the official documents issued by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee[1], which discuss the role of civil society in the European Union's governance. My interest in the EQUAL project conducted in Toruń led me to the documents regulating the Community Initiative EQUAL[2] at the European and national level.

In order to have a better understanding of the changes going on in the sphere of civil society in Poland I also introduced myself to the newest report issued by the Association

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[1] I refer to the "White Paper on Governance" (2001) issued by the European Commission. The Economic and Social Committee has issued various opinions about the role of civil society organizations in Europe: "On the role and contribution of civil society organizations in the building of Europe" (22 Sept. 1999), "The Commission and non-governmental organizations: building a stronger partnership" (13 July 2000) and "Organized civil society and European governance: the Committee's contribution to the drafting of the White Paper" (25 Apr. 2001).

[2] The Commission of the European Committees regulates the Community Initiative EQUAL through the document "Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Establishing the guidelines for the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL concerning transnational co-operation to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labor market 'Free movement of good ideas'" (2003). At the national level the Community Initiative EQUAL is regulated by the document issued by the Ministry of Economy, Labor and Social Policy "EQUAL Community Initiative Program for Poland" in 2004.

Klon/Jawor about the development of the third sector in Poland "The basic facts about the non-governmental organizations. A report from the research 2006" (2006).

In the further subsections of this chapter I describe the design of my research, the reasons for and specificities of the employment of the in-depth semi-structured interviews as a technique of gathering data for my project. I also provide a justification for the choice of my interviewees and the selection of the document. In the second to the last subsection I explain the criteria I applied for analyzing the European Union's civil society discourse. I close this chapter with a few reflections about the limitations to my fieldwork.

3.1. My case study and its broader context

The core of my research is a case study of a project "Partnership – Family – Equality – Work" conducted out in Toruń within the Community Initiative EQUAL and financed in 75% from the European Social Fund and in 25% from the state's budget. It is carried out by the Kujawian-Pomeranian Economic Foundation Pro-Europa in Toruń, The Voivodship Labor Office in Toruń, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Toruń and the Sociology Institute and Pedagogic Cathedral of the Nicolas Copernicus University in Toruń. For the purpose of realizing this project these organizations established a Development Partnership, which means that they signed a contract determining the division of labor between them. The leading partner for this project is the Foundation Pro-Europa in Toruń, which in practice makes this organization responsible for running the accountancy.

The aim of this project is to prove that the possibility of combining the family and the professional lives. It helps to return to the labor market by introducing innovative and more flexible forms of organizing labor and by delivering adequate training. The final goal of the project is to contribute to the implementation of the new methods and models into the state's social policy. However, before achieving this, the executors aim at helping female citizens of Toruń to become active participants of the local labor market.

Toruń's project had three target groups. First group consists of women with the out-of-date skills and lowered self-esteem caused by staying on the maternal-leave for a long time. The second group consists of professionally active women, whose are not able to develop their careers because they have to take care of their children. The last group comprises of women who are endangered to loose their jobs because of the planned motherhood.

I interviewed six people engaged in this project. Two of them work for the leading partner institution the Kujawian-Pomeranian Economic Foundation Pro-Europa in Toruń. One of them, Magda, is primarily responsible for taking care of the transnational partnerships of the project[3] but she is also taking part in the whole implementing process of the project. This young, active person is also a PhD student at the Nicolas Copernicus University in the Sociology Institute. She is therefore a link between the two partners, the foundation and the university. Magda provided me with the information about the transnational partnerships and substantial information about the particular actions of the project, its final beneficiaries, strategies of helping them and the broader institutional context of the EQUAL projects.

The other young girl, Agnieszka, is responsible for designing and conducting the public relations policy of the project. She has been contracted for conducting this particular task and will finish her work for the foundation with the end of the project. She proved a very useful informant, especially in terms of providing me with some knowledge about the media coverage of such projects.

The other four people I talked to are connected to the Sociology Institute of the Nicolas Copernicus University. The university partners were especially interesting for me because of their involvement in the evaluation and monitoring processes by that project, which are the required to be conducted in every project carried out within the Initiative Equal. I also found the involvement of an academic institution into such projects interesting, especially when I

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[3] Establishing transnational partnerships is required in every EQUAL project. I will expand on this element of EQUAL projects in the analytical part of my thesis.

realized that it uses the authority of an objective scientific knowledge to gain the expert position in the project. Two of my interviewees, Monika and Ola, are responsible for conducting the evaluation[4] of the project. They are both experienced in designing and conducting social research. They introduced me to the issues of designing and conducting evaluation of the particular actions[5] of the project. Especially one of them proved to be very critical about the advantages and drawbacks of the evaluation process.

The third person, Sabina, is a first year PhD student of sociology. She is responsible for the monitoring of the women taking part in project, who decided to open the 'daily-mom'[6] business within the project. She provided me with some information about the women taking part in the project, with whom I did not have an opportunity to talk to. She took a very critical stand on the process of monitoring and empowering the final beneficiaries of this project.

The forth person, Arek, has a couple of functions in the project. He is a merits-assistant of the project and the coordinator of a research group of the project. Apart from introducing me to many details about the character of Development Partnership and transnational partnerships, he also provided me with the account of the research projects took up within the transnational partnerships and with an interpretation of the role of university as a particular kind of institution in this type of EU funded projects.

The data I collected during the interviews and while studying the documents produced in this project allowed me to learn about the stages of conducting EQUAL projects. However, as

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[4] Evaluation is also a compulsory process of the EQUAL projects. I expand upon this issue in the analytical part of my thesis.

[5] Every EQUAL project consists of three actions: designing a project and establishing partnerships, implementation of the project and mainstreaming of the results of the project. I will expand upon this issue in the analytical part of my thesis.

[6] A 'daily-mom' service is one of the innovative methods introduced in the project to help long-term unemployment women, who are raising children to profit from this fact in economic term by opening a day-care in their own homes. This is thought of as a solution for the mothers, who want to take care of their children themselves and at the same time be active participants of the labor market by opening using their experience as mothers.

the project "Partnership – Family – Equality – Work" is linked to many my other national[7] and internationals institutions and documents, I could not close my case study in the local space of Toruń. I had to follow the links and connections and therefore expand my case study to the non-local actors and documents issued by the EU and the Polish governmental institutions about the European Social Fund and the Community Initiative EQUAL. I was looking for the institutional context of the EQUAL projects and the way particular actors create a network for programming and implementing the policy.

The project I study is a certain symptom of a particular political rationality of the European Union. However, it is not its uniqueness that makes it a relevant case to study in order to get the answers for the questions I put forward at the beginning of my thesis. On the contrary, it is its replicable logic that makes it worth studying. Referring to the categorization of different types of case studies, done by Bent Flyvbjerg (2005), my case study is a paradigmatic one, which means that it helps to establish a certain paradigm or a metaphor for studying similar cases. Its schematic character and conventionality of the rules and regulations according to which the project is conducted enables me to make generalizations about the rationality of the European Union's civil society policy and the logic of conducting other European projects.

However, as my prior interest concerns the impact of the European Social Fund on the development of civil society in Poland, I also searched for the informants, who are able to

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[7] The Ministry of Regional Development is the managing institution for all the programs funded from the European Social Fund (the Community Initiative EQUAL is one of them); the Ministry of Social Policy and Labor is the implementing institution for all the programs funded from the European Social Fund; the National Supporting Structure is the service institution both for the managing institution of the Community Initiative EQUAL and for the Development Partnerships. At the European level there are six major documents, which provide a legislative and strategic context to the realization of the Community Initiative EQUAL in Poland. There are: European Employment Strategy, Employment Policy Frame of Reference, The Joint Assessment Paper on Polish Employment Policy, The European Social Inclusion Strategy, Joint Inclusion Memorandum and Measures within art. 13 of the European Community Treaty. At the Polish national level there are also six documents which provide a legislative and strategic context to realization of the Community Initiative EQUAL in Poland. These are: National Development Plan for 2004-2006, The National Strategy for Employment Growth and Human Resource Development for 2000-2006, The Strategy of the Social Policy 2002-2005, The socio-economic strategy of the government: Entrepreneurship – Development – Labor, Employment policy, Education policy and Innovation policy.

provide me with a broader perspective on the processes currently going on in the field of civil society after Poland's admission to the European Union. Therefore, I was looking for sites and institutions, which are positioned on the intersection of the two. Regional Centers for European Information and Regional Centers for European Social Fund proved to be this kind of links between the local actors (NGOs, local governments and enterprises) and the European Union, as they provide them with information about the European regulations and funding opportunities in the EU.

I conducted interviews in four such intermediary institutions. Three of them are placed in Toruń and one of them in Gdańsk. In Toruń I talked with the workers of a Regional Center for the European Social Fund, the Regional Center for the European Information and the Kujawian-Pomeranian Center for Supporting the Non-Governmental Initiatives TŁOK. All three of them are located in the same building and their stuff has known each other for years. The Regional Center for the European Social Fund is providing local organizations with the training about the European Social Fund. The Regional Center for the European Information is providing the local actors with general information about the European Union and opportunities it gives to the Polish citizens. The Kujawian-Pomeranian Center for Supporting the Non-Governmental Initiatives TŁOK has been established in order to introduce informal groups to the European Program Youth, which is also a fund for the civic activities, and to help these groups to formalize themselves, register as associations and ultimately prepare for applying for the structural funds. I talked to one person in each of these institutions. These interviews brought a lot of interesting information to my study, as my interviewees had a broad knowledge both about the European funding mechanisms and the specificity of the local environment.

I also conducted one interview in the Regional Center for the European Social Fund in Gdańsk. As I did not want to close myself in the Toruń's area itself and was seeking some

sources of information about at least one other region in Poland, the interview I held in this institution proved very useful for me. I could compare the opinions about the impact of the European funding policy on the civil society in the Pomeranian region, which is the second to the most civically active regions and the Kujawian-Pomeranian region, which is ranked as an average in terms of civic activeness in Poland (see Gumkowska and Herbst 2006). I also managed to talk to a manager of an EQUAL project carried out in Sopot (this city also belongs to the Pomeranian region). This served me as an alternative source of information about the EQUAL projects. I was not that much interested in the project itself but rather in looking for the similarities and differences with the Toruń's counterpart.

3.2. Justification of the choice of semi-structured, in-depth interviews as a technique of gathering data

I chose in-depth, semi-structured interviews as a method of gathering information from my informants. Hilary Arksey and Peter Knight (1999) consider semi-structured interviews as the commonest type of interviews in qualitative work, "where there is a desire to hear what informants have to say on the topics and areas identified by the researcher" (p.7). In this sort of interviews main questions and scripts are fixed but interviewers are able to improvise follow-up questions and to explore meanings and areas of interest that emerge.

Before setting out for my research I had some hypothesis and some basic knowledge about my research topic and my research object. Therefore I found it useful to sketch some guiding questions for the interviews I was about to conduct. However, I did not want to close myself or limit to some particular issues, because it was of prime importance for me to explore the topic, to allow myself to be surprised and driven into unexpected directions. Each of my interviews lasted about an hour and I let my informants elaborate on topics that seemed especially relevant, new, surprising or interesting for me and for them.

3.3. Justification of the selection of documents

In an attempt to analyze the official discourse of the European Union about civil society I selected documents, which most explicitly talk about the civil society concept. I was also interested learning more about the project of good governance and its relation to the sphere of civil society. Therefore I resorted to the "White Paper on Governance" (2001), which has begun the governance reform in the European Union. It was written as a response to a growing need for the increase in the degree of participation of different actors in the EU policy. In order to have a better insight into the role of civil society that is prescribed to it in the European Unions documents I analyzed opinions issued by the European Economic and Social Committee: "On the role and contribution of civil society organizations in the building of Europe" (22 Sept. 1999), "The Commission and non-governmental organizations: building a stronger partnership" (13 July 2000) and "Organized civil society and European governance: the Committee's contribution to the drafting of the White Paper" (25 Apr. 2001).

Although these documents do not have an immediate result on the national legislation systems they have a very special status, as they indicate directions for actions in the European Union and its Member States. As official documents of the European Union, a powerful institution, which has a great economic and symbolic capital they also have a great potential of influence. However, what interests me the most is that these documents describe the EU's policy in the most general way and represent the most general values of the EU. They are further translated into practical policy programs pertaining to certain sphere of social action like e.g. employment policy. When analyzing these documents I was paying attention to the epistemological assumptions they make about the realm of civil society and I was also trying to position the introduced concept of civil society within broader, historically formed debates about civil society.

3.4. Limitations

The major source of limitations for my research project was the time constraints. I could not participate in the process of conducting this project and I had to rely only on the accounts of my informants, which made it easy for them to be silent about difficult and uncomfortable issues about difficulties in building partnerships, failed ideas, dissatisfaction of the project participants, and me not alert enough to try to pick them up. Moreover, I was not able to observe the very mundane, daily practices of conducting this project like the moments of negotiations, compromises, changing strategies or giving up and coming up with some ideas. I could not be present in these situations, which would deliver me some very important ethnographic material. Besides, I could be exposed to 'formal' and 'official' versions about conducting such projects.

However, one of the biggest advantages that allowed me, at least partially, to avoid such 'official' and 'smoothened' accounts was the fact that I knew almost all my Toruń's interviewees for about five years. This provided me with an opportunity to ask more straightforward questions and touch more delicate subjects. I also new that my interviewees have a capacity to be critical and a bit distanced towards their own work, which was a guarantee for me to have some really fascinating talks.

4. Analysis of European Union discourse about civil society

In this section I analyze discourse of the European Union about civil society. I do a critical reading of the documents issued by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee, in which the concept of civil society is elaborated upon and which articulate a certain program about civil society. I selected the White Paper on Governance (2001), which was issued by the European Commission in response to claims about a low level of democracy and participation in governance in the European Union. It is an important document, as it was a starting point for discussions and reforms of the European governance. This document also provides me with a definition of the concept of good governance and a sense of how it is applied to the realm of civil society.

According to the document, governance should to be improved by a greater involvement of different local and national actors. Civil society is mentioned in this document as an important partner for the local, national and European institutions. Its development is seen as crucial both for the more democratic rule at the national and the European level.

The other documents I selected, issued by the Economic and Social Committee, have a form of opinions about the role of civil society organizations in Europe: "On the role and contribution of civil society organizations in the building of Europe" (22 Sept. 1999), "The Commission and non-governmental organizations: building a stronger partnership" (13 July 2000) and "Organized civil society and European governance: the Committee's contribution to the drafting of the White Paper" (25 Apr. 2001). They were written with the purpose of articulating the role and place of civil society in the European Union.

I find it relevant to analyze the official discourse of the European Union about the civil society in order to delineate this concept and critically assess the normative and epistemological assumptions included in the discourse. Moreover, I try to see to what extent the ideas included in these document apply to my empirical case and to the processes that are

currently going on in Poland in the realm of civil society. In other words, how do the local practices contribute to reproducing the EU's discourse about civil society?

4.1. A White Paper of Governance and other EU documents on civil society in Europe

'A White Paper on European Governance' was issued by the Commission of the European Communities on 25 July 2001. It was written as a response to a growing concern among the European leaders about the rising distrust of the Europeans towards the EU on one hand, and their growing demands towards efficiency of the Union's policy on the other (White Paper 2001:3). The Commission decided to launch the reform of European governance in 2000 as a strategic objective, well in advance of the Nice European Council. The general aim of the reform is to connect Europe to its citizens and make them aware that some improvements experienced by them should rather be associated with the Union's decisions than with the national governments' action (White Paper 2001:7).

Reforming European governance, according to the authors, addresses the question of how the EU uses the powers given to it by its citizens. The goal is to open up the policy-making and to make it more inclusive and accountable. In order to achieve this, the Union must better combine different policy tools such as legislation, social dialogue, structural funding and action programs.

Under the subsection "Proposals for Change", the authors suggest better involvement and more openness. They point to the need for stronger interaction with regional and local governments and civil society. Regional actors should be accounted for in the practice of social dialogue and consultations as well as in the implementation of the Community's legislation.

The White Paper sets five main principles of good governance: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence (White Paper 2001:10). These five principles

imply an active communication and cooperation between the European institutions and the Member States both at the national and local level. Although the 'White Paper' underlines the importance of each national state as a mediator between the EU policy and Europeans, a special role is given to the networks, grassroots organizations, regional and local authorities (White Paper 2001:11-12).

Each of the principles is briefly defined. Openness implies the usage of a more communicative language and a more active communication about the European Union and its policy to the European citizens. Wider participation should be ensured from conception to implementation through the chain of policies. Accountability stands for a greater clarity of the roles of each partner in the legislative and executive processes. Effectiveness concerns better evaluation of the programs and more effective implementation of them according to the assumed objectives. The principle of coherence indicates a struggle of the EU to sustain some degree of clarity and understandability despite its growing diversity and complexity. The application of these five principles reinforces those of proportionality and subsidiarity, which basically appeal for applying adequate action to the adequate problem at the adequate level of governance (local, national or European) (see White Paper 2001:13).

The EU understands civil society as a set of various organizations. This approach is mirrored in the rhetoric used in various documents issued by the Economic and Social Committee. The most frequently used term for 'civil society' is 'organized civil society' or 'civil society organizations' (see Organized civil society… 2001, On the role and contribution… 1999). The European Union provides quite a detailed definition of the term, delimiting the scope of possible forms of organizations:

> Civil society includes the following: trade unions and employers' organisations ("social partners"); nongovernmental organisations; professional associations; charities; grass-roots organisations; organisations that involve citizens in local and municipal life with a particular contribution from churches and religious communities. (White Paper:14)

This definition is justified by a brief history of the theoretical background and development of the concept, which is presented in the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee "On the role and contribution of civil society organizations in the building of Europe" (1999). Two main processes are underlined: the separation of the civil society from the state in the eighteenth century and the evolving opposition between the liberal and socialistic view on civil society (p.3). The first is connected with the emergence of the bourgeoisie, which appropriated the concept to denote a social sphere comprising the market and people's private lives. The liberal-socialist struggle over the concept is mainly about viewing civil society either as the realm of free individuals establishing contractual relations or as an expression of oppression and class divide.

Further in the text, a "new interpretation of modern civil society, inspired by Tocqueville, Durkheim and Weber" is introduced (p.3). This interpretation is consistent with the EU's policy and "actually reflects political reality" (p.2). The concept of civil society propagated by Tocqueville, Durkheim and Weber is based on five principles: civil society is typified by more or less formalized institutions; citizens are free to chose the institutions they want to belong to; the framework of the civil society is a framework of law; civil society plays an intermediary role between the state and the individual and is crucial for democracy and civil society introduces the dimension of subsidiary (see On the role and contribution… 1999:3-4). The European Union's theoretical debate is based on the liberal tradition, the theory of communitarianism, subsidiarity and discursive democracy. It is strongly influenced by Hegel's idea of civil society as a distinct sphere from the State but also by Tocqeuville's concept of civil society as a sphere of free associations, which are the building blocks of civil society and make democracy work. A member of civil society mediates between the 'state society' and 'market society' "by embodying all three aspects (homo politicus, homo economicus and homo civicus)" (p.7).

In the Communication on Voluntary Organizations and Foundations in Europe (COM(97) 241 final) the Commission emphasizes that voluntary organizations play an important role in almost every field of social activity. They contribute to employment creation, active citizenship and democracy. Apart from providing a wide range of social services they also play a crucial part in development policies. They strengthen the non-parliamentary structures and give substance and meaning to the concept of a Citizens' Europe. A very strong emphasis is put on the contribution of the third sector to increasing employment opportunities. The voluntary organizations not only produce new employment positions but they embark on projects aiming at fighting unemployment and integrating the weaker groups in society. They also take part in the programs boosting employment capacities in each country as the projects' social partners and actively join the project of 'social economy'. One of the main objectives of the Social and Economic Committee is to call on the Member States to involve the voluntary organizations and foundations in the fight against unemployment.

According to the EU, the scope of problems relevant for the civil society organizations exceeds the boundaries of a nation state, and thus "the role of the nation state is also relativised by the process of European integration and people increasingly sense that the nation state's traditional claims to sovereignty no longer reflect social reality" (Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee … 1998:7).

However, in order to accomplish the tasks prescribed to civil society, it has to itself follow the principles of good governance (White Paper 2001). The Central and Eastern European countries are pointed out as the ones, which are still facing problems with creating the necessary structures for the existence of strong civil society. The assistance for improving this situation is a high priority in the European agenda (On the role and contribution… 1999:4-5).

The effectiveness of 'organized civil society' is "crucially dependent on the extent to which their players are prepared to help achieve consensus through public and democratic debate and to accept the outcome of a democratic policy-making process" (On the role and contribution... 1999:7). The EU perceives the process of a growing participation of civil society as a sign of a growing quantity of democracy. This is an explicit reference to the Tocquevillian tradition of participatory democracy. According to the European Commission and Social Committee civil society is primarily a channel through which citizens can express their commitment to economic and social development in their countries.

4.2. Post-conflict civil society: critical analysis of the EU's concept of 'civil society' and its reproduction in the local discourses

In this section I position the European Union's concept of civil society within a broader debate on civil society. I also account for the implied relations between the state, individual, society and the European Union. My interest also lies in disguising the normative and epistemological assumptions about the realm of civil society and the individuals, who compose it. And finally, by referring to the empirical material I gathered during my interviews in Poland, I look how and to what extent the European Union's civil society discourse is reproduced in the local discourses and practices.

4.2.1. Creating consensus civil society

As Howell and Pearce (2001) notice, since the 1980s we can observe an interesting encounter between the 'civil society' and development. In that time, the gradually dominated concept of 'civil society' has caused a detachment of the state from economic life and from the market. This process has mainly been influenced by the neo-liberal doctrine, which began to be seen as a new solution for the 'modernization' and 'development' problems. In that

time, a new relation between the development and democracy had been established. While in the 1950s and 1960s development was seen as a precondition for democracy, in the 1980s the relation was reversed (see Howell, Pearce 2001).

Some traits of this way of thinking about the connection between development and democracy can be found in the European Union's policy. The principles outlined in the 'White Paper' indicate the following logic: economic and social development can be achieved in the democratic countries.

Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce (2001) introduce a distinction between the mainstream and the alternative approach to the concept of civil society. The EU's concept is an example of the mainstream one, which assumes that the main economic and social problems can be solved by applying proper policies. This perspective is oriented towards establishing partnerships between civil society, market and state institutions in "building of a consensual approach to development" (Howell, Pearce 2001:17). Social and civic dialogue replaces protest, conflict, challenge and contestation characteristic to the alternative approach. There is not much place for a revolution or challenging the predominant paradigm of development.

This mainstream approach to the concept of civil society is particularly visible in the endeavors of the European Commission and the Economic and Social Committee to channel the energy of the voluntary association towards their participation in the employment policy (see White Paper 2001). This approach is strongly reinforced on the national and local level by the introduction of consultation practices of the policies' programming documents like the National Development Plan, the National Strategy for Employment Growth and Human Resources Development and the sectoral operational programs of the European Social Fund.

One of my interviewees, the leader of the Kujawian-Pomeranian Center for Supporting the Non-Governmental Initiatives TŁOK in Toruń, was a member of the Regional Steering Committee established by the Marshal's Office in Toruń in 2006-2007. This was a

41

partnership advisory body for the local government institutions, which comprised of the representatives of different spheres like the private sector, universities, churches and civil society. The main task of the Committee was to approve or deny funding to the projects selected by the Experts Committee and the Monitoring Committee. My interlocutor claims that the role of this consultation body was a bit vague. Although he feels that it had some influence on the final selection of the funded projects, he is aware that the very final decision about the distribution of the European money was made by the Board of Directors of the Voivodship Office, which is an institution representing the state in the region.

My interviewee also took part in the social consultations of the National Development Plan for the years 2007-2013[8] at the regional level. He assesses the quality of this process much higher. According to him, the civil society representatives put forward a lot of suggestions concerning new strategies of combating the unemployment, improving the life-standard of the disabled citizens. They also introduced the notion of social economy into the mainstream of the social policy in Poland. These corrections were indeed included in the final document and are now a part of the programs funded by the European Social Fund (see Strategie Rozwoju Kraju na lata 2007-2013).

Building partnerships between different institutions is one of the main requirements for the projects funded by the European Social Fund. I discussed this issue with one of my interviewees, who works for the Regional Center for the European Social Fund in Toruń. This Center was established in 2005 as a part of a wider network of regional centers, which was previously financed from the PHARE resources and now is financed by the European Social Fund. In the first year of its activity the center aimed at providing the clients with information about the funding opportunities in the EU and with training them in writing ESF projects. During the second year, the center played a role of a consultant for the ESF projects

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[8] This is the most important document prepared on the national level, which sets the basic guidelines for reforms and development for the following five years. The current government changed the name of the document into the Strategy for National Development for the years 2007-2013.

and in the third year of its activity was mainly devoted to introducing the local actors to the idea and practice of building partnerships. My informant has a very positive view on this. He perceives it as a chance for different institutions to join their resources, knowledge and experience in order to achieve a synergic result of their action. However, at the same time, he is quite skeptical about the ability of different actors to be able to use this opportunity and to establish partnerships that go beyond signing a partnership contract.

I have learnt very quickly that building partnerships between civil society actors and the local sector is an exceptionally difficult task. An employee of a twin Regional Center in Gdańsk, told me that the local government institutions still have major problem with acknowledging the role of the civil society sector in building projects partnerships. The common practice is to invite NGOs to join a project financed by the European Social Fund without giving any important functions or real prerogatives to them. The partnership remains solely on the paper and the project is managed and implemented by the local government representatives.

To conclude, the practice of including civil society as a partner for crafting and implementing development policies is becoming a very common requirement of the EU funded projects. However, there are some major questions that should be put forward while discussing this phenomenon. Two of them are very practical and concerns the real influence and the function of the civil society in such partnership bodies. To what extent is this participation illusionary? Why is it such an important element of the projects financed by the European Social Fund, if it rarely works in practice? The third question is a more general one: what does the involvement of civil society in the policy-making process mean for civil society itself and what does it mean for the state? James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer (2005) forcefully argue that development partnerships contribute to keeping "the existing power structure (vis-à-vis the distribution of society's resources) intact while promoting a degree

(and a local form) of change and development" (p.20). This leads further to the depoliticization of civil society and weakens its ability to challenge the current distribution of resources. Decentralization of the policy making process also has important repercussions for the strength of the national state as a decision maker. I come back to these issues later in the chapter devoted to the analysis of the Toruń's EQUAL project, where I elaborate on them and provide some answers to the questions stated above.

4.2.2. Methodological and epistemological assumptions about the realm of civil society

The European Union's discourse about civil society also contains some epistemological and methodological assumptions about the realm of civil society. What I mean by this is that the EU documents perceive civil society as a realm that has some particular features which enable the EU to act upon it in a certain way. One assumption is made about democracy as a condition of society that can be measured. A basic indicator for the 'amount' of democracy is the 'amount' of civil society organizations, which participate in the dialogue with the European Union and apply the rules of good governance and accountability. This methodological approach is preceded by some epistemological assumptions about the realm of the civil society, which is perceived as prone to structuration and organization. It can be shaped, ordered, brought up and thought the principles of good governance.

This opinion was shared by virtually all of my interviewees. The need for organizing people in stable structures of the non-governmental organizations that can be registered and held accountable is perceived as a priority by the members of NGOs and the workers of the intermediary institutions. I found it particularly interesting to listen to the account of a member of one NGO in Toruń, the Association of the Impossible Initiatives MOTYKA, who is also involved in running the Kujawian-Pomeranian Center for Supporting the Non-Governmental Initiatives TŁOK in Toruń, about the role of TŁOK for the local informal

groups of civic activists. TŁOK aims at helping some informal groups of local young people to carry out their first projects. It assists them in applying for the funds within the European Youth Program. This program offers funding for small groups of young people who want to develop their intercultural skills and their knowledge about other countries. The amount of money offered is much lower than in case of the European Social Fund, but the requirements are less strict as well. TŁOK is also helping these people to formalize their groups, register themselves as an NGO and professionalize their organization. The girl I talked to called this process 'incubating the ovules of civil society', which can later on develop by applying for bigger grants, e.g. from the European Social Fund.

The director of a foundation, the European Center of the Youth Collaboration, holds a very similar opinion about the role of his organization in providing various local actors (NGOs, local government institutions, groups of the young locals, local business sector, the unemployed people, etc.) with help in preparing for operating within the European structures. He perceives his own organization as having an expert status towards other organizations and a mission of improving the quality of their actions.

A very important role in sustaining these methodological and epistemological assumptions is played by the Association Klon/Jawor, which is annually issuing reports about the development of civil society. The term 'third sector', which it applies for discussing the currently occurring changes, reproduces the epistemological and methodological assumptions about the realm of civil society as a sphere of institutions and organizations, which can be measured, counted, held accountable, classified and categorized. Moreover, by making region-to-region comparisons based on statistical indicators about the number of third sector organizations per capita or per ten thousand inhabitants, it strengthens the idea about civil society as a quantifiable reality, which is inevitable for providing a given region to develop economically and socially (see e.g. Gumkowska and Herbst 2006).

The European Union's discourse about civil society also carries some epistemological assumptions about the individuals who are building civil society. Primarily, they are active subjects who are able to voice their claims. However, they are also disciplined and 'civilized' enough to be able to do it according to certain rules of good governance and juridical regulations. They mediate between the 'state society' and 'market society' and encompass different spheres of actions: a political, economic and a civil one by embodying three aspects: homo politicus, homo economicus and homo civicus. A European citizen feels responsibility for the 'common good' and the 'common home' – Europe. He or she is a rational and entrepreneurial individual, who can plan its action, calculate the costs of the civil society initiatives and subjects itself to a rational-bureaucratic logic of the European Union's civil society assistance programs. A European citizen is also capable of taking part in a dialogue and making rational compromises.

My interlocutor from the European Center for the Youth Collaboration expressed his view about the meaning of being a member of the European Union in almost exactly the same terms. He underlined that after Poland's accession to the EU, his organization has a mission of bringing up local citizens and helping them become more responsible, more entrepreneurial, better able to plan their actions and better think strategically about their future. He justified it by claiming that there is no place for weak people in Europe, and therefore his organization puts the focus on improving the quality of the local actors' performance in order to prove that Poland is able to compete and operate within the European Union's structures without any problems. In the claims he made there was a sense of Poland's facing a big chance that cannot be wasted. At the same time, however, there is also a need for a priori preparation, a process of bringing up the citizens and teaching them how to deal in the EU.

4.3. Concluding remarks

Some[9] argue that civil society, understood as a set of non-governmental organizations, sponsored by the European Union and big foundations, is not essential for democracy. It renders people powerless rather than empowered. Wiktor Osiatyński gave a much broader and not so well structured notion of civil society, defining it as associations independent of the state and other dominating powers (e.g. the dominant church) but not countervailing them. The main role for civil society is to make people conscious of the mission to help others.

The concept of civil society emerging for the European Union's documents might be called 'pre-emptive civil society', as its main role is to prevent harsh ideological conflicts in Europe. Some corrections, some criticism is welcome. However this should be done within the existing system and according to the preset rules of 'good governance' and 'good standards of social and civil dialogue'.

Civil society is primarily about particular organizational entities that can be counted, donated, compared and classified. This normative postulate expressed in the EU's documents is in practice reinforced by the local discourses and practice, which are enforced by the requirements of the European structural programs. These requirements usually demand from organizations to resort to different bureaucratic strategies and practices like evaluation process, auditing and monitoring. I call these practices 'technologies of government' (see Rose and Miller 1992) and later in the chapter "A case study of the EQUAL project" make a claim that they make up the settings within which civil society is organized and enable the EU governing the field of civil society at a distance. I will come back to this issue in the following chapter where I discuss the realization of a project carried out in Toruń within the frame of the Community Initiative EQUAL.

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[9] I refer here to a public lecture given by Wiktor Osiatyński on the 20th November 2006 at the Central European University in Budapest.

The political discourse about civil society expressed in the official documents of the European Union has a performative aspect. It is important to look beyond the language as a certain rhetoric and perceive it as a complex intellectual and practical machinery or apparatus for rendering reality thinkable in such a way that is amenable to political deliberations (see Rose, Miller 1992, Berger and Luckmann 1991).

5. A case study of the EQUAL project

In this chapter I give an empirical account of a project carried out in Toruń within the Community Initiative EQUAL "Partnership – family – equality – work", 75% funded by the European Social Fund and 25% by the state. This three-year project was launched in 2005 and will be finished in 2008. It is conducted by four local institutions: the Foundation Pro Europa, the Voivodship Labor Office in Toruń, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Toruń and the Nicolas Copernicus University in Toruń.

I describe the way this project was designed, conducted and evaluated. Although the EQUAL program is quite different from other programs financed by the European Social Fund, considering its 'laboratory' formula, the patterns of carrying out local projects financed by the European Union are similar and account for creating a new culture of good governance. Therefore, my case study is not only interesting as a single case but as an example of a wider range of similar cases, which say something concrete about the emergence of a general pattern of social practices.

5.1. Broader institutional context of the Community Initiative EQUAL

As Andrew Barry points out, the European Union is an unusually heterogeneous arrangement and its attributes are still controversial and unstable (Barry 2002). By no means, do I intend to impose any unity on the European Union and perceive it as one, coherent political rationality, ideology or discursive field. However, as I am mainly interested in one particular area of the EU's policy, which has impact on the development of civil society on the national level. I focus on the employment policy of the European Union, which employs European Social Fund as its tool.

The European Social Fund was created in 1957 and it is the European Union's main resource for financing development of employability and human resources. It helps Member

States combat unemployment, prevent people from dropping out of the labor market, and promote training to make Europe's workforce and companies better equipped to face new, global challenges (European Social Fund). The ESF is one of the four European structural funds[10] and they all aim at 'promoting economic and social cohesion'.

However, the European Social Fund is relevant for my interests, as it mainly focuses at 'soft', social projects, which do not necessarily aim at developing infrastructure but rather at creating new social conditions, developing new modes of tackling various social problems and equipping individuals in some 'soft' and 'hard' skills. In more theoretical terms, the European Social Fund aims at "making up citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom" (Rose and Miller 1992).

Another reason, why I decided to look at this particular fund is its connection to organized civil society. The relation between the ESF and civil society organizations might be perceived as a mutual one. On one hand, national non-profit organizations are entitled to apply for money from the ESF and, on the other hand, national non-profit organizations make up a sphere through which the ESF programs are implemented. This mutual dependence does not remain without consequences for the realm of civil society on the national level. Therefore, I find it relevant to look at the ESF programs as an indirect way of developing civil society.

The Community Initiative EQUAL is one of the programs, which make the European Social Fund operate. It might be compared to a computer's software, which makes it function. At the European level, the Community Initiative EQUAL is regulated by the Commission of the European Committees and at the national level the Community Initiative EQUAL is regulated by the Ministry of Economy, Labor and Social Policy.

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[10] The other three are: the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), and the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG).

EQUAL is a part of the European Union's strategy "to create more and better jobs and to make sure that no one is denied access to these jobs" (Communication… 2003:2). As a Community Initiative of the European Social Fund, EQUAL plays a role in a learning platform that finds new ways of achieving the policy objectives of the European Employment Strategy and Social Inclusion Process. It differs from the 'mainstream' European Social Fund projects in that it is meant to be a laboratory to develop new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality in the labor market. It puts strong emphasis on building both local partnerships (called in EU's nomenclature Development Partnerships) and transnational partnerships. The latter are meant to ensure that the optimal results are adopted and shared across Europe. EQUAL operated in two rounds. The project I describe was carried out in the second round of programming (2004 – 2006). EQUAL has acquired an interesting formula, which aims at combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual discrimination focusing on the labor market.

There are five key principles, which regulate EQUAL projects: thematic approach, partnership with empowerment, transnationality, mainstreaming and innovation. All these elements were present in the project "Partnership – family – equality – work". I discuss first three of them as they are put into practice and discover the logic of conducting such projects, which bears traces of the practices of enrollment, translation and normalizing practices.

5.2. Problematizing reality

One of the key principles of the Community Initiative EQUAL is a thematic approach to combating problems. The scope of EQUAL's interest is compatible with the European Employment Strategy, which was launched on the basis of the new provisions in the Employment title of the Treaty at the Luxemburg Jobs Summit in November 1997. At the Lisbon European Council (March 2000), the European Union set itself a new strategic goal

for the next decade: "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (Lisbon Strategy). The strategy was designed to enable the Union to regain the conditions for full employment and to strengthen cohesion by 2010. The Council also considered that the overall aim of these measures should be to raise the overall EU employment rate to 70% and to increase the number of women with employment from an average to more than 60% by 2010 (see Communication from the Commission… 2003).

Heads of State and Government agreed on a framework for action based on the commitment from Member States to establish a set of common objectives and targets for employment policy. This co-ordination of national employment policies at the EU level was built around an annual process of guidelines agreed at the Council level, national action plans from the Member States and a joint report by the European Commission.

Crafting an employment policy is about creating problems and finding tools for solving them. Every document regulating employment policy is divided into priorities, that is into some general problems which are in turn divided into actions (better and narrower defined problems). In the case of EQUAL, the division is made according to the themes. Each of them pertains to a specific group of people, which has a particular kind of problems expressed in terms of their relations towards the labor market. For example, the project carried out in Toruń was addressed to women, who have problems with reconciling family and professional life and with the re-integration to the labor market. The tool for solving this problem is suggested as well. The strategy is to develop more flexible and effective forms of work organization and support services.

The process of creating employment policy implies translating some political problems into technical ones, which have to be addressed by experts in the process of making objective diagnosis and finding technical solutions. Therefore, before the Toruń project was launched a

research about the level of unemployment with a particular focus on the situation of local women. The problems of the unemployed women and the goals of the project were operationalized in terms of very technical 'hard' and, less technical, 'soft' indicators. These indicators provide some orientation about the success of the project. Monika, the main evaluator of the project, read out loud some of them to me. The 'soft' indicators were supposed to measure progress in developing entrepreneurial skills among the participants of the project. The 'hard' ones were about the number of the lasting products of the project like reports, diagnosis, training materials, research projects and leaflets. The most important indicator of the project's success was the number of women who stayed in the project till its end. Monika complained that the distinction between the 'hard' and 'soft' indicators was very vague. She also pointed out the fact that, as these indicators are established by the same team which implements and evaluates the project[11], there is a risk that they will design such indicators, which will be achievable in an obvious way. She perceives it as a general problem of the European projects.

As the policy making process is about acting upon a chosen field of social action, this field has to be well defined and operatiozalized in technical terms. The realm, upon which the European Social Fund programs act, is operationalized with measurable indicators such as the employment rate, the rate of women active at the labor market, etc. In this case the field of social action is perceived as a realm of economy and more specifically as a labor market, with its waves of supply and demand. This realm is appropriated by the means of professional language, which operates with terms characteristic to neo-liberal economy such as economic growth, knowledge-base economy and competitive economy. EES language is, however, not a pure neo-liberal talk, it also resorts very strongly to the language of social cohesion and social equality. It is therefore a cluster of different terms, which indicate the normative

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[11] There are two kinds of evaluations: one in made by the project team and the other by an outside evaluator form the National Support Structure from Warsaw. In this case I talk about the evaluation by the project team.

assumptions hidden behind these document. Only when this problematizing and performative activity is done, can the object of governance be acted upon.

Implementing employment policy requires collaboration of the institutions from the European Union's level as well as from the national and local one. In the next section I proceed with the discussion about the process of implementing the EQUAL project, which is characterized by involvement of authorities from different spheres.

5.3. Establishing partnerships: enrolling actors

According to the documents[12] directly regulating the Community Initiative EQUAL partnerships, the local and the transnational partnerships are of prime importance for a successful implementation of the projects and, therefore, the first action of the three[13] is solely devoted to establishing them. One of the challenges of working in partnerships is the ability to negotiate a common diagnosis of a problem and agree upon a common strategy of combating it. The actor, which is able to enforce its definition of a problem and a strategy for combating it over his partners, gains power to represent this problem in a broader public.

A Development Partnership, established at the local level, should give a 'synergic result' in the sense that it should allow the partners to combine resources of different actors and to pursue innovative solutions based on a common definition of a problem. The aim of this rule is to bring partners together who might not have had a chance to 'collaborate' with each other before, and who represent distinctive spheres and authorities.

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[12] At the European level the Community Initiative EQUAL is regulated by the Commission of the European Committees through the document "Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Establishing the guidelines for the second round of the Community Initiative EQUAL concerning transnational co-operation to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labor market 'Free movement of good ideas'" (2003). On the national level it is regulated by the document issued by the Ministry of Economy, Labor and Social Policy "EQUAL Community Initiative Program for Poland" (2004).

[13] Each of the EQUAL projects consists of three actions. First one is devoted to establishing partnerships, diagnosing the problem, working out common solutions to it and dividing tasks between the partners. Second action one is the phase of carrying out the project and the third action aims at mainstreaming the results of the project.

In the analyzed case, the Development Partnership was established between institutions representing four distinct spheres: the sphere of organized civil society, local government, business and academia. The Foundation Pro Europa is the leading partner of this project, which in practice means that it is responsible for running the accountancy of the project and managing all formal aspects of it. I was informed that in the process of writing the project proposal the Foundation had the 'strongest voice'. This was mainly due to the fact that the idea of launching this project came from this institution.

Some of the partnership institutions have already collaborated with each other in the past, e.g. the university and the Voivodship Labor Office in Toruń. There are also personal links existing between the university and the Foundation, as one of the Foundation employees is simultaneously a PhD student at the university. Therefore, the cooperation between these institutions was not established from scratch. However, it was the first time when all four of these institutions joined their action simultaneously in order to conduct a project on such a large scale. The agreement between the partners was signed and the tasks clearly divided between them.

The other institution which has quite a special status in this project is the Nicholas Copernicus University in Toruń. I conducted four interviews with the university partners. They performed different functions in the project. Two of them worked as evaluators. One of them was 'monitoring' the beneficiaries of the project, which means that she was meeting with them every week and discussing the weak and strong points of the project. The fourth was the assistant of coordinating the content supervising group. They all perceived themselves as experts who are looking at the process of conducting the project from a distanced, scientific position. They were calming down the emotions appearing among the project partners and the beneficiaries and translating appearing problems into technical ones, which were supposed to improve their performance. For example, the evaluator suggested

that problems with communication between the team members can be solved by the practice of writing down protocols from each meeting of the project team. The authority of 'objective knowledge' helped them influence various decisions and control the quality of the work.

Toruń's project was not an exception as to the involvement of an academic institution. It was quite a common practice to invite university to join the Development Partnership, both in Poland (e.g. in Sopot's project university was also involved in the process of the project evaluation) and abroad (e.g. Slovenian partnership was collaborating with the sociology department in Ljubljana). In my opinion, enrollment of the academic institutions has not only an important meaning for each and single project but for the whole process of putting the European employment policy into practice. The nimbus of the academic experts disposing with objective, value-free scientific knowledge gives legitimity to the European programs. The control of the scholars over the research methodology and the quality of reports make them more reliable. These practices shift the issue of employment from the sphere of politics to the sphere of objective expertise. However, the growing involvement of academic institutions in European projects is not without consequences for these institutions as well. The role of scholars as concerned organic intellectuals, in the Gramscian sense, is giving way to the role of scholars as employees of big funding institution and their political agendas (see Gramsci 1971).

I managed to infer from my various conversations that the partnerships in EQUAL projects are usually 'glued in haste' and do not function properly in practice. Arek, the author of a diagnosis of the state of unemployment in Toruń, had significant difficulties getting needed data from one of the partner institutions. As Jacek critically pointed out, not every partner treats the project equally seriously, which results in 'paper partnerships' rather then the synergic effect of a joint action.

In Toruń project two transnational partnerships were established at the beginning of the project. The first one, the Partnership for Equality P4E, gathers Development Partnerships from Italy, Slovenia and Spain and the second, Partnership LIFE and WORK, gathers Development Partnerships from Spain, Greece and France. There is a thematic link between the national projects – they all aim at equalizing chances on the labor market for men and women and at combining career with the family life by creating new and flexible modes of employment. The official goals of the transnational partnerships are the exchange of experience, carrying out common research projects and working out common diagnosis and solutions, which can be further introduced and disseminated. Toruń project team was involved in several common research projects with its transnational partners, one of which concerned the practices of internal social corporate responsibility in the regional companies.

One of my interviewees, who took direct care over the maintenance of the transnational partnerships, claims that the process of establishing them is to a large extent forced by the EQUAL and are thus artificial in a way. Partners are found through an EQUAL data base, which gathers all the currently carried out EQUAL projects in Europe and are chosen according to the thematic equivalence. The biggest challenge of establishing a partnership is finding a substantive common denominator for the national projects. This might prove difficult as every project carries in it something unique, and the commonalities and conceptual links are in a way created for the benefit of the partnerships. This is not always easily achieved, and it means that the partners often have to 'tailor themselves' to the needs of the partnerships. It is usually preceded by heated negotiations and struggles, which might end up with a failure in establishing the partnership. Toruń's project had one unsuccessful attempt at establishing a partnership.

The process of building partnerships is a difficult one. It rarely brings the expected results. However, they are functional for the process of making employment policy in

57

general. One of the major benefits coming from the establishment of the local and transnational partnerships is the enrollment of different authorities into a common venture who make it powerful because of the alliances it can rely on. Transnational partnerships, according to my interviewees, provide with an opportunity of showing other actors at the local or national level that some of the similar unemployment problems are being tackled by similar solutions in other countries in Europe.

5.4. Empowering the beneficiaries, making-up subjects

Partnerships also elicit the active participation of the beneficiaries of the project – people who are exposed to discrimination and inequality on the labor market. This process is called empowerment and, according to the guidelines, is one of the conditions of success of the EQUAL projects.

The term empowerment has not been translated into Polish by the ministry officials or by the executor's at the local level. Its English version is still appealing and meaningful as the word 'power' is commonly understood by the Polish citizens even by those whose knowledge of English is very poor. The term implies some sort of giving power to the powerless – the final beneficiaries of the project. It is the most vague principle of the EQUAL projects as it is difficult to operationalize it and give any practical sense to this term. The roles and the degree of participation of the final beneficiaries is pre-defined in a rather stable way by the project executors. Moreover, as the practice of the Toruń's project shows, the beneficiaries of the project do not always benefit from it in the desired way or, at least, do not have such a subjective feeling. For example, 'daily moms' were receiving very low salaries. At the same time they were usually aware of huge salaries of the project experts. Such a discrepancy made them feel highly dissatisfied with the whole project.

Toruń's project had three well-defined 'target groups'. This first consists of women with out-of-date skills and lowered self-esteem caused by a long term absence from the labor market as a result of raising children. There have been twenty five women recruited to this group. Five out of them decided to open a 'daily mom' service. Four of them decided to open their own business (but nor a 'daily mom' service) and the rest subjected themselves to the career path called 'work under patronage'. The members of the second group are defined as professionally active women, whose career is hindered by their role as mothers. These women, who are twenty five, are provided with professional assistance by identifying their potentials and directing them to take up some further training. The last group comprises women who might lose their jobs because of expected motherhood. They are offered to change the mode of their work to tele-work, while still remaining on the same position and in the same company.

The recruitment process for all of these modules was initiated by some marketing campaigns. However, as there were usually problems with finding the assumed number of participants, the team members used their informal networks to look for the missing women. Although there has been a diagnosis done about the situation of women on the labor market it did not actually help to locate the potential final beneficiaries of the project. There were substantial difficulties with reaching and enlisting 'adequate' individuals into the project. Sometimes, even the 'personal channels' were not always very successful and, during the time I conducted my research, recruitment procedures for some modules were still open. My interviewees talked about the number of beneficiaries in terms of fulfilling or failing to fulfill the premised indicators of projects success. As there appeared some problems with persuading the employers about the benefits of the tele-work, the indicator of participants for the 'tele-work cohort' was reduced from the number of twenty five to sixteen.

There is a wide range of features that are being ascribed to the final beneficiaries of the project. It is done both spontaneously by the project executors in the course of carrying out the project and also in a very systematic way through the establishment of 'soft' indicators, which measure the degree of change that took place in the individuals. And thus the women are locked into roles of the powerless, who are lacking entrepreneurial or adequate professional skills, have too low self-esteem and are unable to take responsibility for their own careers.

In the process of carrying out the project, the beneficiaries are subjected to various techniques of measuring the degree to which they are becoming more empowered. The level of empowerment is measured by 'soft indicators', which should be achieved in order to speak of the project's success. 'Soft indicators' should answer the following questions: did the level of independence and entrepreneurship increase among the beneficiaries? Are they more eager to take up difficult tasks? Are they more motivated to come back to the labor market? Are they mentally better equipped to overcome their own difficulties and barriers? The answers are acquired through different sorts of surveys, psychological tests, interviews and focus groups. The women, by a series of processes, are locked into the roles, which had been proposed for them in 'the expert program' (see Callon 1986).

From the moment the individuals got into the project as the final beneficiaries, they were locked into certain roles and ascribed some particular characteristics in the form of measurable indicators. The individuals are made up by the acquired definitions and indicators assumed in the project and thus are becoming amenable to the project's actions. In the course of action, what really matters is the achievement of the assumed indicators. This way the beneficiaries' characteristics are translated into texts, tables, charts and numbers (see Latour 2000). Those data will be carefully collected and passed on to the central state institutions and them further translated into the EU Annual Progress Report. The moment the translation

60

work is done, the individuals are being put aside. The produced texts are becoming agents as well; they are becoming a part of the employment policy and are the ultimate reference for anyone, who wants to act in the field of employment policy. They will serve as an argument during the process of mainstreaming the results, that is, when the tested model will be implemented into local or national legislation and employment policy system. They start to have their own social life and have to ability to act upon the reality (see Latour 2000), as the following 'editions' of the European employment policy will be crafted basing on the gathered evaluation reports. From this perspective, the idea of empowerment is little more than another way of enrolling actors into a common project, closing them in certain roles and mobilizing in the form of texts to be spokesmen of certain ideas and groups of people.

In this respect, the idea of empowerment has a very strong political and perverse meaning, as the practice of empowerment leads rather to the increase of control over a certain field by such a powerful agent as the European social policy than to the gaining of power by the individuals themselves.

Monika told me, reflecting upon one of the focus interviews that she conducted, that the process of empowering the 'powerless' can bring some unexpected and quite for the assumed effects. During one of the meetings she came to realize that she was talking to some totally changed women. However, this change was not about being more entrepreneurial and responsible for themselves but about being more confident in making claims towards the organizers of the process. She had an impression that the ladies, who already received quite a lot in the project, took it for granted that they are entitled to get more privileges and assistance and that such a focus interview is a wonderful occasion to negotiate better them.

Jacek, the leader of the Kujawian-Pomeranian Center for Supporting the Non-Governmental Initiatives TŁOK, had an opportunity to visit some other EQUAL projects in the region and observe how they were carried out. He confessed that, in many cases, the most

important points of the daily project routine are the moments of signing the attendance list by the participants of the project. Many times it comes down to comic situations when the list is being signed three or four times a day, in the morning, before the lunch, after lunch, but the quality of activities conducted in the meantime are of very little importance for the success of the project. In many cases, it is sufficient for the participants to receive a certificate, which they can show to the future employer. This is why they do not rebel against mediocre activity schedules. After all, the list of presence will be the proof, the 'solid document' for the external evaluator, who comes from Warsaw in order to audit the project and check if all the assumed modules and activities have been carried out according to the plan.

There is yet another point. Monika made an ironic remark that such projects, in the end, boil down to a desperate chase after achieving the indicated results instead of focusing on the help for the women. This logic might have caused great confusion and disappointment when one of the participants decided to leave the program and open a business herself in another city. Arek told me that the organizers initially perceived it as a kind of tragedy and betrayal of the project. However, he admitted, this was actually the best indicator of the success of the project and he strongly insisted that the other members of his team perceived the defection of one woman in this rather optimistic way.

Sabina, the PhD student responsible for monitoring the women taking part in the project, noticed that the participants are very dissatisfied with the project. The ones who are involved in the 'daily-mom' module do not want to continue this kind of activity after the project is finished. First of all, this solution does not work in practice for them. The ladies complain that it is not a profitable business, as they receive very low 'salary' for being a 'daily-mom'. At the same time, they are aware of the huge sums of money that are circulated in the project. Most of the time they go into the pockets of different 'experts' hired in the project. They find the discrepancy between their salaries and the salaries of the 'experts' simply unfair.

The process of empowerment is more beneficial for sustaining the policy and legitimizing the process of solving particular problems than for the beneficiaries themselves. Sabina told me in a straightforward way that no one really cares about the women. The most important thing for the project-organizers is to look after the schedule, and make sure that all the assumed points are accomplished.

5.5. Practices of good governance: interessement of the project team members

There are also strong expectations from the executors of the Community Initiative EQUAL as to following the practices of good governance. Good governance requires active participation of all interested stakeholders also in order to enhance and improve governance of the process and contribute to better mainstreaming of the outputs of EQUAL into policy at national and European level. "With EQUAL, new Member States will be entering new ground in terms of governance, policy issues and policy development. An ongoing evaluation will facilitate learning processes amongst all stakeholders involved, and contribute to capacity building within the public sector" (Communication from the Commission… 2003).

Good governance is something more than just a principle, it is a new rationality of programming, implementing and evaluating policies. As the authors of a report "The Emergence of the Structural and Cohesion Funds in Central Europe" (2006) point out, the EU has no right to instruct its Member States to restructure their public administration systems or to organize their social dialogue in the way that seems optimal from the EU's point of view. "Instead, the EU managed to create legal, procedural and financial framework conditions that actually initiate a kind of decentralization and involvement of civil society, regional and local government, to be able to absorb EU assistance effectively under structural and regional policy" (The Emergence… 2006:3). As there are no EU institutions or rules binding member-states to decentralize and maximize participation, the principle of good governance, which

has to be complied to in order to effectively utilize the funds, is forging new alliances between the public and social partners and is strongly acting upon the sphere of civil society.

The authors of the report point out that "one of the undeclared and contested objectives of the EU's structural policy is to reach down to lower levels of governance, changing policies and procedures at sub-national level and empowering public and private stakeholders" (The Emergence... 2006:4). By encouraging establishment of various new modes of governance and following the rules of good governance the decision making process is being decentralized and the authority of the state is being significantly weakened. The possible consequences of the structural policy, pointed out by the authors, is the development of "multi-level governance" and eventually further regionalism within the Member States and in certain sense in the whole EU (The Emergence... 2006:4).

Two main tools by the means of which good governance is being promoted are the regional, structural and cohesion funds. Structural and regional policy of the EU can be seen as a shift in the relations of competence between European level and national level.

> The European level impact moved from negative integration, limiting member states' capacity to cope with regional imbalances to positive integration by expanding Community regulatory authority and providing extensive resources. As far as the financial resources are concerned, it can be seen that the expenditure of structural policy has become one of the EU's core activities and has represented a substantial part (approximately 30-40%) of the communities budget. The declared objective of the EU's structural policy is 'the strengthening of its economic and social cohesion'. (The Emergence... 2006:4)

The idea of good governance offers two potentialities for exerting political power over the field it pertains to. The first one is implied by the idea of a wider participation through the policy chains. This principle encourages the process of enrolling and mobilizing different actors and authorities into the process of programming, implementing and evaluating structural and regional policies. A stabilization of a network of enrolled human and non-

human actors and different authorities ensures a given policy success and legitimacy to become a spokesperson for a certain group of people and problems.

The other potentiality is implied by the principle of accountability and effectiveness. The idea of formalized accountability has now become the ruling principle in many areas of humans' activities. These changes are symptomatic of a new rationality of government, or what, following Foucault (1991), we might calls 'neo-liberal governmentality'. Shore and Wright (2000) point out that by applying the term new rationality of government, we refer to "a wholesale shift in the role of government premised on using norms of the free market as the organizing principle not only of economic life, but of the activities of the state itself and, even more profoundly, of the conduct of individuals" (p.60).

In the case of Toruń's project there were two evaluation strategies employed. One was internal and the other was external. The first kind was conducted by the members of the project team, Monika, Ola and Natalia. The second was conducted by the evaluators from the Domestic Supporting Structure from Warsaw. This institution, created by the Ministry of Regional Development, which is the managing institution of the European Social Fund, also sends its auditors who control every project.

Monika called the internal evaluation process a participatory-interactive one. Its purpose is to improve the conduct of the project and the work of the team. The members of the project team are, therefore, also subjected to a series of processes, which lock them in the roles of efficient, self-reflexive and disciplined executors of the project. Callon (1986) calls this process interessement. However, contrary to the women, who were locked into certain roles by the project teams, the team itself is locked into the roles prescribed in the 'expert project of good governance'. The project team is gathering regularly at meetings where they discuss the process of implementing the project. They tackle the substantial issues and the administrative as well, such as the flow of information between the partners, transparency of

65

the collaboration between institutions, clarity of the rules and the just sharing of duties. In other words, the project is not only about producing certain effects on the outside but also about working out some good practices of cooperation between the partnership institutions. It is an 'incubator' of good governance, which should lead to a further advancement in the art of such governance during the future projects.

Accountability and effectiveness are operationalized in the strategies of audit, accountancy, evaluations and monitoring. Shore and Wright claim that, in order to be effective, audit technologies must re-fashion the way people perceive themselves in relation to their work, to one another and to themselves. This process is called 'empowerment', as it implies that audit enables institutions to ensure quality and improve performance by allowing people to be judged by the targets that they set for themselves. However, according to Shore and White, this 'democratic facade' of audit disguises the "hierarchical relationships and coercive practices" (p.62), which do not leave an option for challenging the main goals of the projects the individuals participate in. This way, civil society actors, while struggling to achieve the targets set in the particular programs and projects, are complying with the fundaments of the implemented policies and are deprived of the possibility to challenge it. The authors point out that auditing technologies assure "the quality of control systems rather than the quality of first order operation" (Shore and Wright 2000:73). Subjecting civil society actors to the technologies of audit, evaluations and monitoring, make them 'chase'[14] the indicators of success assumed in the projects' rather than focus on giving help to the beneficiaries of their initiative. Finally, according to the authors, auditing practices construct the professional self, which is eventually willing to scrutinize its own behavior and adopts the norms of conduct desired by the disciplinary institutions (see Foucault 1979, Elias 1939). In

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[14] This expression was used by Monika, a woman working as an evaluator of the EQUAL project in Toruń.

other words, technologies deployed in the realization of the principle of good governance enable governing individuals at a distance without imposing any direct rules upon them.

5.6. Concluding remarks

To what conclusions does the study of the EQUAL project lead? Sabina expressed a strong opinion that such projects merely serve the pure purpose of circulating big money to the pockets of different experts and institutions. Other members of the Toruń's project were quite positive about the whole formula. They appreciated an opportunity to exchange experience with the foreign partners and felt that the women involved in the project really benefited from it. Jacek judged that the ESF, because of the very high volume of grant, is 'spoiling' NGOs and other local institutions in Poland. He assessed that the projects are usually of low quality, they are not innovative and the final beneficiaries do not receive great help. The NGOs as well as the local enterprises make a 'giant ESF raid' without having any attractive offer for the final beneficiaries of the projects. Wojtek, the manager of the Sopot's project was very enthusiastic about the ESF projects. He had high hopes about the potential of the EQUAL projects to working out models for making employment policy more efficient in economical terms.

A spectrum of opinions about EQUAL projects is quite broad. It would be unfair to say that the European Union's employment policy does not do any good. It is very useful in many cases and brings concrete results. However, for me as an anthropologist it is more important to look at the process of making the employment policy work in terms of building up a power macro actor. Different actors are enrolled into one common project, which is extremely powerful because of the forces it can rely on (see Callon and Latour 1981). By translating wills of the national and local actors into one single will the European employment policy grows to a form of a Leviathan. Such translations, according to Callon and Law, involve

"negotiations, intrigues, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence, thanks to which an actor or force takes, or causes to be conferred on itself, authority to speak on behalf of another actor or force. 'Our interests are the same', 'do what I want', 'you cannot succeed without going through me' (Callon and Latour 1981:279). To make it more concrete, the European employment policy translates not only the sincere will of different state and local institutions to combat the unemployment in Poland. The process of translation involves also calculations and intrigues of the different civil society organizations, local enterprises or education institution, which struggle to survive and develop financially. The ESF, as a huge resource of money seems to be 'the Thing' they really need. Jacek, Ewa, Piotr and Jan told me about the current NGOs-boom in the region, which leaders come of advice about the possibilities of applying for the ESF grants. According to my interviewees, many organizations extended their statuses so that they can now encompass activities directed to the problems of inequalities and discrimination on the labor market. My interviewees were even of the opinion that organizations or associations, which aim at 'contesting the system', are also able to benefit from the European funding. It is just a matter of making projects, which match the funding objectives. This quite perverse strategy puts into question the stability of the employment policy Leviathan as a spokesperson representing various wills as one single will and speaking on behalf of various voices with one single strong voice. However, the processes of translation do not remain without consequences to the sphere of civil society. I argue that, simultaneously with the employment policy Leviathan there is yet another Leviathan being built. The other one is the good governance Leviathan, which enrolls the project partners and therefore also the civil society actors. It aims at locking them in the roles of 'technically fit good governors' and normalizing their practices (see Foucault 1971). I will come back to discussing these consequences in the final conclusions of my thesis.

Final Conclusions

The object of my studies is civil society in Poland and throughout my thesis I discussed the European Union's impact upon it. I argued that after 2004 the EU does not only exercise its influence through direct civil society assistance programs like the Youth Program, but also in an indirect way through its structural policy. I took a closer look at the mechanisms of the European Social Fund, whose main objective is to encourage economic growth and develop employability and human resources in the EU Member States. I focused on one particular program of the ESF, the Community Initiative EQUAL, which aims at combating inequality and discrimination on the labor market. After Poland's accession to the EU, the ESF programs are the biggest funding resource for the civil society organizations. However, given a clear pro-employment profile of the ESF programs and a demand for adherence to the principles of building partnerships or of good governance, they enforce change in the discourse and practices in the field of civil society.

A shift into a greater involvement of civil society into development programs was already implied in the "White Paper on Governance" (2001), and later on in the documents issued by the European Economic and Social Committee, which I analyzed in the chapter "Analysis of European Union discourse about civil society". My analysis revealed the normative and epistemological assumptions about the sphere of civil society and its role for the European Union. It is perceived as a realm distinct from the realm of the state but very strongly connected to the issues of economic development. It is comprised of a variety of organizations and associations, which can be counted, monitored and subjected to the practices of good governance and of the social and civil dialogue. The documents suggest thus that civil society is amenable to structuration and organization. The "White Paper on Governance" speaks in a straightforward way about the need of a greater involvement of civil society into building and implementing the employment policy.

This discourse, as I learnt from my interviews, is reproduced by local leaders and members of civil society organizations. They all underlined the importance of professionalization and greater involvement of their organizations in development programs.

Although the transformation of the sphere of civil society towards its greater structuration and organization began in Poland as early as just after 1989 with the inflow of the US and European Union funding, I argue that the year 2004 saw yet another important change. This change is connected with the promotion of the principle of good governance. Civil society actors are locked into the roles of 'technically fit good governors' and actively enrolled in the project of good governance. The European Union's impact on civil society through this principle has a sophisticated nature, as it acts through the deployment of technical strategies of audit, evaluation, monitoring and accountancy. Their technical character disguises the political power, which stands behind them. I argue, after Rose and Miller (1992), that these strategies should be looked upon as technologies of government. They normalize the practices of the actors in the civil society field and enable the European Union to govern them from a distance without necessarily having to resort to any direct coercive action.

Moreover, I argue that the combination of Rose's and Miller's approach to the studies of modern government and Wolf's concept of structural power provide a better understanding of power relations involved in the process of subjecting civil society actors to the principle of good governance. Governmental technologies, which are deployed by this principle, orchestrate the settings for the action in the sphere of civil society by indicating 'the way in which things should be done'. Therefore, I find it legitimate to say the European Union, through its ESF programs and by employing the concept of good governance, gains structural power over the national field of civil society in Poland. It means that, although the actors play different power games within the field, the way they are able to do that is structured by the European Union.

70

The last question I address in this chapter is about the possible social consequences of the good governance normalizing practices for the sphere of civil society in Poland. Petras and Veltmeyer (2005) point out that the growing trend of contracting NGOs as social partners for development programs and subjecting them to the normalizing practices of good governance demobilize the civil society actors and "divert the struggle for state power in one or more directions toward electoral politics, reformist social organizations, or local development" (p.9). This might be the case for Poland as well, where, contrary to the dissident idea about civil society as a countervailing force against the regime, the contemporary civil society organizations are becoming more and more in line with the mainstream politics of the European Union and the state. I claim that European Union's corporatist approach to the process of policy making and subjecting it to different normalizing practices defuses its potential for challenging the system. Jan, one of my interviewees, expressed his worries about the future shape of civil society in Poland. He pointed out that some areas of activities, such as sport and culture are underfunded by the European Union. This might result in homogenizing and impoverishing these spheres in pro-employment ventures.

However, at this moment the absorption of the ESF funding is very small. The figures for 2006 indicate that only 3 per cent of the civil society organizations received a grant for carrying out ESF projects. Moreover, as the structural funds have only been available for organizations for the last two years, it might still be too early to notice any significant changes in the field of civil society. However, I claim that some trends have already become visible. According to Jacek, one of my interviewees, the opening of the ESF funding for Polish civil society and the closure of most of American and Canadian resources at the same time causes a funding-vacuum for the middle range organizations. They either had inadequate statuses or were organizationally and financially too weak to cope with large-scale ESF

71

projects. Another significant change is the re-profiling of the statuses towards the employment activities or opening NGOs in order to absorb the ESF funding.

However, I also find it crucial to investigate the consequences of the process of channeling the energy of civil society actors into the improvement of their own governance through auditing and evaluation processes. How will this influence the capacity of organizations to deliver direct help to different local groups and improve their sensitivity to local issues? Although I provided some speculations about the possible consequences, I leave this question open for further research, which should involve more systematic and longer studies of the changes in civil society in Poland.

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