

30 MINUTES OF SILENCE

Potential intersections of shame, insecurities, and fear on the NANE helpline

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Abstract

In this thesis I investigate how the domestic violence helpline run by NGO NANE (Budapest, Hungary) can take into consideration more effectively the various aspects of belonging to Roma minority when working with callers of Roma origin. More precisely I ask the question that in the practice of the helpline in cases of visible minorities (like Roma) when and how is perception of Romany-ness silenced, or on the contrary, restored by the Roma caller or the counselor. I examine the special aspects of fear, insecurity and shame present in the conversations between the counselors and the callers to find out how ethnic belonging and (anti)racism are present, when potentially Roma women are calling the helpline and remaining silent about their ethnic belonging. So doing I focus on one hand on how the experience of being Roma can be connected to Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick's concept of shame (2003) and the performative obligation of visible minorities (Muñoz, 2006). Utilizing the finds and insights of Hungarian anthropologists (Kovai, Horváth, 2012) I state that being Roma cannot and shouldn't be discussed without the racialized aspects of perception into consideration. I also emphasize how problematic the concept of culture of poverty is, which appears in different forms when researching and working with/for Roma (basing on Stewart). I claim that the different waves of feminisms being present synchronically and the problematic characteristic of belonging to the Hungarian nation affect the way counselors acting and reacting on the helpline. On the other hand in the second part of the thesis I analyze the interviews I conducted with my colleagues and the results of my participant observation as a trainer of the NGO and as a counselor on the helpline to find out what suggestions could be made to improve the quality of our work when Romany women call us.

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Terms and list of abbreviations

CofP – culture of poverty

HR – Human Rights

DV – domestic violence

NANE – Women Against the Violence Against Women association (Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen)

*

In the thesis Roma and Gypsy are used as interchangeable terms (depending on which term the referenced texts used).

INTRODUCING 30 MINUTES OF SILENCE

In this thesis I investigate how the domestic violence helpline run by NGO NANE (Budapest, Hungary) can take into consideration more effectively the various aspects of belonging to Roma minority when working with callers of Roma origin.

More precisely I ask the question that in the practice of the helpline when and how in cases of visible minorities (like Roma) is perception of Romany-ness silenced, or on the contrary, restored by the Roma caller or the counselor.

1.1 How I met the silence on the helpline and what happened after that

1.1.1

I've been working as a volunteer on the NANE helpline for victims and survivors of domestic violence for about a year. NANE is an NGO combating domestic violence in Hungary since its foundation in 1994. Its full name is Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen Egyesület, in English: Women Against the Violence Against Women¹. All the volunteers who want to work on the helpline are required to participate in a training where we learn basic information about DV and related issues and imbibe communicational skills and attitudes regarding what and how should and shouldn't be done and said on the helpline. There is a part in our training when we have to co-counsel on the phone with counselors, who have been working there for a longer time. The beginners listen with a separate headset to the conversation and try to

¹ See more details later in the introduction.

learn all the communicational tricks and useful informations. Once we (me and a counselor) had a relatively long (though not longer than the usual ones, about 40-50 minutes) call from a middle aged woman from one of the poorest regions of the countryside who was suffering from multiple forms of violence. Her father-in-law was battering her and her two children and threatening them that they should leave their housing, which was the property of the father-in-law and another relative. In addition she was being sexually harassed by members of the community and so were her children. Her son was being bullied and harassed as an assumed homosexual, which at the point when the woman called us had led to cutting himself on his upper and lower arms with sharp objects². After a half an hour talking she mentioned that she herself was a Roma and asked us not to take it the wrong way, but according to her experiences the institutions in her village did count her as a Roma and didn't even try to help. Nor did the teachers of her children, nor the social workers of the family care center.

1.1.2

A young woman called us to ask for help for her younger sister. This younger sister had been verbally and physically insulted by her boyfriend for months, but she loved him and didn't want to leave the relationship. After talking for 30 or 40 minutes about the situation and how this elder sister could support and help her sibling, the caller suddenly mentioned something about the Vlach Romany-ness of the boy. And a few minutes later she added that she and her sister are Roma as well, but not Vlach. She was afraid that if her

² About the correlation of serious abuse and self-destructive tendencies see: Judith Lewis Herman: Trauma and Recovery. The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. Basic Books 1997.

sister decides to leave the boy he will bring all his relatives 'with knives' to get revenge. Till that point I had not the slightest hint that there was anything related to ethnicity, or ethnic conflicts in this case. To be honest, I was a bit surprised.

1.2 What is at stake

In this thesis my aim is to investigate a very special aspect of fear and shame on the DV helpline run by NANE. Namely how ethnic belonging and racism are present in the forms of fear and shame, when potentially Roma women are calling the helpline. (Which means that this thesis focuses in a very limited way on 'usual' topics around domestic violence such as characteristics of battering, or possibilities of institutional help etc.)

After several calls like these a question emerged for me: what exactly happens in that 30 or 40 minutes, while the call remains silent about the ethnic belonging of our callers? In both the above depicted cases it appeared to be important that Romany-ness is considered since they both decided to mention it at a certain point as an issue. But why did it take approximately half an hour to bring ethnicity up? Or why the counselor did not ask about that? We have no written policy about mapping ethnic belonging, or how to map it but as it appeared in the training and in the interview we have a hidden or un-explicit routine not to take that factor into consideration till the caller doesn't mention it. The question is that what that half an hour silence around ethnicity is about. According to my experiences other factors of importance, such as living in a remote village, or on a farm, or to have a disabled grandmother to take care of, or being disabled the caller

her(him)self are not that difficult to bring up. These factors are voiced much earlier and there is usually no silence around them. The aim of this thesis is to answer the above questions, to explore the potential intersections of shame which could explain that silence.

*

The main argument of this thesis is that the below enumerated different fears and shames appear together when creating the 30 minutes of silence on the helpline. As I reason in the following pages, in this silence these different factors are present synchronically.

On one hand our Roma callers are afraid to mention their ethnicity, since they were many times neglected, ashamed and mistreated on individual and institutional levels as well because of their belonging. The theoretical framework deployed when analyzing why Roma are silent about their ethnic belonging in the first 30-40 minutes of the conversation is based on the work of Kata Horváth (2012) and Cecilia Kovai (2012) who mapped how unnamings of Romany-ness, thus silencing ethnicity as a practice of the post-socialist era created and conserved shame around ethnic belonging. This shame is linked to the concept of 'circle of shame' of Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick (2003), and the constant performative obligation of people of color. In elaborating that thought I utilize the insights of Muñoz who wrote about the complex problem of being Mexican.

On the counselors' side there are also different things at stake. Interviewing my colleagues it became apparent that we, as middle-class, feminist human (women's) rights activists working on the helpline are afraid of asking about

the ethnic background of our callers, since we don't want to act, and don't want to be perceived as acting in discriminative, racist ways. When mapping the various reasons behind that fear I examine how counselors are becoming constructed at the end of our training. So doing I base on my participant observation both as a trainee and as a trainer and on analyzing the cooperative and associative learning methods and materials used during the procedure. It is also important to see how we perceive our callers, and how we imagine the assumed caller we are talking to. In this section I deploy the insights of several authors who deepen and broaden the potentials in using the concept of intersectionality (Yuval-Davis 2006, 2011, Taylor 2011, Shih 2005). The concept of culture of poverty came into picture as well (Stewart 2002). Since NANE is an organization working with Human Rights approach, and since this approach in the special case of how we map and treat members of ethnic minorities is connected to the concept of culture of poverty (see chapter 3.2) it is important to contextualize and historicize how this concept appeared in Hungarian sociology (Stewart 2002), and in the work of the helpline. The specificities of Eastern-European feminisms should be taken into consideration as well, since as Graff (2003) showed it in post-socialist countries different waves of feminisms – so different aims and ideological backgrounds - are present simultaneously. This is true for NANE as well. The last thing which appears as important is the problematic nature of Hungarian-ness, the national belonging of the counselors. This is illustrated with references to a recent collection of essays on the topic 'What is Hungarian now?' edited by Iván Sándor and on Anikó Imre's article (Imre 2008).

1.3 Herstory and structure of NANE

This chapter gives a brief summary of the history of NANE, about the structure of the organization, and how the volunteers are trained to become a counselor on the helpline.

1.3.1 The historical part

Since the history of NANE is not really researched I could rely on only a few sources. Namely on private conversations with my colleagues, and a recently submitted MA thesis by Anita Mátray, from the university of Radboud, Netherlands. From these I've learnt that the civil association of NANE (Women Against Violence Against Women, in Hungarian: Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen) was founded in 1994 by Antonia Burrows, an American feminist activist who was teaching at that time at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. Burrows and thirteen Hungarian volunteers began the work of combating domestic violence, both as working with survivors and work as lobby-activists, fighting for correct legislation regarding not only domestic violence but human trafficking, abortion and harassment. NANE had visiting activists from the United States several times who gave trainings on women's rights and DV related issues. From Hanna (one of the the 'Mamas Grande', see below) I learnt that in 1998 among the American

trainers there was Ellen Pence, the co-founder of the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project. This program is still the basic model for NANE when combating for instance for legislative regulation of DV in Hungary.³

1.3.2 Mamas Grande in the Association

The structure of the organization is set up as it follows: we have a General Assembly which elects the president (or chair) and the two vice presidents. There is an Executive Committee, a Controlling Committee, Secretariat and Employees. We have activists and counselors among our membership. These are the 'official' facts about the NGO. What is important here to note, since it has serious effects on the everyday work of the organization, is that we have two people of authorities. Both of them have been volunteering for NANE since 1998. One of them (Gréta) has been the chair of NANE for several years, but the other, Hanna now doesn't have any official title. When joining the organization we meet them at first – since mainly they are engaged with training the new volunteers. But it takes a bit more time to realize that actually they are not only very experienced trainers but the 'Mamas Grande'⁴ of NANE. They know everything and everybody, they are the ones who know whom to contact in an international project, they are the ones invited when experts are needed in media or in conferences. They are also the ones who compiled the training materials we use. There is a tendency in NANE to behave as a democratic organization where people are

³ 1998 was also the first year when NANE handed in materials and recommendations to the Ministry to achieve the goal of a domestic violence law to be made, based partly on the Duluth model. This law may get realized (adopted by parliament) these days (June 2013). This was a difficult and long process and the experts at NANE claim that the result is still not optimal, but can improve the situation of victims.

⁴ Expression of Gabriel Garcia Márquez and meaning a woman who is the leader of, and authority for a group of people.

almost equal in their positions (this can be conceived as a self-requirement since we consider ourselves as Human Rights activists working in democratic frameworks), but at the end of the day many discussions among the activists ends with the phrase ‘ask Gréta/Hanna about it’. This is not only a telling (and characteristic) detail but has effects on how we work, as it is shown in the analytical chapter.

1.3.3 History of the helpline

As Gréta, one of my interviewees – and current president of the NGO - told me, the foundation of the helpline came up in 1994 as a very practical idea since there was no institutional help for victims of DV in Hungary and something was needed to be done. NANE as a civil association was devoted to help survivors, but because of the lack of finance had to find a cheap and easy way to manage this help. The helpline was born as a first step of this help. Hanna explained me that in Western-Europe and in North-America the helpline is the very basic form of helping survivors which functions rather as a dispatcher service, and channels clients to other institutions, both governmental or civil ones (like shelters, advocacy, psychologists etc). In Budapest the helpline appeared to be the practical first step, since finding a room in someone’s flat was not really difficult or expensive and with little investment they could begin working. It was also significant that the minimal service they could provide was available from all over the country. It is sad that nothing did profoundly change since those years and what we can offer is mainly still a minimum service of the helpline. However, the situation of

victims, and how institutions (including media) and civil organizations treat cases of domestic violence is not the scope of this thesis. What is important here is to see that we lack really effective and useful legislation, infrastructure, shelters with enough space, supportive and prepared lawyers and so on. This shock linked to the limitation of effective help will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

1.3.4 How volunteers become counselors

All the volunteers who want to work on the helpline⁵ are required to participate in a training, where we learn basic information about DV and related issues, and imbibe communication skills and attitudes regarding what and how should, and shouldn't be done and said on the helpline. The next step is shadowing six times the counselors working on the helpline. The new volunteer gets a head-set so she can hear everything said on the phone, but cannot, and is not allowed to speak to the caller. After this we do a so called 'szerepjáték' (role-play) when aspirants and 'real' or 'old' counselors are present at the NANE office. Sitting in a room on chairs, with no real phones the counselors play the role of callers. The imitate calling the helpline and the aspirant counselors should answer the calls, one by one. We give and get feedback and if the present counselors find that the aspirant is ready, she becomes a co-counselor. Now she can answer the calls on the helpline with the supervision of an old counselor. If she had co-counseled with all the

⁵ We have only women counselors on the helpline, which is a policy of the organization.

counselors a decision is made that she can, or can't pick up the phone on her own, as a counselor. That is the end of the process.

In the introductory chapter of the thesis I set up the research question about how to improve the efficiency of helping in cases of Romany women calling the helpline.

I lined out my main- and sub-arguments and made it possible for the reader to get familiar with NANE, the organization this thesis is about. In the next chapter I explain the chosen research methods and enumerate my ethical and personal concerns.

2. DATA AND METHODS USED IN THE PROJECT - AND SPACES OF DIFFICULTY

2.1 Chosen methods

Because of the specificities of the topic I decided to use different methods to explore what's happening around ethnicity in the 30 minutes of silence on the helpline. The biggest part is the analysis of the interviews I had conducted with my colleagues. (Using materials of Weiss (1994) and Kvale (2007) for preparing, conducting and analyzing the interviews). I also did participate as a co-trainer in the training of our new volunteers, and (co)counseled⁶ on the helpline several times.

2.1.1 Interviewing colleagues

I conducted seven interviews with my colleagues working on the helpline. Six of them are counselors and Sylvia is a co-counselor (which is the last step to become a counselor). All of them are middle class women, who consider themselves as belonging to the majority ('white' part) of the society. Although their ethnic belonging is more complicated since two of them stated they were Jewish and one of them told me to have Roma among her ancestry (but didn't identify herself as Roma).

Doing research in an organization where I am one among the volunteers creates a special a situation for interviewing. This situation got further complicated by the intermezzo when I was asked not to write about NANE.

⁶ During the time of writing my thesis I became a counselor.

The process of negotiating about my thesis, the fact that we - the volunteers - know each other quite well, and that we do have private conversations mean that my interviewees surely had preconceptions regarding my questions, priorities and assumed opinions. And so did I. I knew about some of their thoughts and beliefs and preliminary conceptions about the topic I wanted to interview them about. This made the framing of my interview guide a bit tricky, since I had to find ways to get answers which were not addressed to me, the person they know, and about whom they assume to know what she wants. I find that several times I failed. For instance interviewing our president was more than a challenge. She is a very experienced expert in DV and Human Rights related issues, with very explicit opinions and with very good communication skills - and a friend of mine. The result was that interviewing her took not the usual 90, but about 140 minutes and she still managed some times to answer my questions. Generally my strategy was to ask the same or similar questions from the interviewees, at different parts of the interview. This spiral form of the queries made it possible the different articulations and aspects to appear, together with the contradictions and suppressed sentiments. Since they were all aware of the fact that I am interested in Romany-ness I was quite about that and tried to get valuable answers rather by structuring the interviews in that spiral form.

2.1.2 A participating volunteer

As a member of NANE I participated in the training in 2011, and this year I returned to help the process as an assistant trainer. So I have very personal

experiences about the procedure as a trainee. This year when researching for my thesis I tried to mix the position of the participant observer and the assistant trainer. It was difficult to carry out – for example I hardly managed to take notes. However I had the opportunity to witness the process and the methods used, to apperceive the atmosphere and have conversations with the new volunteers. These helped me to think in more depth about the possible consequences of the training on our work – and thus on the 30 minutes of silence on the helpline.

I also managed to look through the training materials, what our chair provided for me and the basic literature on DV what we use in our work.

In addition I kept on with the process of becoming a counselor on the helpline what meant that at first I co-counseled, and after getting the approval of the ‘old’ counselors I began counseling on my own. The occasions of co-counseling were particularly valuable for the purposes of this thesis since I not only listened to the conversations between the counselors and the callers, but after hanging up the phone we (the counselor and me) discussed how the call went, our feelings and thoughts regarding the case and the caller. These conversations of course happen without a research project too, so I was careful to be open about my split (researcher – NANE activist) presence and attention in the situation.

2.2 VALIDITY, MOTIVATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

2.2.1 Why ‘Roma’? – Ineluctable limitations of the scope

As it is clear now, the scope of this research is limited. The helpline is a very specific place of interaction between different people; we could say that the vertical segment of society can be presented on it. This is an intriguing aspect which deserves further exploration, like how financial circumstances, religion(s), sexual orientation, disabilities or other, less obvious factors appear on the helpline. I chose ethnicity or more precisely Romany-ness because Roma are subjects of discrimination in Hungary for centuries – just like in other parts of Europe (Liégeois 2002, Stewart 2012). The other important reason to choose Roma ethnicity as a focus was that Roma are the largest ethnic minority group in Hungary⁷. Being Roma in Hungary is a serious issue, an unavoidable condition which should be studied from more perspectives to get a deeper understanding of the different aspects. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of Romany-ness in the very specific space of the helpline. But there is a personal motivation too, why I chose Roma, and not other (ethnic) minorities. In recent years I had been working with Roma people from diverse groups in different situations – which (while witnessing the difficulties they face) I enjoyed a lot. Because of my experiences among, and with them I definitely have a positive bias towards them. Since the most important ethical concern is ‘do no harm’ and taking the given circumstances into consideration (time limits of the project, anonymity on the helpline, lack of knowledge on how to interview traumatized people) I

⁷ According to the census of 2001 about 200 000, and in 2011 more than 300 000 people presented her/himself as Roma. Sociologists using different methods found that the Roma population can reach 5 - 600 000 people. See: http://index.hu/belfold/2013/03/28/kevesebb_a_vallasos_tobb_a_cigany/ and <http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/?lang=hu>.

decided to focus on the accessible (colleagues at NANE), and not on the more vulnerable part (our callers) of the interaction.

The phenomenon under investigation – the 30 minutes of silence – occurred to be a very complex one. The limited scope of the thesis resulted that there is no literature review on DV and battering. For literature about domestic violence see among others Stark et al. (2009) or Sokoloff et al. (2005), and about the situation in Hungary Wirth (2013). It also means that there are directions, possibilities and potentials which are not developed but which deserve further studies. Two examples here are how postcolonialist and feminist theories could be deployed in studying the situation of Romany women, and the other that how do human (women's) rights organizations function in post-socialist Hungary. In the latter case the focus of the research could be how several concepts of social movements and democracy appear in the structure and in the everyday work of these NGOs (see the notes on the 'Mamas Grande' and democratic structures of NANE).

2.2.2 Voices and counselors

The helpline itself means a certain kind of limitation as we don't see our clients, only hear them as voices. In the interviews there were questions about this aspect, as it will be shown in the analytical part of the thesis. There is another condition which should be mentioned. After the below narrated cataclysm in the organization (see chapter 2.2.4.1) now we have only 9 counselors (me included), and 3 co-counselors. I reached 6 of the counselors

and 1 of the co-counselors. The amount of the material is confined but so is the membership of NANE.

2.2.3 Ethical concerns and asking the right questions

In contemporary Hungary talking and asking about ethnic belonging, particularly asking about Romany-ness is not without connotations and it can also be dangerous⁸. NANE as an organization is combating domestic violence from the ideological ground that women's rights are Human Rights, and is really sensitive about racist tendencies around us. We – my colleagues and me – are aware of the existence of discrimination against Roma people and obviously we don't want to do any harm to our clients. In addition, from the moment when our caller brings up her ethnicity, and the violence she experiences because of her ethnicity, we are with her, as supportive witnesses, not questioning her statements, and admitting that racism does exist on individual and institutional levels as well. But I state that in that 30 minutes of silence about ethnicity there is something more complex palpable, which requires and deserves attention. The practical purpose of this thesis is to give suggestions on how our training and routine could be developed to become more sensitive and well informed in the aspect of Romany-ness, by all means keeping the safety and interest of our callers in the center of our work. Since the helpline is anonymous, meaning we do not

⁸In 2009 6 people, among them a five year old boy were killed and several more attacked because they were considered as Roma by the extreme right perpetrators. See: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/feedarticle/9564871> Another example: 9 Romas were recently sentenced by a county court 'for racism „against Hungarians” for attacking the car of far-right activists in a small Hungarian town'. Source: <http://tasz.hu/en/romaprogram/those-racist-roma-again>

know many details about our clients (name, address etc.); and since the given frames of this thesis are not suitable for identifying and safely⁹ interviewing our callers, I decided to interview the counselors of the helpline and to use the above mentioned anthropological texts concerning the Roma. I also found it important to shift the focus from the vulnerable, already abused (and potentially to-be exploited by scholarly investigation) Roma to the white middle class volunteers of the organization. It is my intuition that the constructedness of the white middle class identities (counselors), and not discernibly from that, the construction of their intersectionality is much less thoroughly examined by scholar scrutiny¹⁰. My aim was exactly to focus on how our constructedness shapes the understanding of Romany-ness on the helpline. This means that I had the presumption that in spite of the fact that we try to avoid acting and being perceived as acting racist, actually our manners do not lack those stereotypical, potentially racist tendencies. Since there is no human being without prejudice¹¹ my question was not about the existence of stereotypes and prejudice on the helpline, but about our inclination for change and (self)reflexivity. After enumerating the ethical concerns I continue with my positionality which is strongly linked to these concerns.

⁹ The main principle here was doing no harm. I am aware of the fact that at the moment I am not trained nor educated – thus not prepared - on a good-enough level for interviewing traumatized people. But it is my ambition to learn more about that in the future.

¹⁰ As I learnt from the telling of the president of the organization who has been working for NANE since 1998 there was only one research dealing with the counselors. The researcher was interviewing the volunteers of the helpline about narcissism and was investigating how for-profit and non-profit helpers conceive their professional performance.

¹¹ See Elliot Aronson and Carol Travis: *Mistakes Were Made (But Not by Me) : Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions, and Hurtful Acts*. Harcourt, Inc. 2007.

2.2.4 My positionality

In this section I deal with my position and identity as a researcher in the field. Actually I am a typical volunteer of NANE - I am white, middle class and have the opportunity (time and energy) to work as a volunteer on the helpline. This fact was also determining when I had been planning the project, and positioned myself in the process, among the ones to be examined. Just like them, I was trained to become a counselor on the helpline, and in addition I did and do participate in activism and work in the school program of NANE. This project is called 'Heartbeat' which is an interactive workshop about violence in teenage relationships. Being part of the organization means both an advantage and a possible disadvantage when doing research and conducting interviews with one's own colleagues. My bias (or rather assumption) lies somewhere here, that I did and do assume that I will find a lack of reflexivity and acknowledgement of the perceptive-constructive parts of our work. After conducting the interviews and considering many scholarly insights, I think that we miss knowledge about the performative pressures as well. I definitely have a practical drive to write my thesis in a way to be meaningful and useful for my organization, for our everyday practice but I have to be very careful about how to turn abstract theoretical findings into changes of routine. On the other hand it is an apparent advantage that I work in the field with my interviewee, that we share experiences, we can talk about certain callers who did manage to call the helpline more than once. This kind of reflexivity and reality check is an important part of my work. As it can be seen there are advantages of my situation and possible disadvantages, sources for distortion I have to be careful about.

2.2.4.1 Giving red/green light to the project

Before elaborating on the topic, and analyzing my interviews I find it useful to share some details of the history of this research. At first most of my colleagues seemed to be supportive of the project. But a few months later something changed. On our usual monthly supervision when one of the volunteers expressed her anxiety concerning the possible consequences of my thesis. As she explained if my findings will be publicly available, in a country like Hungary it can result stigmatizing NANE as a racist organization and/or the findings can be used by nationalists to buttress their prejudicial statements. We had a debate, and though many colleagues agreed on the importance of the topic in the end our supervisor had the last word. While admitting the significance of the problem he asked me to change my topic and not to write about NANE since my insights could be used for wrong purposes and we could lose supporters. Not all the volunteers were present on the supervision, but those who were, were entitled to make decisions. So, at the end I agreed on to change the topic and from that moment I had been working on another, but similar thesis project in Vienna. Then in March a very fundamental change came in the organization. Because of certain reasons – not related to my thesis – our supervisor, and together with him some of our colleagues left NANE. After this cataclysm I asked the members of NANE again if in their opinion I can turn back to my original topic. All of them said yes, and some of them added that they actually were positive about the project all along, but the structure of function of the association didn't make it possible to change the decision of the supervision. This is a telling detail

which bolsters the intuition, that the 30 minutes of silence deserves investigation.

3. THEORIZING SILENCE AS INTERSECTION OF SHAME, INSECURITY AND FEARS

In the following chapter I draw the theoretical framework I use in the thesis when analyzing the interviews I conducted with my colleagues at NANE. The first part deals with the concept of shame (Sedgwick 2003) and Romany-ness as a constant performative action (Horváth (2012), Kovai (2012), Muñoz (2006)). In the second section discussing Human Rights approach and the concept of culture of poverty (which appeared as important in the interviews) my aim is to contextualize these concepts the way they are used by NANE and/or relevant in conceptualizing Romany-ness. Since my NGO is a feminist organization in post-socialist Hungary, section three introduces how according to Imre (2008) and Graff (2003) different waves of feminism are present at the same time in this region of Eastern-Europe. The fourth part is a review on literature on intersectionality deploying queer theorists as Weston (2011) and Taylor (2001). It continues with situated imagination (Stoetzler-Yuval-Davis) 2002 and the necessary work of translation (Shih 2005). This is followed by a brief enumeration on the problematic characteristics of Hungarian-ness – in contemporary Hungary.

3.1 Can 'don't ask' mean 'don't tell'?

'In the Congressional hearings on 'don't ask, don't tell',

a lively question was this: if a drill sergeant motivates

*a bunch of recruits by yelling 'Faggots!' at them,
is it permissible for a recruit to raise his hand and respond,*

*'Yes, sir?'*¹²

In this section my aim is to consider the possible negative consequences or unintentional negative messages of the practice of NANE, namely when with the intention of avoiding being perceived as racist, counselors on the helpline don't ask about the ethnic background of callers. My question is whether there is a possibility that not asking about ethnic identity can be understood as a suggestion to the caller not to mention – thus silence it? Here I focus on the assumed Roma caller and how her/his experiences of unnamed-ness, bounded with silence and shame about her/his ethnic identity will shape her/his performative acts. In so doing I use different examples and parables to underpin my argument, beginning with the catchy phrase of 'don't ask, don't tell', as a rhetorical springboard:

From 1993 till September 2011 US military used the policy of 'Don't ask, don't tell' in regard of letting people with homosexual orientation become a member of the army (or not). The policy prohibited discrimination against homosexual service members while at the same time banned openly gay, lesbian and bisexual applicants from joining the army. This means that being silent about their sexual orientation was an entering condition for the people who wanted to work in and for the army. As is clear from the epigraph of the chapter it is that visible 'don't ask, don't tell' didn't protect homosexual

¹² Sedgwick 1995, 7-8

members of the US army from discrimination. On the contrary, the homophobic, discriminative environment acted in an oppressing, insulting manner while at the same time silencing the individual about his/her sexual orientation, about that part of his/her identity. This requirement of silence is revealed in the above plot where the absurdity of the situation comes partly from the fact that the recruit takes the verbal insult literally, as an invitation for those with homosexual orientation to present themselves, thus voicing his/her identity rather than hiding it¹³.

NANE is an organization that is working with a Human Rights approach, aiming to avoid any kind of discriminatory practices, and this is obviously in contrast with the US army policy which was/is not by any means trying to act in non-homophobic ways. Though being Roma in contemporary Hungary is a completely different issue than being an LGBT soldier in the US army in the past decades, and being aware of that it is also a different situation to be a volunteer of NANE than being an employee of the US army, I would like to use the above example as a rhetorical springboard when problematizing silencing practices, or more precisely the potential silencing of the ethnic belonging of our callers. Let me show how Sedgwick's narrative would look like here in Hungary, not on the helpline but in the army, or at a police station for example. The yelling could be something like 'Stinky gypsy!'¹⁴. But what about the answer? Would it be still necessary for someone with a dark complexion to answer 'Yes, sir?'? Or because of the unavoidable perception

¹³ The source of absurdity can be tackled as silencing someone while requiring to give honest answers to the questions of his/her superiors.

¹⁴ In Hungarian this is a so well known and everyday phrase. 'Büdös cigány' (stinky gypsy) is a general term I heard in several conversations, yet never when talking to, only when talking about Roma.

of that complexion would he/she already be considered as Roma, irrespective of her/his self-identification? Is here a potential of the subversive gesture of calling oneself Roma, as Butler suggested to use the term queer? Later I will come back to these questions to find more detailed answers, but now let's continue with another illustrative story which allows developing these thoughts further toward the direction of Roma performativity.

3.1.1 Can Roma inhabit Geneva?

Geneva here refers to Rousseau's utopian concept about theatricality (Marshall 1988) where he describes Geneva not as a city but an embodiment of the true, innocent and honest rural countryside. In Geneva there is no theatre since people never pretend, never act – they are, and act as themselves. The concept of theatricality for Rousseau is something entirely negative since theater means being and acting fake.

*

I spent a week in October in Spain where I was participating in an international Human Rights training course whose purported aim was 'to help the integration of the Roma youth'. The participants and trainers were from seven different countries. There were five Romas from Romania in our group. The trainers were all white, seemingly members of the middle class. One morning we had a discussion about our identities and about how important it is for us to belong to a group. The trainers' approach was that it is not really important, because we are all individuals and they want us, at least in the space of the training to act like – to be – individuals. One of the Roma

participants tried to oppose that it is important for her and for the other Romas present that they are Roma. And that since this was a Roma integration project, it must be somehow important that they were Roma. The trainer in her answer said this: 'Mirela, I don't care if you're Roma. It doesn't matter for me. For me you are Mirela, the individual, and not Mirela, the Roma. Here you are not Roma, you are an individual.'

In the next section I give an explanation what happened when the trainer refused to affirm the Romany-ess of Mirela. At the same time my aim is to contextualize unnamings of Romany-ness under the Hungarian climate to see what the potential effects of blurring or silencing that ethnic belonging are when working on the helpline. At the end of the section I weave these threads together to show how the different fears of shame interact when not asking about the ethnic identity of the caller of NANE.

3.1.2 Theater for Roma

As mentioned earlier using the name 'Geneva' in the title of this section is a reference to the Rousseauian approach of theatricality, discussed by Marshall (1988). Geneva here is described as a symbol of a human settlement or environment which not only lacks the institution of theater but is lucky enough not to be a theater itself. According to Rousseau's theory, the 'innocent', the 'real' and 'natural' which are connected to the rural, to the country or the small town are not theatrical at all: 'The stage of nature seems untheatrical; it is in part defined by the absence of any consciousness of

beholders¹⁵.’ (Marshall 1988, 137.) Or: ‘Like the *homme sauvage*, *the Genevan* in Rousseau’s portrait *does not seem to depend on the regard of others for a sense of his own existence*. His economic autonomy is analogous to the autonomy of his self: „all his resources are in himself alone”.’ (139. emphasis added).

In the following pages I argue that there is no Geneva, no rural or innocent place for the members of minorities, like for instance for the Roma; that there is no possibility to sense her/his identity, not depending on the regard of others. As a subargument I suggest that this permanent on-stage position of a legibly marked minority constitutes a peculiar performative circle around the ‘brownness feeling’ (Muñoz¹⁶ 2006) and the potentiality of shame. To this end I call several anthropological texts (Horváth, Kovai (2012)) and Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick’s article (2003) into play. But at first let’s see what theatricality means.

We can rephrase the question ‘Can Roma inhabit Geneva?’ as follows: Is reality suspendable for everyone? This rewording is a direct adaptation of Josette Féral’s idea about the basic condition of theatricality, which is that reality is suspendable for actors when acting, and that it should be acknowledge-ably suspended when actors are on stage. There, in this *acknowledgement of suspension* lies the difference between acting and reality. In contrast I claim that there are certain, constantly visible thus legible realities (features), that no subject or agency can get rid of.

¹⁵ I do not agree with this concept, but find it useful here since it creates the opportunity to think about the implications of ethnic belonging, theatricality/performativity and shame.

¹⁶ I deploy Muñoz’s expression (which is more complex) here as an allusion of the unavoidable perception of dark complexion I discussed earlier and its consequences.

Muñoz (1988) in his article writes about an art-project, the video-installation of Nao Bustamante, a Mexican artist, which deals with the complexity of Mexican identity - the complexity that is in part a consequence of the unavoidable perception of 'brownness'. Mexicans appear as racialized ethnicity, just like Roma do. Muñoz connects Bustamante's artifact, and thus the life experiences of people from visible minorities to the psychoanalytical concept of paranoid/depressive disposition of Melanie Klein. (Considering that the focus of this thesis is to talk about the potential intersections of shame, insecurities, and fear governing both the ways of acting of NANE counselors on the helpline and our callers, I utilize Muñoz's insights keeping this in mind.)

'The fact that Bustamante's Mexican-ness was projected onto her installation does in fact make a case for the various ways in which *brown paranoia is not something that can be wished away* [...]. Indeed, the brown depressive position I'm describing is called into being in relation to the various projections screened on the embodied self from the outside.' (Muñoz 1988, 686 –emphasis added.)

So this inevitable 'brownness' (Latino/a – ness, loaded with projections from the outside), which cannot be wished away, becomes itself an - if not theatrical but surely a performative - act. Performative in the Butlerian sense as well: not necessarily intentionally, but constituting the agency by reiteration again and again. Does this mean that there is no theatrical space

and suspendable reality for the Roma? Does this mean that theatricality, being put on stage is a constant reality, an obligate strategy for the Roma?¹⁷

3.1.3 The reality of Geneva in contemporary Hungary

This section situates the imagined un-theatrical Geneva in contemporary Hungary to see whether there is a possibility to avoid performing as Roma. So doing I base on the findings of Kata Horváth and Cecília Kovai, two Hungarian anthropologists, who have been working in the field for more than 10 years now. One of the villages they've been researching is a community in one of the poorest regions of the country, in the North-Eastern part, called Borsod-county. Earlier there were four Roma settlements on the periphery of the village, including cave-dwellings. As Horváth found:

‘...in this village, until recently, the Gypsy-Hungarian distinction functioned through being kept unspoken. [...] It was no accident that the most important taboo was against uttering the word ‘Gypsy’ since the whole mechanism of subjection was based on this prohibition and silencing of the real terms of distinction. The main threat to a mechanism of this sort lay either in public acceptance of being Gypsy or openly calling other people Gypsy (*lecigányozás*). And since the mechanism of not naming perfectly suited the Hungarians – the Gypsies had their place at work and so on¹⁸ [...] – nothing motivated them to question the order, or to start openly naming people as ‘Gypsy’. (Horváth 2012, 119.)

¹⁷ Or from another aspect: is there an excluding edge in Féral's approach since she writes about an imagined neutral entity of theatricality, which presumes a not-needed-to-be-read, nonsigned actor?

¹⁸ Their place was always on the periphery, kept inferior and marginalized (my note).

In Horváth's and Kovai's¹⁹ understanding being (considered being) Roma in Hungary for a long time had a pejorative potential, since this phenomenon was connected to crime, poverty, under-educatedness and so on. As Horváth and Kovai argues there was an important turning point during the socialist era, when the regime of János Kádár decided to solve the 'problem of the Gypsies' all together with other ethnic, class and religious differences. This regulation (1961) stated that Roma is not the member of the working class, and not an ethnicity, but a group living in poor socio-economic circumstances and having certain ethnographic traditions. The aim of the regulation was to eliminate these circumstances which would result the elimination of category Roma.²⁰

This meant with this unspoken agreement, by silencing their ethnic belonging, Gypsies institutionally got marginalized. Marginalized spatially (building new segregated settlements for the Roma on the peripheries of the villages and towns²¹), educationally (segregated classes, or if not classes than back rows in the classroom for Roma children) and on the workplaces (since Roma were undereducated) as well. But nobody claimed that this is happening to them because of their ethnicity. Silencing ethnic belonging, thus un-ethnicizing Romany-ness had a message for the Roma: if they learn well, accept hygienic rules, civilize themselves, and work hard they can escape segregation and become Hungarians. According to Horváth and Kovai (2012)

¹⁹ They usually work alongside each other, and even if they publish their findings separately they refer to their works as mutually constitutive.

²⁰ http://hvg.hu/velemenye/20130520_Ciganybunozes_egy_hazugsag_evolutioja

²¹ There were segregated settlements before the Kádarian era, since Gypsies were extruded from the centre of towns and villages, the aim of the regulation here was not to integrate Roma into the settlements but to standardize and improve the infrastructural environment of the segregated communities (Bársony 2013).

this false promise was based on the strategy of unnamng the Roma. Tough climbing the ladder of social status was almost impossible for Gypsies, whose marginalized position was deeply in connection with the perception of their ethnical belonging, nobody spoke about that fact. In other words nobody never made it explicit that they are a racialized ethnicity. It is important to see that Romany-ness was constructed as uncivilized, dirty, and inferior, and that thriving from that position could have been imagined only by leaving that Romanyy-ness behind and becoming a civilized, educated – normative – Hungarian. But how could have that happened if Romany-ness was at the first place perceived and recognized as having racial (physical) features of Romany-ness. And perceiving complexion immediately activated (it still does today) the categories enumerated above (being un-civilized, under-educated, having the tendency for criminal behavior). In summary: not naming the assumed characteristics of Romany-ness didn't mean that they were *not* considered exactly as features of Roma ethnicity, something inherently Roma.

3.1.4 Defining Romany-ness as Otherness

Feeling inferior, while being silenced about that feeling, not having clear, public answers about the ethnic (racial) aspect of that feeling, resulted different things. On one hand re-defining what being a Gypsy means was a never-ending process for Roma people, which was kept inside the

boundaries of the segregated settlement. As Horváth puts it: ‘... the only domain for negotiating the meaning of ‘the Gypsy’ became the family and the neighbourhood.’ (p 123.) Being Roma was and is problematic thus defining who is Roma and how much Roma someone is became a very important issue among Romany people. As Boross-Domokos states citing Horváth: ‘Most of the anthropologists researching Roma report on a kind of distinction which is present besides the detachment from gajos²² and is about distancing themselves [the Roma] from other, stranger Romas as well’ (Boross-Domokos 2006, 25). According to Horváth (2012) this distancing appears as claiming that someone is not a ‘true’ or ‘real’ Roma and also that some Roma are inferior (retkes²³ for example).

I claim that working on the helpline and remaining silent about the ethnic belonging of our callers can have a consequence that we act not sensitively enough when mapping our client’s conditions. Not knowing about the important distinctions between Roma and Roma according to their true Romany-ness, which is a matter of positioning oneself and being positioned by the others, can mean different things for the individual member of the community when needing help.

Not knowing about this aspect, lacking the information about how Roma communities are functioning (this way or differently) together with avoiding ethnicity as an important issue, keeping it silenced, or unnamed till the moment our caller decides to mention it can result in giving non-adequate answers. The most obvious case would be that we offer services she has no

²² Gajo means Hungarians. (Roma term.)

²³ Retkes is a Hungarian expression which means very dirty.

access to (calling the police, talk to the social worker, pay a lawyer etc). Actually when offering these unrealistic solutions comes the moment, when they explicate their ethnic belonging. What is not revealed (and since we do not have statistics about the racial or ethnic background of our callers we do not know how frequently it would become important) that what are the specific relationships, hierarchies and alliances in a certain community. Stating that ethnicity is important only as an issue when fighting with institutions (see chapter 4) means that we neglect factors which could be significant and improve the effectiveness of our help.

I argue that we are benevolent but not prepared enough to act as sensitively as we could – if we had the knowledge about Roma living in Hungary.

3.1.5 Segregation as othering

In the forthcoming section we turn back to the imagined Geneva. My aim here is to draw attention to Rousseau's process of creating the innocent place, or may be the place for the innocent. It can be fruitful if we concentrate on the imagined landscape of the theatrical versus real rather than to describe what Rousseau meant by 'real' and 'natural'. We have to consider that the elsewhere-ness itself creates a possibility of theatricality, when there is a detectable regard or gaze circumscribing the boundaries of the so called innocent. In this sense creating the very special space of 'truthness' or 'reality', the arbitrary marking of the territory of Geneva can mean that by the Gaze and the purpose of witnessing that innocent truth of the Genevans Rousseau himself puts the nontheatrical on stage.

This leads us back to the unavoidable theatricality - or the un-suspendable reality - aspect of the lives of visible minorities. In other words theatricality (eg. racial performativity) is the unavoidable reality for minoritarians. In my view this rises a further problem when studying the segregated Roma settlements whether they are in the countryside or in urban areas of for example Budapest. Studying the elsewhere Other also means that the scholar or the social worker or anyone with the witnessing (voyering) tendency puts the individual Roma on the made-up stage of the created Romany-ness – an issue which we must be careful about.

The shared experience of Roma regarding being identified, recognized and categorized belongs to the same depressive position of the 'feeling brownness' discussed by Muñoz (2006). There is another statement in the Muñoz text which needs additional elaboration: 'Feeling brown in my analysis is descriptive of the ways in which minoritarian [sic!] affect is always, no matter what its register, partially illegible in relation to the normative affect performed by normative citizen subjects.' (Muñoz 2006, p 679. – emphasis added). This illegibility echoes the distance for me since the visibly, legibly Roma or Latina or Black or Queer is read only as different from the normative citizen subject, without the real possibility or intention of understanding her or his Romany-ess (Latiness, Blackness, Queerness etc.). I state that this legibility of illegibility when put on that arbitrarily circumscribed stage is functioning as a further exclusionary, oppressing practice. It is a kind of focalization where from the position of the majority minorities can and are imagined as homogenous group. The emphasis is on the difference between the majority and minority and the differences in the minority group are

neglected. As it is shown in chapter fourth when NANE is careful only about avoiding racism counselors are actually operating this exclusionary practice, (re)creating Roma as the Other.

There are people who are coerced to permanently act on that stage or whose being is constantly read as acting - just because of their sexual orientation or racial features or gender (etc.). Marshall writes that 'What is at stake, then, is nothing less than the self-annihilation of the actor' (Marshall p 145.). Applying this statement, namely, that to be permanently on stage is not without consequences for the reiterating identity building process, what can be said about those who are kept on that stage as a result of the unavoidable performative force? In the next section I deal with the question of individualization of the Roma – the way it happened on the training I depicted earlier.

3.1.6 Circle of shame

When sitting in a Human Rights training various approaches, ideologies and tensions appear. Power patterns, obvious and hidden ones shape what we do, what we say. The trainings – not only the ones which use theatrical forms – do have a theatrical/performative characteristic which would be worth for further investigation. When on this last training of mine the white middle classed trainer insisted on to work with individuals and refused to work with the Roma I state that it was a power in action moment. Denying the importance of being Roma meant denying the position of the 'brown

depression', denying the mutual acknowledgement of that permanent theatrical – performative on-stageness of the Roma. I claim that what Mirela did and said, when she tried to oppose the trainer's opinion was not a simple repugnance. By emphasizing her Romany-ness she offered a solution for the conflict concerning the brown shame. The unavoidable theatricality (performativity), the unavoidable feeling brownness discussed above based upon mainly on the text of Muñoz was this time obvious. By paraphrasing Muñoz I would say that the fact of Romany-ness could not be fully wished away, whatever was said on that stage. Romany-ness never fully disappears; instead, it haunts the present. (Muñoz 1988, p 684.)

Kosofsky-Sedgwick in *Shame, Theatricality, and Queer Performativity* (2003) discusses the circle of shame basing on psychologist affection theories. She states that shame appears when the connection between mother and child (through looking at each other) is interrupted by the mother, thus the child is no more recognized. The connection can and should be restored by repairing the circle of looks and the child gets recognized, thus it can live again. But if the circle is not restored, the mother refuses to look back the affect of shame appears. So shame means being denied, denying the recognition of someone. Since the circle of recognition is a basic condition for living, refusing it means a very serious threat²⁴.

²⁴ Sedgwick writes about the subversive potentials of shame, about queer potentials which lies in naming the shame. This aspect can be found in literature cited above researching Roma, when putting being Roma into play in different interactions.

But the trainer denied to look back, she interrupted the offered circle of the acknowledged shame and thus the queer potential, subscribed by Sedgwick (Sedgwick: 'Shame, Theatricality, and Queer Performativity: Henry James's the Art of the Novel', 2003) and the Muñoz text remained unmaterialized. The subaltern was not allowed to speak, was not heard once again. Muñoz says: 'That is, the video represents and performs a political depression [...] This political recognition contains a reparative impulse that I want to describe as enabling and liberatory...' (Muñoz 1988, p 687. – emphasis added by me). This feasibly political and definitely reparative impulse, the possibility of building back the circle of feedback (Sedgwick 2003) became impossible when the trainer refused to see and hear and acknowledge the on-stageness of the present Roma.

So my answer for the question in the title is no, there is no Geneva for the Roma. Romany-ess means an ineludible and constantly visible and legible performative utterance which must be taken into consideration when working for/with Roma.

3.2. Intersectionality

My aim here is to investigate how the concept of intersectionality can be deployed in the work with victims of domestic violence. More precisely how intersectionality and performativity can be found in that 30 minutes of silence. So doing I intend to draw attention to the fact that not only the clients mapped on the margins, but professional helpers themselves are constructed and changing identities. I query about the possibilities of the clients defining

themselves throughout the process of service provided for them and about if the counselors working on the helpline are reflexive about their intentional and unintentional performatives. Although intersectionality is often regarded as a theory or research approach, my focus is on how it can be utilized in practice itself. As it can be seen I use a variety of authors, deploying findings from the field of public policy and anthropology together to show that my concerns are embedded in other scholarly debates and ongoing negotiations while trying to filling the gap of our knowledge about the concrete intersection of shames potentially present on the NANE helpline.

3.2.1 In the beginning there was intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept of great consequence in feminist studies which is permeating different fields of scholarly research and practice. As Yuval-Davis wrote, citing McCall '[many] would argue that intersectionality is 'the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far' (Yuval-Davis 2011, 3). If we want to define intersectionality it is unavoidable to refer to the canonic text of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991):

Crenshaw pointed out that the experiences and thus the oppression of black women was missing from the agenda both of the feminist and the black-human-rights activism. It is important to note, that Crenshaw focused mainly on gender and ethnicity in her article when conceptualizing intersection as the place where several categories of one's identity appear not in an additional form, like the category of Black-ness added to the category of

Woman, but much rather as a mutually constitutive point, where Black-ness and Woman-ness act and effect on the life of the individual at the very same time. Black women at the intersection of these protruding categories remain invisible and their problems not efficaciously, or not at all targeted by social-institutional actors. Crenshaw differentiated between structural and political intersectionality, and found that on both fields black women had limited options to get access to institutional help (for instance in cases of domestic violence, or if they were victims of rape).

The recognition that various axes (Yuval-Davis 2006) or crossroads (Crenshaw, 1991) of intersections of different factors of different women's lives and identities shape their experiences of oppression differently, shapes our (researcher, helper) understanding about domestic violence as well. Though the most common axes of intersection, where an individual can be mapped are race, class and gender (plus ethnicity), authors enumerate other potentially important ones as well. Crenshaw (1991) detailed how immigrant background modifies (attenuates) the chance of accessing efficacious help in case of domestic violence, and Yuval-Davis (2002) mentioned other possibly important categories, such as age, sexuality or ability which can be necessary to be taken into account.

3.2.2 Who has the right (and opportunity) to construct intersections?

As Leslie McCall claimed in her 2005 article, these categories mostly remain in the area what she called intracategorical intersectionality, since 'authors

working in this vein tend to focus on particular groups at neglected points of intersection... in order to reveal the complexity of lived experience within such groups' (quoted by Walby 2007, 9). There are several consequences of this multiplying approach: boundaries of identity categories are not stable and groups always can be divided to further subgroups – which makes research difficult or even impossible, but can be seen as an attempt to renovate the systems we can do researches in (see McCall's anti-categorical definition (2005)).

On the other hand focusing on the micro-level of the process of constructing identities ethnographical and narratologist methods come into picture. Biographical texts and case studies are good examples of this avenue. In one way or another, deploying practical-reductionist, or theoretical-analytical methods, the problem still remains with us: who will decide, what factors are important as constituting intersection in the lives of certain individuals, at a given moment of acute or long-continued crisis? Or the way Hancock put it: 'Who has the authority to define public policy goals that are in the interests of race or gender groups'? (2007, 71). As Aarti Ratna summarized using Valentine's claims in her article about British Asian female footballers: 'Valentine bases this premise on the notion that those who are dominant within a particular space have the power to construct the hegemonic culture of that space, marking out those who belong and those who do not (Aarti 2013).' In my understanding this is absolutely true in the space of the conversation on the helpline.

Still following this thread of thoughts I paraphrase Hancock's (2007) statement this way: manipulating language (to serve the purpose of) having

the privilege to frame categories and to set the boundaries of those categories is also a matter of power. Can the self-representation and self-imagination of the victim play a role in the process? How does the perception of the client affect the work of the helper? How does the unavoidable aspect of Romany-ness (the racialized ethnicity), this constant performative load affect the interaction? The article of Yuval-Davis's main argument is that not only knowledges are situated (Haraway 1988), but imagination, limitations and alkalescence of one's imagination should be considered situated as well (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002). (This idea was deployed when analyzing Horváth's and Kovai's insights about shame and Romany-ness in the previous chapter.)

3.2.3 Intersections in practice

I can agree with the concerns, that anti-categorical approach (McCall 2005) wouldn't necessarily help the work of analysis, policy-writing or other, for instance state-level deployment of intersectionality. On the other hand I suggest to differentiate among the fields it can be utilized: social workers, or the volunteers of organizations working with victims of domestic violence (or other people, working with living creatures, anywhere...) should be aware of their own intersectionally and performatively constructedness. It can be said that adjusting the concept of intersectionality to the people working as professional helpers, warning signs should be put all around the place about the consequent limitations of understandings, interpretations and thus likely mis-interpretations of individual cases. Perception is a part of this situatedness. Thus drawing attention to the fact that identities are changing and present only in momentary relations of interconnectedness can be a

crucial point in training and re-training employees of NGOs and institutions working with – among others – victims of domestic violence.

Mapping the client is an unavoidable step of the process, but acknowledging our situatedness (knowledge and imagination included), in other words being reflexive about our positionality is an important factor and also a part of our accountability. Let me cite Aarti Ratna (2013) again: 'Therefore understanding which intersectional positions are advantageous, in different social spaces, enables individuals such as Jeanette to negotiate their identities in potentially more favourable ways. However, I argue that people are not simply free to choose which identities to play-up or play-down as they wish, as this ignores the impact of determining social structures.'

3.2.3.1 Identity as intersection

Turning back to the question about the opportunity of the client to define and re- and re-define herself, her identity through the process can be a key to effective help. I find it very promising to deploy here the insights of Kath Weston (in Taylor et al. 2011) since she drew attention to two important aspects: (1): people do not necessarily identify themselves according to one label, or a clear junction of two labels, (2): 'Class, age, gender, and such come together not only in the doing but in the perceiving' (Weston 2011, 35 – emphasis added). When thinking about identity - above these aspects - Weston's suggestion about its temporal, changing character is also useful and is in concert with what Yuval-Davis wrote about Probyn's definition of identity which is seen as a 'combined process of being and becoming,

belonging and longing not to belong' (Yuval-Davis 2011, 15). If we add to these the fact of non-stability and constant change of identity, construction and perception, we see that when trying to institutionalize intersectionality, when trying to adjust it to policy-making or working with clients several serious issues should be addressed when considering its applicability in different fields.

3.2.4 Translating between intersections

The next topic I intend to accentuate is the question of translation. I claim that the employees working with victims of domestic violence are in a liminal position, translating between individuals and institutions, or between individuals of different cultural, ethnic or class backgrounds (the list of the possible different backgrounds can be completed with gender, abilities, linguistic and other aspects – from the list of potentially important factors of constructing intersectionality). This brings a new phenomenon into light.

Shu-Mei Shih is citing Gayatri Spivak's question when she asks in her article discussing her experiences as a translator between American feminists and Chinese writers (Shih 2005): 'For whom do they [Third World diasporic intellectuals] work?' 'In what interest do they work?' (p 79). I assert that these questions can be asked about the employee of the organizations working with victims and survivors of domestic violence; regarding individual, personal or institutional interests when trying to resolve cases. Since in the instance of these organizations working with the victims means on a large scale listening, interpreting and employing (in getting medical, juridical help) stories and narratives I also plan to use the insights of Yvette Taylor (Taylor

2011) about the complexity of lived experiences. She is concluding her article about the frequent absence of class conditions when researching homosexual partnership and parenthood with the argument that intersectionality could be understood as a lived experience and empirically researched. In her understanding it is a task of the scholar to make visible the making and using of stories, to show accents and silences in them. I advocate applying this methodological concern to people working in the field as well. In the practice of social service work the lived experiences (intersections) of the clients appear on several levels.

As I forecasted, I deem that the employee of these organizations work in a liminal space, basically between the circles of the clients and the institutions and in this liminal space their situatedness can easily be neglected or not taken into account. Working as a translator of stories, demands and interests is an important site of intersectionality appearing as a complex, lived experience. It is challenging to try to apply these theoretical or rather scholar considerations, evolved mainly in queer sexuality studies to the work of these organizations working in the very field - and fathom about the correlations and consequences.

In my comprehension queer-theoretical discernments can and should be used in the everyday routine of social or helper work as well. Thus the claims of Michel Bograd (Bograd 2008) can be further modulated about the observation that social service providers tend react and reflect to victims with different backgrounds differently which means many times discriminatory or even punitive actions. Whether intentionally or unconsciously some of the service employees worsen the burdens of the victims, for instance denying

adolescents sons of the victim permitting the shelter, re-traumatizing her by using her batterer as a translator (in case of language barriers) or using immigration policies against them. She is concluding her article with an argument that 'As new theories and techniques are developed, models and practices must be anchored in the descriptions of the contexts in which they were developed and the populations that they are intended to serve. Rather than assuming their universal applicability, it is crucial to ask: Who is excluded and why?' (Bograd 2008, 33). Considering Gloria Wekker's proposition (Wekker 2009) this can be paraphrased as a suggestion that the ultimate subject when making policies should be imagined as a black, migrant and refugee woman, since what is good-enough for the least privileged will be good-enough for the others as well.

Though I can accept this approach, the questions of categories as changing, not-stable ones with uncertain boundaries (Yuval-Davis 2011, Weston 2011 etc.) will raise the question who is that imagined (essentialized?) least-privileged subject? Despite the potentially problematic conceit I claim that these arguments can be developed further by the queer theoretical insights above and addressing the situated knowledges and imaginations of the people making those policies, judging and jury-ing in courts, enacting restraining-orders when battering happens. In this case the accent on who is excluded can be shifted to who is excluding, and how to get meaningful answer for the very same question about who remains excluded. In the fourth chapter by analyzing the conducted interviews I investigate how intersections are present on the helpline. As a practical suggestion I emphasize again that trainings can be developed for the ones working in this liminal space to get a

better understanding of their own positionality and intersectionally constructedness.

*

Weaving together the threads about the unavoidable feature of perceiving (we do perceive others), asking and translating and the accountability, responsibility of these processes I presume that investigating how the employees of the organizations working with victims and survivors of domestic violence map the lived experiences of their clients, the way they construct their intersectionality is an important issue in the consequences and effectiveness of that work. I also claim that self-consciousness and reflexivity about their (the employees') own imbeddedness and intersectionality is a tool which can be deployed to assure a better quality of service.

3.3 Culture of poverty

In this section my aim is to show why the concept of culture of poverty is significant discussing Romany-ness, and how it is palpable in the work of NANE. So doing I base on one hand the text of Michael Stewart (2002), where he contextualizes the concept as it is deployed in Hungarian sociologist literature (which according to my interviews seems to be a 'mainstream agenda'), and on the other hand on the links between CofP and Human Rights approach.

3.3.1 American history

The term CofP comes from the American sociologist literature. More precisely and according to Stewart it was defined by Oscar Lewis anthropologist, who stated that poverty can be acknowledged as a subculture which maintains and perpetuates mechanisms of poverty. The reason behind this would be that people living in poverty lack ambitions, a constant feeling of being marginalized and left helpless. Perpetuating the CofP means that children growing up in conditions like these adopt the attitudes and feelings of the adults. As Stewart explained in this theory the economic circumstances determine the fate of the individual living in poverty. Culture of poverty soon was employed by policy makers and politicians in the fight against poverty – but employing it also meant that it was exploited to racialize the poor conditions Black-Americans (and other racial or ethnic minorities) were living in (see Moynihan-report 1965). The concept of culture of poverty is problematic and one should be very careful to utilize it²⁵.

3.3.2 ‘Roma – poverty dressed as ethnicity’²⁶ (‘Cigányság – szegénység etnikai köntösben)

The culture of poverty theory appeared in the Hungarian Sociologist literature after the transition. As Stewart writes in the above mentioned text (2002) Szelényi and Emigh deployed the term with the intention to categorize Roma as a possible underclass of Hungary, thus de-ethnicizing them. Stewart

²⁵ See for instance: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr08/vol65/num07/The-Myth-of-the-Culture-of-Poverty.aspx>

²⁶ This is the title of a chapter in the book Communication, Healthcare, and Roma I found on the bookshelve of NANE. (The book was the result of an interethnic education program of the Soros Foundation.)

points out that utilizing such a problematic concept is dangerous and should be thought over. In addition he states that Roma are diverse and ethnicity should be taken into consideration when researching them or working with/for them. It is also apparent that these sociologists use quite the same frames when claiming Roma rather as a culture of poverty than an ethnicity what the Kádarian regime did.²⁷

To illustrate how impossible it is to de-racialize a group like Roma (and this is happening when denying their ethnicity) I cite Horváth:

...upon entering the room, the parents, siblings, relatives or visitors address a new born baby in the following manner: 'Let me suck your little black dick!'; 'Let me eat your little black hole!' In other words, the baby is constructed and brought into the discourse not only through its sexuality [...], but through (their) colour as well. Their sexuality is constructed via colour, colour via sexuality, and the baby itself at the point where these intersect. (2011, 123)

The question of Romany-ness as it can be seen is much more complicated and loaded (with identity construction connected to sexuality for instance) then thinking about it as a result of socio-economic circumstances. This should be taken into consideration in our work on the helpline as well.

The idea that Romany-ness is connected as poverty, and recognized a problematic culture of poverty appeared in the interviews: [Many Roma] live on the margins, may be because of this they don't finish school, they live in ghettos and in bad conditions. So [...] they don't get jobs since they are

²⁷ Thanks for Cecília Kovai for sharing her insights on this topic when discussing her coming soon PhD Dissertation.

under-educated and then criminality... I know that there are a lot of Roma in prisons... (Ella)

It is interesting that here unemployment appears as a consequence of under-educatedness and there is no mention about discriminating people who look like (who can be perceived as) Roma. This kind of color-blindness amalgamates in our routine with the Human Rights approach contributing in the creation of a very specific practice of silencing on the helpline.

The Human Rights approach²⁸ comes into picture because of our training which is based on it. As Gréta told me (she is a very well trained Human Rights trainer herself) the concept of culture of poverty for her (and thus for the training material of NANE, which is mainly her work) means that in concert with the aim of the Human Rights approach the aim is to reduce poverty in the world (and among Roma as well) on one hand, and avoiding blaming ethnic minorities as 'having' inferior cultures because of their ethnicity (or much rather racial belonging). What is worth to point out that these aims are great to follow but the way we act is resembling the sociologist school's approach when trying to improve the situation of Roma they use a Kádárian frame.

3.4 Feminism

In the section dealing with the history of NANE it was explained that the NGO was co-founded by an American feminist (Antonia Burrows) and that in the

²⁸ <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publicat>

90s we had many feminist activists and trainers from the United States visiting NANE. I claim that this has an effect on how we approach domestic violence and on our routine.

One can have the impression that when mapping the assumed caller of the helpline we tend to imagine a 'general' woman, a member of the homogenous group of women – just like liberal feminists (and maybe our visitors) did.

As one of my interviewees put it, talking about how during the training callers were imagined and portrayed:

I did bring this up, since many times we were talking about them [women] as if they were a homogenous mass, and they are not. So I brought this up and Gréta agreed with it. (Sylvia)

What is interesting here is that from the quote it becomes apparent that at the moment there are several feminist schools present among our members, and among the methods and insights we deploy in our work. Our trainees do know about and admit it as important to know about differences between women as individuals or groups. Actually there are exercise focusing on power relations and hierarchies between certain people. Yet, this kind of sensitivity doesn't necessary appear on the helpline.

This ambiguity around feminisms and thus the image of the woman – the assumed caller of the helpline is in concert with the findings of Anikó Imre (2008) who based on the article of Agnieszka Graff 'Lost between the waves?' (2003).

3.5. *'What is What?'*²⁹ – *Problems with Hungarian-ness*

This question was cited by Rudolf Ungváry (2011, 172) in the collection of essays written by intellectuals (writers, historians) which is the 're-iteration' of the question what does it mean to be Hungarian. As Ungváry suggests, Eszterházy is deploying an Anderson-ian insight about the imagined community of the nation. Actually this utilization of the imagined community gives a voice to the problems of nation states in Eastern-Europe.

There are only a few studies discussing this question in an academical framework (Örkény, 2006) and not from the perspective on nationalism³⁰. Although it seems that the topic is hot, and people who consider themselves as anti-nationalists (for instance the counselors of NANE) fight with the needs and possibilities and controversies of national belonging³¹. I find this a very intriguing and complicated topic which goes much beyond the scope of this thesis. What is important to point out that many people (and among them my interviewee) find it difficult to define and express their national belonging without the danger of conceived (or believed to be conceived) nationalist. This problematic relationship effects how they frame and map other nationalities – and more importantly ethnicities, such as Roma.

²⁹ This was a phrase of Péter Eszterházy when in 2005 he was asked to contribute to the volume 'What is Hungarian?'

³⁰ I am grateful to Zsófia Loránd for sharing her thoughts on this topic with me.

³¹ See these blogs collecting opinions about what it means to be Hungarian:
http://mandiner.blog.hu/2012/10/19/irodalmarok_szerint_a_magyar

In this chapter I examined how Romanytness, as an unavoidably racialized ethnic belonging is connected to the concept of circle of shame (Sedgwick 2003) and concept of culture of poverty. Reviewing the theory of intersectionality I tried to find a way how to implement its findings in the practice of the helpline. I also dealt with the question of different waves of feminism being present simultaneously in post-transition countries since this also has effect on our work. In the last section I enumerated some of the problems related to Hungarian nationality, focusing on how this is relevant in the case of the counselors at NANE

4. WHAT SILENCE TELLS ABOUT COUNSELORS

In this chapter I show that in the thirty minutes of silence there are several factors contributing from the counselors' side. After analyzing the interviews I claim that there are different factors at work here.

1. The construction of the counselor – this is how we are trained
2. The process of perceiving and constructing - a lack of knowledge about the Roma living in Hungary
3. Problems with being Hungarian
4. Identity, Intersectionality, and Reflexivity

*

Preparing for my interviews I decided to ask about ethnicity and when and how it can be relevant on the helpline. As it can be seen from the interview-guide there were questions about whether ethnicity is an important issue on the helpline, then questions on whether the counselors would ask about the ethnic belonging of the caller directly, or non-directly; and in the last turn about whether in their opinion are there factors which multiply certain disadvantages or risks in the clients life.

When conducting and analyzing the interviews it soon became apparent that the answers are many times contradictory. Most of my colleagues find it important not to act or be perceived as acting in a racist way. This means that they claimed they definitely wouldn't ask our callers if they are Roma. As Zita said: 'It is really difficult to ask this in a way not to make the caller believe

that this was asked because of racist motives.’³² Sylvia stated something very similar when sharing her doubts: ‘I just can’t see how to ask about it. When comes the moment when I can ask it? Or by asking am I becoming a Gypsy-hater?’ I consider these sentences as sensitive towards the issue of avoid racism but I began to think about the focus or perspective of the statements. I find ‘focus’ a very significant issue here since it is in connection with the assumed caller on the helpline, that how we construct our callers and among them our Roma callers. Employing here Yuval-Davis’s and Stoetzler’s expression ‘situated imagination’ I claim that how much we know about Roma living in Hungary is also an issue related to our situatedness. As Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler put in this article elaborating on special aspects of standpoint theory and Haraway’s situated knowledges: ‘... imagination not only conditions how sensual data are transformed into conscious knowledge, but that the imagination is also fundamental to why, whether and what we are ready to experience, perceive and know in the first place’ (Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler 2002, 325). I share my colleagues’ anxieties and I find their attitude sensitive, yet the phrasing made think about how reflexive we are, or we should be regarding our focus, our situatedness. In Foucaultian terms how much we are aware of our constructedness.

Turning back to the above cited sentences I have to add that in Hungarian Zita’s utterance is a bit more complicated since it states that it is Zita who asks the potentially racist question, but concentrates on the feelings or suspicions created by the question in the caller. But still, there is the issue of *being perceived* as racist. For me this suggests that both Zita and Sylvia are

³² In Hungarian: ‘... nagyon nehéz ezt úgy megkérdezni, hogy ne keltsem a hívóban azt az érzést, hogy ha én erre rákérdézek, akkor az egy rasszista indítékból feltett kérdés.’

concerned about themselves, as being perceived as racist by the caller. The potential shame of being perceived as racist is a telling detail which made think about the possible intersections of shame on the helpline. We do want to help our callers – that’s why we work at NANE. We don’t want to make the caller feel uncomfortable by asking potentially racist and (see the chapter about the Roma) so threatening questions. Though in my insight the focalization of the statements imply that it is an important issue that the *counselors* don’t want to be perceived as racists. This kind of personal anxiety is understandable and deserves attention.

At the same time there were some volunteers who stated that knowing about the ethnic background of the caller wouldn’t affect their work as a volunteer for several reasons. Hilda put it this way:

What can it add to [the quality] of my counseling, or how could it worsen it, if I knew that the caller is Roma? I don’t feel as if it could... So, there are no shelters for Roma families. She can function in the very same institutional and legal framework as the non-Roma. [...] I think she is not different from someone who is in the same social status, only being non-Roma. So for me, [...] *it is more important what kind of hierarchy is present, what her status³³ is.*

Ella was on the same opinion that Romany-ness is important as an issue of class, of social position and not as an ethnical category. She said that if there would be on the phone a voice announcing that ‘the next caller is Roma’ she wouldn’t do anything differently. I also see in these examples the tendency

³³ By status she meant socio-economic status and class-relations of the caller.

to avoid acting as racist, but Hilda's and Ella's words and attitude I found slightly different. Here is a hint of *negating* ethnicity and offering class relations instead. This is intriguing since a very frequent pattern of the interviews appear here, namely the class-icization of the Roma. Hilda was negating the effect of ethnicity on the quality of *her work*, and stating (together with other counselors) that being Roma is rather a problem related to class, thus to financial circumstances and status than to ethnicity. (I will come back to the issue of class and culture of poverty later.) This tendency of de-ethnicization of Roma is also something that piqued my interest. From the chapter dealing with theatricality and the constant on-stage performative obligation of the Roma it is clear that Romany-ness is something which is always present. I began to ask myself why helpline counselors would negate something as ethnic when it is perceived as ethnic. Paraphrasing Muñoz I say brownness cannot be wished away. (Muñoz 2006, 686)

The next section illustrates how the above defined categories creating that 30 minutes of silencing on the helpline (from the counselors' side) appeared in the interviews.

4.1 Constructing the counselor

4.1.1 The training shock

'I am the point now that I believe, that this could happen to anyone. Moreover I do believe in this, that much, that I feel

lucky that it haven't happened to me yet. I have developed a kind of paranoia in me... if this is paranoia.' (Hilda)

Hilda's sentences were very familiar to me. I felt the same way finishing my training and I witnessed the same kind of shock this year when I participated in the training of the new counselors as a trainer. Being shocked because we have just learnt that we are vulnerable and we are hurt. That we, as a group of women are supportive towards each other, we are empowered to claim our rights, but what happens and can happen to women and children in the outside world is just shocking. Having conversations with the trainees I recognized this kind of shock and arousal in them. This training-shock in my understanding is a consequence of the tough topic, the information about how helpless or even hostile the institutions can be towards the survivors and victims of DV – and of the interactive, non-formal training methods used.

As I've explained earlier to become a counselor on the NANE helpline one has to participate in an 8 day training. The training itself is a carefully built process with two main purposes. One is to shape the attitude of the volunteers about women's rights issues and DV. The other is to give relevant and up-date information about how the different institutions can or cannot be deployed in helping our clients.

As Gréta (the president of the NGO) told me during private conversations, the today current form of the training is partly her own invention, built upon modified aspects of earlier materials, and new elements added where it seemed to be useful. At the beginning, American activists visited NANE almost every year and gave a 4 day training, which concentrated mainly on

building community and shaping the attitude of the volunteers. Knowing from Gréta's oral history, two major changes happened to the training material, one around the turn of the millennium initiated by Judit Herman (an ex-leader and volunteer of NANE)³⁴ and one around 2005 initiated by Gréta. The first adjustment's aim was to give practical information about the legal and institutional framework in Hungary, and communication skills to improve the quality of the work on the helpline.

The second was rather a fine tuning and bringing in explicit human-rights contents and exercises. Since that time the training is more complex, contextualizing women's rights and DV in a Human Rights framework. By this time Gréta was a well-known Human Rights trainer working for example in the European Council's Human Rights education program. As she told me, when she had been trained to be a Human Rights trainer she realized that the exercises inherited from the American activists NANE was already using, were actually Human Rights exercises. Attitude-shaping in the training had followed an obviously Human Rights approach. From this point Gréta was consciously trying to get Human Rights, and women's-rights-areHuman Rights messages into the training material through exercises. In the interview she said:

'These categories [fear of death, indignity etc.] are general ones connected to human dignity and humanism. [...] May be we do not phrase it the same way but in the end these needs and demands are quite the same. [...] The part of my-

³⁴ Not identical with Judith Herman, the author of *Trauma and Recovery* – but the Hungarian translator of the book.

self relevant when working on the helpline is the one that believes that these are fundamental and inalienable Human Rights and needs.’ (Gréta)

4.1.1.1 The importance of the Human Rights approach

This is important for the scope of the thesis since there is a link between the Human Rights approach and class-icization of Roma. It is interesting that here it seems that the Human Rights approach is linked to the theory of culture of poverty and is deployed to avoid stating that certain criminal acts and behavior (stealing, being violent etc) can be connected to ethnic features, thus to ethnic minorities, in our case to the Roma. The explicit message here is that criminality is not an ethnic-cultural issue but much rather a question of economic and social status. Considering this as a really essential issue I come back to it in a later subchapter. What I want to emphasize here is that the process of constructing the counselor of the helpline is affected by the Human Rights approach and it is not without consequences. I also claim that new-born volunteers being born at the end of the process are products of explicit (women’s right and Human Rights) and not so explicit, quited unnamed impacts.

The exercises used in the NANE training are interactive, informal ones mostly basing on cooperative learning³⁵. This means that the construction of the counselor is a very intense process and a very strong learning

³⁵ Two books Gréta mentioned as sources of other, gender and DV related exercises: Creighton, Allen, and Kivel, Paul. 2011. Helping Teens Stop Violence, Build Community, and Stand for Justice; and Adams, Maurianne, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin. Teaching for diversity and social justice: a sourcebook. These are books using non-formal training methods.

experience. Utilizing the personal experiences of the volunteers³⁶ results in a deeper involvement and as we know experiential learning is much more effective than the formal, frontal methods. The use of these techniques all together with the recognition of how vulnerable women are in the private and public sphere in Hungary create the training shock I evoked earlier by citing Hilda. The problem here is that shock doesn't really leave space for reflexivity (or doubts). I got an impression of the degree of imprinting when meeting different parts of the interviews which looked very much alike – and which resembled my own thinking and wording during and after the training³⁷. I find that the counselors working on the helpline deeply identify with these statements. It was interesting that when asking about their experiences on the phone, when asking about their thoughts, priorities and communicational tactiques I got answers like these:

It is important what she [the client] claims. I think it is very important to unravel what *her* needs are. (Ella)

We have to ask if she is safe when calling us. (Ella)

Well... the most important thing is that... is she safe now?

Can she talk, how she is at the moment, and even more importantly, what does she want to talk about. [...] What her expectations are [and giving her] what she wants to get from us. (Hilda)

³⁶ The method employed here is 'associative learning'. As Gréta told me, this type of getting messages through by sticking them to personal experiences of the trainees is a very general model in andragogy and human rights training.

³⁷ In many instances this is still true. But because of my special interest in the topic of Romany-ness in that field I became more reflexive.

We only have to know what her needs are. We shouldn't really know anything else about her. (Hanna)

For me these illustrates that the lesson is learnt and what is learnt is in concert with Gréta's above cited statements that Human Rights approach is about the human needs of our callers (being safe, living without fear and pain and having dignity etc)

4.2 Culture of poverty

Culture of poverty came to the picture when having more conversations with Gréta about the Human Rights approach and methodology of the training. She says that certain problems shouldn't be ethnicized since they are much rather consequences of economic circumstances then skin and haircolor. Thus avoiding and fighting against blaming ethnicities, which is a Human Rights aim can be helped by the theory of culture of poverty:

This comes from the sociological discourse, that there are certain features of groups living in deep poverty which are easily read as ethnic features. But they are not characteristic at all, for example if members of that ethnicity don't live in deep poverty. And if these group can stand out of poverty these features will disappear. [...] Having many children is one of these stereotypes, that this is a Roma thing. But it is shown that the longer girls go to school the less children will born. (Gréta)

Gréta told me that she knows this theory as coming from the work done in the third world to improve the situation of people living there and that Roma researchers here in Hungary have very similar results. Culture of poverty as an explicit phenomenon appeared only in her interview, but it complements the Human Rights approach of de-ethnicization which does appear in different forms, but in all of the interviews. The theory of culture of poverty could and should be debated (and it is debated as it can be seen in the theoretical chapter), but my question here is that what is the assumption behind identifying people as problematic, or as sources of problem than deciding to name this problem in a new way? I will clarify this in the subchapter dealing with situated imagination and focalization of our opinions, beliefs and imagination.

4.3 The assumed caller

Those who want to talk less, or can talk less, may be they have fewer opportunities [to define themselves and their situation] on the helpline, because counselors usually ask the same questions. May be these are doctrinarian things... that what kind of relationship she lives in, what her resources are, what does she want. We usually ask these. (Sylvia)

It became apparent for me from the interviews that the counselors tend to map our callers as individuals with the same (basic) needs. It would be difficult to impugn that the instantaneous and the long-term safety of the caller is a priority, and I would like to emphasize that these questions are

important and should be asked. Still I have the impression that when ‘visualizing’ the caller my interviewees keep their middle-class focalization (and so do I). This un-reflexive routine is partly an aftermath of the above depicted very strong training procedure. I deal with focalization or situatedness in a later subchapter and in connection with it I refer to the knowledge we lack about Roma minority – and how that lack of knowledge define our situated imagination.

4.3.1 Different ways of feminisms

When hearing from Gréta the oral history of the organization I began to ask myself that what kind of role does feminism play in how we are trained or how feminism is imagined by us. In the interviews Hilda stated that she wouldn’t call herself feminist yet, but she is on the way, Zita said that she considers herself as radical feminist. Gréta’s definition of feminism is that ‘feminism fights for the equality between sexes and for the Human Rights of women.’ Hanna also pointed out her Human Rights based feminism. In my understanding these quite different claims illustrate what Graff wrote about different waves and trends of feminism arriving after the transition to Eastern-European countries and being present simultaneously. As detailed in a previous paragraph American women’s (human) rights activists visited and trained potential volunteers of NANE and we still use some of the exercises brought by them. I claim that in our training second wave ideas of the homogenous group of ‘women’ are simultaneously present and active with the Human Rights approach, and as a result of that approach with sensitivity towards minorities.

Yes, it would make sense to talk about differences, that women are not the same. Social status, education, ethnicity... this is not a homogenous mass. I brought this up [in the training], because *sometimes* we talked about women as a homogenous mass. And Gréta said that I was right.

(Sylvia)

For me this means that while it was acknowledged that women are different in many ways, sometimes they appeared as a homogenous group with the same needs. During the training we have an exercise when we create pairs from words like professor-student, old-young, man-woman, white-black, and disabled-healthy. This sensitizing exercise's aim is to show how different – isms embody power relations and differences between certain groups of people (like agism, racism etc). Actually I remember that when I had been trained the pair Hungarian-Roma was on the blackboard too. So Roma did appear as an explicit vulnerable category, as having less power than the Hungarian majority, but Roma as ethnicity remained silenced. I find this circumstance also significant to point at before turning to perception and after that Romany-ness and culture of poverty.

4.3.2 Perception as construction

How one is dressed, her gestures, and how she behaves, these tell a lot about her background', so perception is a key-importance factor when people interacting. It is still true on

the helpline though we hear only the voice of our callers.
(Zita)

These physical features, like her speaking style, the pitch, the rhythm [...] Her vocabulary, these all are additional information to her story, and having your little stereotypes you see her in front you.' (Hilda)

I think Hilda's sentences illuminate two significant factors here. One is that we do have a kind of perception at work on the helpline and the other thing is, that we are situated in our knowledge, and imagination - in our stereotypes or even prejudice.

4.3.3 Perceiving through voice

And I have talked with this woman a lot, and she had amazingly beautiful voice, her language was very bolted [...] and I imagined her as, I don't know, but tall and a bit plumpish, she had a voice like that. I thought she had dark complexion. And then I met her. A small woman, like me³⁸, with dyed red hair.... she was just completely different than as I imagined her. (Hanna)

After this experience Hanna consciously tried to treat her perceptions skeptically and open to change. Gréta told me in her interview that she

³⁸ This means the caller was rather slim than plumpish.

suggests to be careful with perception, and focus much rather on *what* is said than *how* it was said. This reflexivity is important and many of my colleagues mentioned it. When asking them about how they visualize the assumed caller, all of them seemed to be aware that perception can be misleading and stereotypes can direct our reactions, so they concentrated on not to draw conclusions about the caller's personality, only about her situation. Of course this is not so simple since we are exposed to perception. As Sylvia put it:

Language is important since we can learn a lot of things from how she [the caller] speaks. Education, where she lives, social status [...] and we even unintentionally/unconsciously draw the inference from these.

A few questions later Sylvia shared a story about a woman calling the helpline.

There was this woman... she many times said 'little lady' and 'aranyoskám'³⁹. This woman was very young, maybe the same age as me⁴⁰. And she talked all along as a 50 years old. She had a husky voice, I think she had been through a lot. And she talked to the counselor⁴¹ as to an authority, to a man of position. So I think.... that's why [because of her negative experiences] she talked to Edit this way. From beneath... [...] She talked to Edit as if Edit was a much older

³⁹ It is really difficult to translate this properly. Literally 'aranyoskám' would be cutie, but there in Hungarian there is a way this expression can be used to express that the person we are talking to is a presumably benevolent, young woman with power. Calling her aranyoskám is much rather an offer or request to act nicely than a statement about how cute she is.

⁴⁰ Around 30

⁴¹ Sylvia was a co-counselor at that time

woman with a position, with power. This could be felt because of the way she was speaking.

I asked her if in her opinion this woman was white⁴². She said no. I asked her if she thought about this when she was listening to her. She said 'No, but I can imagine that she was ethnic... maybe the way she talked. May be this is prejudice, I don't know.' She explained that because of the words the caller used and her intonation made her think that the caller could be Roma. There are several interesting issues here. One is the question of age. Young women usually don't use the word 'aranyoskám', but this caller did. This made Sylvia think that she was much older than her. In addition I find this story an intriguing example of the on-stage position of Roma. Recognizing the caller as Roma was based on the language she used: her vocabulary, intonation etc. I think this caller was talking to her previous experiences with institutions and authorities and constructed NANE and the helpline as an institution one among them. I don't know what happened in the rest of the conversation, I am almost sure that we still could and did help her. Yet this is a complex illustration of perceiving someone as potentially Roma and potentially poor and shattered and from the caller's side performing on the stage of Romany-ness by giving voice to it. In the next subchapter I enumerate instances of how Romanyness is perceived and constructed by the counselors.

⁴² This was a too direct question but because of her gestures and non-verbal signs I had an impression that there is something we should talk about more.

4.4 Perceiving ethnicity – assuming Romanyness

At first I want to note that no counselor mentioned that she could recognize Jewish or Human Rights or other people belonging to ethnic minorities of Hungary on the phone, basing on (voice) perception. Migrant background appeared as an obvious obstacle since the helpline is available only in Hungarian. The Vietnamese and Chinese communities living in Hungary are kind of exceptions since most of them do speak Hungarian but no counselor could recall any calls from them. (In my opinion accent makes Asian people recognizable.)

Well, if someone told me that 'I'm Armenian' I couldn't do anything about that... because I don't know the cultural background of ethnic minorities. Or if she just said, that 'otherwise I came from migrant Chinese background, but I was born here'... [...] I never met anybody Asian calling us. To be honest among ethnic minorities only Roma called us... maybe they just didn't tell they were Chinese. Roma did tell that they were Roma. For example once I had a caller and she said, she was Roma, but she said that she was a working person, not like those... who about people say that they [these 'general Roma'] just slack about and don't learn... (Ella)

From the last sentence it can be seen that several intentions and stereotypes interplay on the helpline. Though the caller defined herself as Roma it was important for her to announce that she was not like those other Roma of

stereotypes and prejudice. Here it seems that she accepted, or learnt to accept the prejudice of the majority of society about Roma and while admitting her ethnic belonging claiming that she was different from those imagined, stereotypical Roma.

4.4.1 Stereotypes on the wire

What does a stereotypical Roma look like for the counselors? When interviewing Gréta after she told me that there are circumstances which suggest that our caller is roma I asked her about these circumstances she answered:

Well, some of them were subculture-specific things... actually this hasn't ever happened to me, but if somebody said that I have to go out and bake the 'punya'⁴³, than yes, I would know. [...] And I am not really into these Roma culture things, so I usually do not record that, oooh, this could happen only to Roma, or this is a rural folkways or what.

Here it seems that though Gréta is using the culture of poverty approach, when thinking about how Romany-ness can be perceived she is trying to find signals coded in folk traditions. This suggests me that there is an ethnographical-ethnic potential, and also that there is a certain ethnographical knowledge regarding Roma. (I know that she was working on at least one project in the region called Ormánság among others with Boyash youth and their teachers.) Once again I find a duality in how things are

⁴³ Punya is a type of bread of Boyash Roma, usually baked in an outdoor furnace.

perceived and coded (as ethnic for instance) and how statements are made by carefully avoiding the possibility of ethnicization, since it can be source of racist tendencies.

For example that my family, they always endure besides me,
'cause we are a Roma family and I am their dog's cub and
this is more important than a marriage. [...] (Zita)

This is a nice example how the stereotype about the supportive solidary Roma family is imagined and mapped by the counselor. The image of this assumed Roma family is surely in connection with what Horváth and Kovai (2012) wrote about, namely that segregating unnamed groups of Roma resulted in strengthening kinship relations in those communities, as the only available points of help and reference for them. But what is the exact connection between the mobilized stereotype and what the anthropologists found? Is this assumption about Roma families produced by the practice of unnamings while segregating them? I think this relationship deserves further investigation but unfortunately is beyond the scope of my thesis.

At this point of the interview she was talking about the potential importance of Romany-ness on the helpline and she told me that she was thinking if there are indirect questions we could ask, or details hinted by the caller which could lead us to de-code Romany-ness. One of the possible features was the phenomenon of supportive family. But what families was she exactly talking about? If Romany-ness is rather an issue of class, of socio-economic circumstances how could happen that Roma appeared as a potentially homogenous group of supportive families? I am sure that there are

differences among Roma families and I am also sure that Zita knows about this. She tried really hard to find a good enough way (so not potentially racist but still effective) way to figure it out how to map this factor. Let me remind here that since of the constant performative obligation of Roma there is no case being Roma as not significant. The question is much rather that how much important it is, and is the helpline able to map it in cases when it is really important but the caller because of several reasons doesn't mention it. As Hanna pointed it out, there is no chance of a negative proof, that if Romany-ness was important it did surface, since we cannot know if it was important – and didn't surface. In my understanding Zita tried to give politically correct answers to questions which are difficult or maybe impossible to answer politically correctly in contemporary Hungary.

4.4.2 Restoring perception

So if this [being Roma] surfaces during the call what usually happens is that callers tell it. As an explanation for some things, when sharing some experiences, they just add it [that they are Roma]. *They add it as an explanation.*' (Izabella)

Romany-ness cannot be wished away as it was shown many times in this thesis. On the helpline where perception is based on what we hear, sometimes callers feel that they need to restore perception by announcing (explaining) that they are Roma. That is the point when the 30 minutes of silence is broken, when the narrative doesn't make sense without the recognition of Romany-ness – which, in normal, 'visually not restrained' situations comes with perceiving complexion (See Izabella's example in the

Introduction). As Gréta told me, talking about the new personal counseling program supported and financed by a mobile service provider:⁴⁴

‘You know in this program it is usually clear who is Roma. This is not a helpline, but personal counseling, and it can strongly suspected simply because of the phenotype that one is of Roma origin. [...] Her appearance and complexion and so on. These are the signs [she decodes when claiming that someone is Roma]. But I don’t ask about this, and don’t base strategy on that.’

Zita put it this way:

They usually don’t begin with this [that they are Roma] the conversation, but when they talk about that they tried to validate her interest and she failed in mobilizing for example the police, than usually they add, that ‘by the way I’m Roma’.

This can be read as something merely practical. But on a more abstract level I think this restoration of perception under the pressure of necessity is a very telling. After the 30 minutes of silence Roma should get back on the stage of perceiving her/him as Roma, since otherwise her/his story remains uninterpretable.

4.3 Situated imagination

Zita continued with sharing the story of a caller, who experienced serious institutional racist violence.

So this woman was shopping in a DM⁴⁵ and the security guard was beginning to feel her up and harass her, and the

⁴⁴ Vodafone for women’s safety.

woman ran out of the shop with something, maybe with sanitary pads. And they [employees of the shop] called the police. The security guard who had been harassing her! And she was taken to the police station and they began a proceeding against her. And it is fucking obvious that this couldn't have happened to a white middle class woman!

Sylvia talked about the same issue: 'And if she asks for help and she belongs to the ethnic minority⁴⁶, they [the institutions] won't care that much about her or listen to her.'

The case of the woman being harassed in the DM was channeled to TASZ⁴⁷, where they could help her more effectively. In this example⁴⁸ it is clear that the caller's appearance, complexion, in other words her assumed Romany-ness was perceived as a green light by the perpetrator (the security guard). As Zita put it in another part of her interview, it seems that there are 'good minorities' and 'bad minorities' living in Hungary. Those ones with dark skin and hair color are deemed as inferiors. Hilda said in her interview that Roma are not different from non-Roma who live in the same socio-economic circumstances – but this example shows that Romany-ness is always a signified other, not the same as non-Roma, even if living in the same deep poverty. Here it becomes obvious that Romany-ness is not a question of class, but of perceiving (racialized) ethnicity.

⁴⁵ A Drogerie Markt shop.

⁴⁶ This usually means in Hungarian Roma. This is also an interesting thing that people call them in everyday conversations 'etnikum' (in English literally ethnicity). And Sylvia used the term in this sense too.

⁴⁷ Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, offering pro bono advocacy for Roma

⁴⁸ The case would be worth to be analyzed more profoundly, but unfortunately so doing is beyond my scope.

I draw attention to the fact that while keeping away the risk of ethnicizing poverty, culture of poverty approach is still keeping the focalization or point of view of the majority of society. As I've stated above, it is still situated (embedded) in seeing people as problem, or more precisely situated in keeping the belief that we (white majority) have the right and the required knowledge to decide if something or someone is a problem or isn't. I see that leaning on the theory of culture of poverty here helps to blur *our*, the counselors' situatedness and focalization. The point where we see the stories of our callers from and the very limited perspective we have on those narratives. We *are* othering Roma, when making claims about their assumed supportive families, baking punya, or being loud and temperamental (the latter categories were brought up by Hanna and by Izabella). The problem here is that according to the interviews we are not really reflexive about our situatedness, about the process of othering. This is close relation with the anxieties regarding the constructing intersections I summarized in the theoretical chapter. Neutralizing our identity as a construction on the helpline is a way of blurring and maintaining othering – for example in the case of Roma.

Continuing from this point I claim that we seem to see these stories about institutional violence (the one about the DM shop for example) as binary interactions between Roma and white Hungarians. And this is, once again, completely true - these are stories are about serious violations. What I want to draw attention is the question that on which side is NANE of the line of demarcation? We do witness and admit violence our callers suffer from. With a really provocative statement I claim that still we are on the same side of the line as the violent institutions. Our knowledge and imagination about Roma as individuals, different or homogenous groups are situated. Not knowing more about Roma than what is shown in the interviews, not knowing or

imagining them as an intricately layered community, or much rather different individuals and groups has the suggestion that we are benevolent but still part of the white-system. What I want to emphasize is not the existence of othering but the lack of *reflexivity* concerning that othering. In other words: de-ethnicizing Roma, and for the purpose of avoiding racism defining Romany-ness rather an issue of class than ethnicity, unfortunately can be understood as a lack of admitting the constantly present perceived-by-ethnicity problem and not taking up the challenge of the work of translation (Shih 2005) in the dialogue between the sides of Roma and Hungarians.

4.3 The problems with Hungarian-nes

When asking my interviewees about their relation to being Hungarian or belonging to the Hungarian nation, and what it means in their opinion to be Hungarian, I got answers like this:

Belonging to a nation means that we share common things.

Language, culture, history, traditions... But this constant accentuation of Hungarian-nes is very antipathetic for me.

(Sylvia)

4.3.1 Roma as Hungarian

When I asked if in their opinion Roma were Hungarian, they answered of course. However I see a bit of contradiction here since many of them expressed for example that language is the necessary minimum of belonging to the nation. And we know that almost every Roma speaks Hungarian, but 'only' the 75% of them speak it as their mothertongue (Farkas ÉVSZÁM?). In addition when I was asking about

perceiving voice on the helpline they stated that there are vocal hints, which suggest that they are speaking to Roma. These vocal hints signify something different, not standard – something which is perceived and conceived as Other. The other dubious part is the question of history and traditions. How much do we exactly know about the history of Roma? Even here in Hungary? From their answers it is apparent that half of the counselors have basic knowledge regarding Roma history, and only 2-3 of them mentioned concrete Roma traditions. This suggests for me that this assumed and Hungarian-ness is not problematized COMPLEMENTED with the history and traditions of Roma - that they are a once again silenced part of the nation.

4.3.2 The problem of belonging

I basically don't like being Hungarian. I don't like these depressive and procrastinating features of Hungarians. (Izabella)

If I had had the choice I would have chosen another nation. Something more cool. (Zita)

For me Hungarian is who share these common experiences, that what it is like to be Hungarian, that you belong to a nation such a loser. (Gréta)

Not only from these quotes but from all the interviews I detected that there is something difficult around being and announcing being Hungarian⁴⁹. Obviously this is a matter partly of the political circumstances, for instance the right wing monopolizing themetizing Hungarianness and positive feelings as pride and admiration (towards the language for example). Actually we operate with stereotypes

⁴⁹ I share the experience of this difficulty with my colleagues.

– with stereotypes about looser pessimist Hungarians. If belonging to the imagined community of Hungarians is so deeply problematic, how could we presume that belonging to other nations or ethnical minorities can be unproblematic, neutral, easily-thematized? Maybe in the tendency to avoid naming ethnicity, the shame and discontentment around this problematic Hungarian-ness can be apprehended in that 30 minutes of silence as well.

4.4 Identity, intersectionality, and reflexivity – the angel of neutrality

In this last section I concentrate on how the image of the neutral professional helper, the lack of knowledge about intersectionality and situated knowledges and imagination make reflexivity difficult to appear in our work.

For me counselor is a person, who can support people in difficult situations. I [as a counselor] accept what the caller says, I listen to her. Here [on the helpline] nobody will shout with he, she won't be further battered. [...] I try to figure myself [as a counselor] as an 'angel of neutrality'⁵⁰. [...] So acting as des-personalized, 'cause I don't want to act as a person when working on the helpline. I want to be a reaction, a reacting agent⁵¹; a space where the other finds relief. I definitely don't want to use or present my boxes of stereotypes on the helpline. (Hilda)

I find Hilda's claims on one hand more than fascinating and on the other hand worth for deeper analysis. Ella, Sylvia and Gréta stated very similarly that when working on the helpline they don't want to be, or they are not present, since they are there to

⁵⁰ In Hungarian she used the term 'nemtelen angyal'.

⁵¹ In Hungarian she used the term 'reaktív ágens'.

help as 'neutral' professionals and not as people with problems and stereotypes. In my insight this high and firm standard about the neutral professionalism of the 'counseling subject' is partly a result of our training and the training shock I described earlier. I also have to mention one of the explicit (Human Rights originated) messages of the training about don't be, don't act as racist, homophobe and sexist. Even if we have (and we have, just like all human beings have) stereotypes and prejudice towards certain things and people, leave these 'boxes' outside of the counseling room.

And once again, this message and this standard are absolutely fine. Yet (once again) I began to ask myself that why professionalism is imagined here as something despersonal. Or since the answer lies partly in our training, it could be a more significant question to ask that why isn't the unavoidable 'constructed subject-ness' of the counselor presented or emphasized by the training? I claim that this could help many of the problems listed in this chapter.

As I told earlier using associative learning methods in our training means that we are trained by using/relying on our bodies, emotions, memories and experiences. But the next link of the chain seems to be missing. Namely to connect the (shocked) subject of the training process to the counseling subject answering calls on the helpline. We do learn about multiple disadvantages of people, for instance that being a lesbian Catholic, or a Roma living in deep poverty make life much more difficult. We also learn that we are subjects with different characteristics as well. Being white, middle-class with Jewish, Serbian German origin we map ourselves. But we do not learn about intersectionality, and even less as a conceptualized in the theoretical chapter.

Although I claim it would be important. When asking my colleagues that who was picking up the phone in their opinion when they were on duty⁵², only two of them answered immediately: 'it's me, Hanna' and 'it's me, Zita'. They did talk about themselves as professional helpers, like the others, but I think the difference in the starting point is very important here. Assuming or aiming to work as a party- or rather non-self-identical professional creates the opportunity to blur the given situatedness of the counselor. Both regarding her knowledge and imagination. Which means that the focalization of our perspective can remain hidden. And if it remains hidden this can result that we (volunteers of NANE) are not prepared to act *pro-actively* about questions and problems related to ethnicity, to Romany-ness. In the last chapter of the thesis I explain what I mean by pro-active acting and why I think it would help to minimize the minutes of silence on the phone.

⁵² 'Imagine that it is 7 o'clock in the evening and you are on duty on the helpline. What do you think, who is sitting in counselor's chair?'

5. POSSIBILITIES OF BEING PRO-ACTIVE ABOUT ROMANY-NESS

After mapping the complex issues which can explain the 30 minutes of silence from both the counselors' and Roma callers' sides, in this chapter I suggest three solutions for consideration for my NGO, which I believe could lessen the amount of that ambiguous silence. The first one deals with ideas about public utterances, the second about the training and the last point about Roma volunteers counseling on the helpline.

1. We admit that institutional and many other forms of racism exist in Hungary. Yet I suggest making this acknowledgement public, so our caller could meet the message that NANE is aware of racism *before* she calls us. The fact that we give voice (and written letters) to this acknowledgement has a great performative/subversive?? potential, since clear utterances are a more active form of anti-racism than only accepting what our clients tell us.

The idea came up when I saw the homepage of a British organization, Women's Aid. There is an item in the menu for clients of 'Black and ethnic minorities' (see homepage). Clicking on it a page long part of the survivor's handbook appear where it is stated that there is no evidence that could suggest that women of minority background suffer in a larger proportion from DV, *but* they may experience racism and discrimination from institutions. I claim that this kind of announcement, voicing our knowledge and sensitivity regarding the issue of racism would empower our Roma callers to name their ethnic belonging (much) earlier.

Practically we could add an item on our homepage just like Women's Aid did. But in addition it would be useful to distribute leaflets with the same content, since many of Romany women live in poverty without internet connection – or simply their batterers (just like non-Roma batterers) don't let them use the computer.

2. Since Roma are the largest minority group of Hungary I claim that (besides other workshops, dealing with religions, disabilities or different sexual orientations) a basic level education about the different groups of Roma living in Hungary should be set in the material of our training. Knowing our Other is the first step to eliminate the even unintentional routine of Othering.

I also suggest to build the concept of intersectionality in the training. We already learn information about 'multiplier factors' (age, poverty etc) and have exercise illustrating the effects of these factors, but it would be useful to emphasize that we *all* are constructed in temporal intersections of various axes. (It would take more time to figure it out how to phrase this not-so-academically.)

In addition I propagate to talk about the 'person-ness' of the professional helper at a certain point of the training. By making our trainees more aware of that these temporal intersections of individuals are interacting on the helpline, we could strengthen their (self)reflexivity regarding their situated knowledge and imagination when talking to our callers.

3. If there is a chance it could be useful to have women who identify themselves as Roma among our counselors⁵³. This could be a second or third step of the process since till this point we had only one Romany woman trained who worked as a volunteer for NANE. We should find out at first how to reach potential Romany activists.

⁵³ I thank Violetta Zentai for this suggestion

6. CONCLUSION

In this thesis I investigated how the perception of Romany-ness is silenced, or on the contrary, restored by the Roma caller or the counselor when Romany women calling the domestic violence helpline of NGO NANE (Budapest, Hungary).

I examined the special aspects of fear, insecurity and shame present in the conversations between the counselors and the callers to find out how ethnic belonging and (anti)racism are present, when potentially Roma women are calling the helpline and remaining silent about their ethnic belonging. After a brief history of the organization and the description of its structure I turned to the question of how Romany-ness is as an unavoidably racialized ethnic belonging is connected to the concept of circle of shame and concept of culture of poverty. Reviewing the theory of intersectionality I tried to find a way how to implement its findings in the practice of the helpline. I also dealt with the question of different waves of feminism being present simultaneously in post-transition countries since this also has effect on our work. In the last section I enumerated some of the problems related to Hungarian nationality, focusing on how this is relevant in the case of the counselors at NANE.

In the second part of the thesis I analyzed the interviews I conducted with my colleagues and the results of my participant observation as a trainer of the NGO and as a counselor on the helpline to find out what suggestions could be made to improve the quality of our work when Romany women call us. In this chapter I show that in the thirty minutes of silence there are several factors contributing from the counselors' side such as the way they are trained, assumptions and beliefs about Romany-ness, and a problematic relationship with Hungarian-ness. The sixth chapter suggests possible solutions to improve our work regarding the aspect of Roma ethnicity

(distributing leaflets for Roma, training about Romany-ness in Hungary and having Roma counselor among us.)

7 APPENDICES

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. General questions about the interviewee's

- age
- address
- 'marital status'
- qualification
- job
- scope of activities
- if she belongs to any ethnic minority
- How would you define your class-membership?
- How do you define your sexual orientation?
- Do you have any kind of disability?

1.2 How long have you been working for NANE?

1.3 Why did you choose this organization?

1.4 With what frequency do you counsel on the helpline?

2.

- In your opinion NANE is a feminist organization?
- Do you consider yourself a feminist?
- What does feminism/being a feminist mean for you?

3.

- In your opinion what is the aim of the NANE helpline?
- What do you think, who are the people calling the helpline?
- How do you imagine the person calling the helpline? (this question aims to know if the counselor visualizes the caller, the situation, the

place she is calling from, how she perceives voice? – these were follow up questions)

- I would like to ask you to share a memorable call – or the last call you had on duty.
- In your opinion what are the important factors regarding the caller the counselor should know about?
- Among these what would you ask about directly? (in Hungarian: Mire célszerű rákérdezni?)
- If this helps I can offer categories: class, where the caller lives, sexual orientation, if she is living with disability, cultural identity, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion

4.

- What does 'identity' mean for you? What does it consist of?
- In your opinion how stable or how changable it is?
- In your opinion how does the caller's identity appear on the helpline?
- How do you build up the image of the caller?
- How and how much does the caller shape this image?
- Does the caller have the opportunity to define her identity during the call?
- Does the caller have the opportunity to re-define herself during the call?
- Imagine that it is 7 o'clock in the evening and you are on duty on the helpline. Who is the person sitting in the counselors' chair and answering the calls?

5.

- What things do the trainees learn about the callers? (during the training)
- In your opinion what kind of relationship is between the following pairs?
- ethnic belonging – DV
- class relations – DV
- geographical factors (where the caller lives) – DV

- cultural belonging- DV
- nationality – DV
- sexual orientation - DV
- How important you find these categories? (the first part of the pairs) (score 1-10)
- Are there factors among these which could change (strengthen or weaken) each other's effects? (Vannak-e az előbb felsoroltak között olyan jellemzők, amik erősíthetik/gyengíthetik egymás hatását?)
- How important it is to know about these 'multiplying' factors?
- In your opinion how important is to ask about the ethnic identity of the caller?
- Has it ever happened that you asked about any of these categories?

6. (Supplemental questions)

- In your opinion what does that mean that the helpline can be called from all over the country?
- Do we know where do most of the people call from? (Tudható-e, hogy honnan hívják a leginkább?)
- How significant is it that the helpline is available only in Hungarian?
- What does it mean that somebody is Hungarian?
- In your opinion what makes a nation?
- And what makes Hungarian-nes?
- Do you remember any call when your caller was Roma?
- How did you know that she was Roma?
- Can you recall any call when the ethnic belonging of the caller appeared as important?
- Who is Roma? (Szerinted ki a roma?) (in Hungary, now)
- In your opinion among the following categories what is relevant when defining Roma: ethnicity, culture, language, class (or other)?
- What do you know about Roma living in Hungary?

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