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Biographies of young leaders
in politics and society in Slovakia

Subjective meaning and relevance of participation
in the lives of leading professionals working
in non-governmental sector in Slovakia

verfasst von / submitted by

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Thank you

I would like to thank my interview partners for their time and openness towards a stranger who has approached them with a request for this unusual type of interview. Many of you felt the asymmetry in information sharing and despite that shared your life stories. Once again thank you for being so forthcoming, I feel indebted.

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Content

1. Introduction

Growing up, I was socialized within a youth organization and soon enough after joining I began volunteering for them. I was able to acquire skills, which I would not have done elsewhere and was forced to think about and discuss issues that would not even cross my mind before. I was given opportunity to grow into responsibilities that were beyond my capacities at that time, which gave me the motivation and urge to work even harder. I joined a community of likeminded people, many of whom remain friends for life. I saw the impact of this experience on me, and I felt I needed to give back to the community and stay engaged for many years after. It also made me more connected to society, more conscious about the less fortunate in our society, and more willing to engage in political and social life. Civic engagement and political participation became a large element in the process of my socialization and thus sparked my academic interest within my university studies. My bachelor thesis partially covered the topic of participation, and within my master thesis I decided to fully focus on this issue, while using a qualitative research approach.

Through my current work I was able to see that most of the research on participation in Slovakia uses quantitative methods such as surveys, polls and questionnaires to look at determinants of participation such as trust, democratic values, rejection of institutional politics or civic-political cultures of the society, to name just a few. Other studies look at participation patterns to come up with typologies to explain how civically engaged or disengaged people are. A third type of studies looks at education: how civic knowledge that students and pupils gather in schools and after-school activities correlate with their voting and civic engagement tendencies. However, on one hand these approaches often fail to bring the perspective of the respondents themselves, and on the other hand lack to provide a deeper understanding of the complex processes of participation and engagement in society. They also mostly look at the traditional forms of political participation like voting, attending protests, and being a member of a political party. They often look less at or even leave out involvement and civic engagement altogether. This leads to the fact that only part of the phenomena gets analyzed and certain populations are left out of the research altogether (women, minorities, youth), since more often than others, they engage in these forms of participation.

The thesis looks at the life stories and histories[1] of selected leading representatives from non-governmental sector and political representatives engaged in promoting civic and human rights issues in Slovakia. By looking at their life stories, I intend to look, on one hand, into the path

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[1] by life story I mean the narrated life story as captured in the interview situation = erzählte Lebensgeschichte), by life history I mean the life s/he experienced/lived = erlebter Lebensgeschichte (Rosenthal 1993)

through their biography, and on the other, at what were the experiences and context that shaped their life histories. Additionally, the aim is to reconstruct the subjective meaning that guided their actions and the choices they made along the way and thus to bring out the biographers' own relevance setting, and their own experiences in understanding civic engagement and participation. The narrative interview and reconstructive analytical approach I chose lends the respondents more control over their own narratives about participation and thus provides a deeper understanding of the participation processes, and contexts in which they arise, which is why I chose this particular research approach.

I am interested in lives of the lead representatives who engage in policy making in the area of civic and human rights in Slovakia. To narrow down the scope of my research, I have chosen to interview a range of representatives who promote furthering civic and human rights issues from both the third (non-profit) sector and public sector. I carried out 5 narrative biographical interviews according to Fritz Schütze and used biographical hermeneutic case reconstruction and global analysis according to Gabriele Rosenthal for the analysis of the data.

The thesis is divided into four parts. The first part is dedicated to theoretical framing of the thesis. Firstly, I outline the research questions and define the main terms such as biography and non-governmental organizations. Secondly, I reflect on the concepts of engagement and participation, and Bourdieu's work on social space and habitus which help with the interpretation. And thirdly, I contextualize the material produced in this research within the relevant historical settings to make the analysis more comprehensible.

The second part deals with the methodology and methods used in this research. I outline the research strategy and focus on presenting the research design. I also present the narrative interview by Fritz Schütze used as a method of data collection and hermeneutic case reconstruction by Gabriele Rosenthal as a method for steps of analysis, while reflecting on the decisions made along the way. And lastly, I discuss the quality control measures I have taken to meet the quality requirements.

The third part presents the results of the research. The main part of this section is dedicated to the reconstruction of the selected case and its analysis. The remaining interviews are used to offer contrast and comparison and help to contextualize and generalize the findings.

The fourth section is dedicated to discussion. It provides the interpretation of results by setting them in the context of existing theories. Additionally, it serves as space where the main case

structure of the selected case is compared and contrasted with the other cases to provide further depth of argumentation and breadth of observations.

The last chapter is dedicated to conclusion, which take the reader back to the research questions and summarizes the main findings. I also reflect on the relevance of my research and outline the limits as well as potential areas for further research.

2. Theoretical framing

This chapter talks about theoretical framing of the thesis. Firstly, I outline the goals of the research and my understanding of the main terms. Secondly, I present relevant historical events as well as main theoretical frameworks to make the analysis more comprehensible and to contextualize the material produced in this research.

2.1 Research questions

In my thesis I am interested in the path towards being socially and politically active of the young professionals (35-40 years old) who promote human rights. More specifically I aim to answer the following questions:

- What was their path towards being socially and politically active and what participation story are they telling?
- What is the subjective meaning and relevance of civic engagement and participation in their lives?
- Which biographical experiences and what historical events were important in their life stories? How do these conditions and experiences shape their thinking about their current situation?

2.2 Defining terms

Defining 'biography'

Biography is to be perceived as an instrument of *"self-presentation and self-description of individual members of a society"* (Fisher-Rosenthal & Rosenthal 1997, p. 405). According to Fisher-Rosenthal and Rosenthal (1997) biographies are selective reconstructions of the past through which individuals are connected to the society; they are means by which individuals position themselves in society. At the same time individuals' life history gets shaped by the institutionalized patterns of how society normatively considers biographies should evolve. *"Our aim is rather to reconstruct the interactional significance of the subject's actions, the underlying structure of the biographers interpretations of her or his life, which may go beyond the subject's own intentions."* (Rosenthal 1994, p. 2) So, on one hand looking at someone's biography it means to look at what action has been said was taken. On the other hand, it means to question the social processes that take place while constructing the biography in the moments when it is experienced as well as retold.

Biographies, either the experienced or retold ones, are highly selective. The experienced ones cannot encompass all the events of one's life and thus their retelling undergoes even a greater degree of selection of what is deemed relevant and what not. *"The narrated life story thus represents the biographer´s overall construction of his or her past and anticipated life, in which biographically relevant experiences are linked up in a temporally and thematically consistent pattern"* (Rosenthal 1994, p. 3). Thus, the life story is not an arbitrary recount of what comes to mind at the given time of the interview. Rather what is being told underlies a structured selection of life episodes based on the perceived individual meaning of these episodes to one's life. These are heavily shaped by what are the normative social expectations about life and in which social structures and contexts these episodes arise. The relationship between these is dynamic and thus the experiences get continuously reinterpreted. Therefore, to use Rosenthal's words: *"what we are in fact attempting is a reconstruction of both the narrator's biographical overall construction and the biographically relevant experiences." (Rosenthal 1994, p. 4).* In order to reconstruct the life history of an individual, we cannot just take the accounts of biographers at face value but need to contextualize within the biographical construction process. One must first understand the dynamics between the narrated life and its biographical overall construction, and only then analyze the experiences themselves and their meaning to the biographer, which is why the steps of hermeneutic case reconstruction follow in such sequence (see section 3.3 Methods of data collection and data analysis in chapter 3. Methodology and research design).

Using similar argumentation Völter, et al (2005) also agrees that biography is a social construct and captures how individuals process and structure their past experiences against the backdrop of social norms, restrictions, and discourse in which they are embedded. Therefore, biographies reflect the link between an individual and society: what is the positioning of individuals towards society and how do they influence society. Using the method of biographical hermeneutic case reconstruction, the biographies get to be structurally described and reconstructed and thus both the individual and societal level are captured in the interpretation as well. This is why using a case study is enough to make conclusions about the structural level as well.

Additionally, biographical research is heavily influenced by the interpretative paradigm, which also stipulates that actions of an individual are shaped by the social structures and context that are perceived, understood and reproduced or altered by the individuals in social interactions. Thus, on one hand the biographical research aims to reconstruct the processes of social behavior that we are able to see in the individuals' narration of their own life. On the other

hand, the biographic research aims to reconstruct the history of individual's behavior chronologically with the purpose of seeing how humans understand and sort what they experience and how does that impact their current or future course of action. Thus, by analyzing biographies, based on what is experienced and what is retold, we can observe and analyze the societal structures on concrete and real experience (Fisher-Rosenthal & Rosenthal 1997).

One more thing needs to be said about the context in which these life stories come to life. They arise from the mutual interaction between the biographer and the interviewer. I already mentioned that life experiences get continuously reinterpreted, and this is just another context where reinterpretation takes place, and it is based on how the biographers define the social context of the interview situation. On one hand for the quality of the research, it is important to be a conscious and reflective interviewer (see more on quality measures). On the other hand, in the spirit of interactionism paradigm in which this approach is embedded in, it is business as usual. As Rosenthal puts it: *"Life stories are not finished products ready to be 'served up' on demand." (Rosenthal 1994, p. 4).* Rather, the life story gets reinterpreted based on what theme the interviewer proposes, in my case how do people become engaged within the non-governmental sector - field of civic and human rights - and how the biographer assesses what is relevant to this topic for the interviewer.

So, in theory, the interviewer gives the narrator a framework for selecting the stories, however it's up to the interview partner to choose how they will self-present themselves (Rosenthal 1994). Based on my experience, this process is a continuous negotiation throughout the whole interview and beyond. In my first interview, which is briefly described as case zero in the results, but is otherwise not included in this research, my interview partner was not willing to accept my framework and ended the interview early. In other cases, the asymmetry in information sharing felt at times uncomfortable. Three of five of my interview partners mentioned throughout the interview that the situation felt therapeutic at times. My interpretation was that in most cases the situation gave them space to reflect about these issues and often think about them in this light for the first time, which is something they said throughout the interview. Others have noted, in the post-interview phase, that they felt the imbalance in information sharing *"you know so much about my life and I know so little about yours".* In some interviews I managed to do the balancing act after the interview quite well, in some cases it felt uncomfortable for a few days after.

Defining 'leading professionals'

Coming up with this key phrase was quite challenging and it remains a source of discussion and contention about the suitability of this phrase. First, I started with the term 'leaders' but my first two interview partners rejected the label. It was either devalued, empty, or it put them into a position with too big of shoes to fill and they did not identify with this description. So, in the subsequent interviews I started using the phrase 'active people' in the opening question as well as in other communication. Some interview partners have interpreted it to mean activists, and similarly the biographers declined this label as well as they did not feel like they were the primary experts or soldiers in the battlefield. Each of the interview partners chose alternative labels they identify with, like 'researcher', 'advocate' or 'a member of parliament'. So, in the end it came down to leading representatives working in the non-governmental sector. This negotiation about identity and accepting labels that took place in most of the interviews would be an interesting topic for a subsequent journal article.

Defining 'non-governmental sector in Slovakia'

In the thesis I use the following terms interchangeably to refer to the non-governmental sector: non-governmental or non-profit organizations, abbreviated as NGO, non-profit or third sector. I am aware that they vary slightly in meaning. Each of them is used by different age cohorts of members of this sector in Slovakia and they were also used by my interview partners, which is why I use them interchangeably as well. The term describes a space between primary units (such as families and individuals), state and market. According to Salamon and Anheier (1996) the term non-profit organizations refers to entities that are organized, institutionally separate from government, self-governing, involving some form of voluntary participation and do not return profits to their owners or directors (Salamon and Anheier,1996, pp. 2-3)

My interview partners are from the non-profit organizations, and many are or have also been directly involved in formal politics. They all came from or through Civic and Advocacy Organizations, or so called new social movements, to use the classification according to The International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations (Salamon and Anheimer 1996) and Frič (2014). One of the main focuses of these organizations is defending the human and civil rights and interests of citizens, women, minorities, migrants, and other groups (Frič, 2014). These are the so-called new advocacy groups, which, in comparison with old advocacy groups (political parties, trade unions and professional organizations), are community oriented and focused on serving the broader community and not just their members. Although the new advocacy groups also provide service to their clients (e.g., represent clients in court), their dominant function is to influence policy to address major social issues and further the

promotion of human rights of particular vulnerable groups of society. These groups are the ones which come into closest contact with the political, as their main function is to influence policy making. This focus allowed me to have a more congruent research sample and it was also the group I was really interested in looking into those who engage in policy making, but each from a different perspective (see more in chapter 3.2. Description of the sample).

2.3 Historical context

For the historical perspective it is important to mention where Slovakia was at the time when my interviewees lived, in order to provide the context in which the third sector existed then. When my interviewees were born, Slovakia was part of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The country was under communist rule and it belonged to the eastern European bloc of countries which were satellite states of the Soviet Union. Czechoslovakia underwent a major political and social transformation in 1989 with the fall of Communism that allowed for democratic government to emerge. Massive student-led protests also took place in Czechoslovakia and contributed to the fall of Communism. A crippled but vibrant NGO sector played a massive role in these protests, as many of the revolutions' key representatives were from what can be labelled as the non-profit sector. After gaining independence, the early nineties were also a period of buoyant growth for the NGO sector (Bútora, Bútorová & Strečanský, 2012). In 1993 Czechoslovakia split peacefully in a decision that was political rather than coming from the people.

In nineties, political conditions have changed but they were under serious threat from authoritarian tendencies represented by Vladimír Mečiar[2] (this era is commonly called the era of Meciarism). To mention just a few of these tendencies, he misused state media for state propaganda, and he is blamed for corruption and botching the privatization of national property. He is also associated with having the president's son abducted and former policemen Robert Remias'[3] murder is believed to be the work of secret service police under Meciar's auspices. For all these reasons, Slovakia's accession talks to join EU and NATO have slowed down in this period.

The era of Meciarism was very crucial and had massive impact on the NGO sector as well. Seeing the authoritarian tendencies, the vibrant sector protested, and the regime retaliated by trying to diminish the size and influence of the sector. They changed the law regulating

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[2] Meciar, retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladim%C3%ADr_Me%C4%8Diar (December 28, 2020)

[3] Remias, retrieved from https://dennikn.sk/445819/vrazda-za-meciara/ (December 28, 2020)

foundations - now all foundations had to undergo a special audit by ministry of finance, state employees were dissuaded to take part at activities of NGOs and the Slovak secret service issued a statement about the NGOs being in direct opposition with the interests of the state. All of these were seen as a threat for many actors in the NGO sector (Bútora, Bútorová & Strečanský, 2012). According to the authors, they paradoxically had the opposite effect and people started to pay more attention to questions about rule of law and democracy. These efforts also helped cultivate the gradually emerging coalition against Meciarism made up of artists, students and academics that resulted in his losing the election in 1998. The NGO sector played a huge role in dissemination of information and organizing, which unified the whole sector and mobilized even more masses to attend the protests and participate in the parliamentary election of 1998.

Mečiar's regime was overturned in the hallmark election of 1998 where a pro-democratic coalition led by Mikuláš Dzurinda[4] was able to form a government, which set a pro-democratic course for the next decade of important changes – accession to the NATO and EU. This confirmed Slovakia's status of stable democracy, one that it enjoys until today. The first decade of the new millennium saw Slovakia make a huge leap towards democratic modernization and as a result Slovakia was symbolically labelled as the European tiger. A lot of progress was made, especially in terms of economic performance and international reputation, but it was also a period of sobering up in connection with the government's promises for rule of law and transparency.

Bútora, Bútorová and Strečanský say that this period was very fruitful for the NGO sector, where many new parts of the sector were starting up or booming. To name just a few: development at the local level though community organizations, expansion of service providing organizations in the field of education, health and social services, and many advocacy campaigns and research done for improvement of state policies on, for example, discrimination, energy, state service, or providing information. But this period also brought fracturing of the sector, and soul searching about the role of the NGO sector in politics and involvement in pre-election campaigning. This period also saw institutional and financial reforms in funding for NGOs, which brought about more transparent, competitive and fair environment. Thanks to a new tax assignation mechanism and availability of EU structural and other international funds, the share funding to the NGO sector increased overall. However, funds for certain type of activities or projects dried up after accession of Slovakia to the EU and posed a financial crisis for NGO sector. As a result of Slovakia's accession to the EU in

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[4] Durinda: retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikul%C3%A1%C5%A1_Dzurinda (December 28, 2020)

2004, Slovakia could no longer be using money from funds available to accession countries to map and monitor meeting accession criteria. Many other non-EU funds or donors pulled out their funding as Slovakia was perceived to be 'democratized' already and should be able to find funding internally or from other EU schemes.

Year 2006 began what would become 12 years of a regime led by Robert Fico's[5]. This could be labelled as a period of nepotism, when oligarchs and white-collar mafia were intertwined with state institutions, benefiting from unfair conditions on the market and crooked rule of law which protected 'our people' affiliated with the government. In 2020, in the wake of political crisis and massive protests that ensued after the murder of investigative journalist Jan Kodiak[6] and his fiancée Martina Konnikova. Fico was forced to step down and his party lost the following parliamentary election in 2020. All but one interview for this thesis took place after these murders.

This Fico period also saw attempts to cripple the third sector (Bútora, Bútorová & Strečanský, 2012). The repeated complaints from the NGO sector about corruption, weak rule of law and low civic participation in the policy making process resulted in an increased share of attacks on NGOs, especially advocacy focused ones. The period was also bleak from the financial point of view, as many NGOs were struggling in the wake of financial crisis that hit the NGO sector especially hard in 2009-2011. The NGO sector bounced back with the economy and played a crucial role during the Fico's government but felt the attacks on its place in society and integrity more and more. The NGO sector played a significant role in the massive protests that ensued after the murder of investigative journalist Jan Kodiak and his fiancée in March 2018. The NGO sector helped with mobilizing, organizing and communicating the protests, which were similar to those of the Velvet Revolution in 1989 in terms of size and duration. In the run up to the parliamentary election though, the representatives of NGO sector learnt its lesson from 1998 and did not support any party or coalition against Fico.

The above-mentioned political changes brought about significant societal and macroeconomic changes, but I will only mention the two that are the most relevant for this thesis. The first was massive transformation of the labor market. To illustrate it, in 1988 half of labor market was filled by the working class. It decreased to 32% by 2001 and in 2016 dropped even further to 29% (Spooky, 2019). This resulted predominantly in growing middle class jobs, which doubled in size in that period.

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[5] Fico: retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Fico (December 28, 2020)
[6] Kuciak: retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_J%C3%A1n_Kuciak (December 28, 2020)

Second, the change of political system and on the labor, market brought about massive changes in educational patterns. This was due to increased opportunities to acquire high school education with graduation certificate (matura) and increased interest in attaining university education, which is connected to intergenerational social mobility patterns. The research of Džambazovič and Gerbery (2018) showed that upward mobility is the most frequent type of social mobility process in Slovakia, however the chances are not the same for everyone. In terms of relative social mobility, women, in comparison to men, have seen a significant decrease in the share in non-qualified workers and greater expansion of the upper classes. People from the upper classes have significantly higher chances of maintaining the same status. Their research also shows that it is easier for those who are in the highest or lowest classes to maintain their status than it is for the lowest classes to move up. The move up is particularly more difficult for men no matter what class they are in.

2.4 Theoretical background

There are a few theoretical concepts that help me with interpretation of the findings that are more complex and thus need a few more than a paragraph to explain, which is why I include them here and build upon them in the results section.

Participation, engagement and being active

Optimists of the participation research claim that we are witnessing a transformation in participation form: there are more bottom-up processes and activities that pop up around neighborhoods and communities, which tend to zoom in on more focused localized single-issues or run parallel to, and independent of, political sphere altogether. Current research supports this observation, by concluding that single-issue movements (Bennet, 2005) and high internet penetration across the world strengthens the engagement of young people in public affairs who would normally be hesitant to participate (Fisher, 2012). This could actually suggest that not only is the participation of people in public affairs not in decline, but its forms diversify, and these new forms have the potential to attract new segments of the public which would not participate in traditional forms of political participation altogether.

In my research I am using a very wide understanding of the term 'participation'. It ranges from being active in school, local community, and with friends, to helping out and volunteering, through to activism (e.g., organizing protests), civic engagement (volunteering for charity), and political participation (eg. voting). Some authors (Gyárfášová & Bútorová, 2010) argue that such an understanding may reduce the sharpness of the definitions and might obscure the phenomenon rather than help its understanding. However, I believe that this holistic approach

counters the dominant and well-researched discourse on political participation and can lead to uncovering new connections and blind spots. Secondly, it fits better for my target group of leaders who are talking about their not-so-distant youth when they were, for example, not allowed to participate (e.g. you must be 18 or older to vote in elections) or were not taken as relevant partners because of their age. Thirdly, through other projects I have observed that young people have a vague idea about what the terms participation or engagement means and often associate it with the "professional youngsters" who are politically engaged and socialized (e.g. in a political party, organizing protests, etc.) based on publicly circulated imagery. Lastly, many models and typologies do not distinguish between the individual and collective levels. It seems relevant, especially in the wake of postmodernism, during which individual action receives more attraction than collective action, to look at the importance of individual as well as collective action.

The typology of Ekman and Amnå (2012) builds on previous typologies of other authors (Verba, Nie, Teorell in Ekman and Amnå, 2012) and captures the complexity of the phenomena in greater detail within a single model without reducing it. The model includes activities that are carried out on individual and collective levels and encompasses the so-called pre-political social participation such as membership in clubs, youth or school councils or affiliation with lifestyle groups. Thus, it includes activities that are not a priori aimed at influencing politics, but they provide a safe space for practicing and have the potential to grow into being political. Last of all, this interpretation brings in a very important dimension of those who are disengaged. Though this aspect is not relevant for my thesis as it focuses on those who are engaged, this interpretation is nevertheless more inclusive and points out an important blind spot of the other typologies.

Figure 1: Typology of different forms of disengagement, involvement, civic engagement and political participation

Non-participation (disengagement)		Civil participation		Manifest political participation	
Active form (anti-political)	**Passive form (apolitical)**	**Involvement (attention)**	**Civic engagement (action)**	**Formal political participation**	**Legal/illegal activism (extra-parliamentary participation)**
Individual forms					
•Non-voting •Avoiding following news about political issues •Avoid talking about politics	•Non-voting •Perceiving politics as uninteresting and unimportant •Political passivity	•Taking interest in politics and society •Perceiving politics as important	•Writing to an editor •Giving money to charity •Discussing politics with friends, fora •Following news about political issues •Recycling	•Voting in elections, referenda (incl. blank voting) •Contacting political representatives •Running for, or holding public office •Donating money to political parties, organizations	legal: •Buycotting , boycotting •Signing petitions •Handing out political leaflets illegal: •Civil disobedience •Politically motivated attacks on property
Collective forms					
•Deliberate non-political lifestyles, e.g. (hedonism, consumerism •Non-political riots, reflecting frustration, alienation or social exclusion	"Non-reflected" non-political lifestyles	•Belonging to a group with societal focus •Identifying with a certain ideology, party •Life -style related involvement: music,group identity, clothes (veganism, right -wing, Skinhead scene, or left -wing anarcho-punk scene)	•Volunteering in social work (women, homeless shelter) •Charity work or faith-based community work •Activity within community based organizations	•Being a member of a political party, organization, trade union or attending their activities	legal: •Involvement in new social movements, forums •Participating in demonstrations, strikes, protests illegal: •Obstructing roads, railways •Squatting buildings •Confrontations with political opponents, police

Source: Ekman/Amnå 2012, p.295

The model distinguishes three basic forms: manifest political participation, civic participation and non-participation or disengagement.

Non-participation includes that which is done actively (e.g. non-voting as a political stance) or passively - disengagement due to being apolitical. Civic participation covers a broad spectrum of activities of ordinary people, whose aim is to influence circumstances in society which impact and are relevant for others, outside of their circle of family and friends. On one hand that includes giving something attention, like being involved in a social group, following politics, or identifying with a certain lifestyle. On the other hand, it involves being civically engaged to achieve some public benefit, to co-create and co-manage public affairs and to contribute to solving social problems. These include donating money, volunteering or following the news.

Manifest political participation is associated with action and is geared towards political actors in order to influence the political system as such. Ekman and Amnå distinguish between formal political participation like attending elections, running for office, participation in protests (in other typologies known as conventional political participation) or as activism like boycotting products, signing petitions, or participating in protest and strikes (also known as unconventional political participation).

Bourdieu and habitus, capital and social space

When reconstructing the selected case, it came to me that Bourdieu's concept of habitus, different forms of capitals and social space helps me to further understand the case, as they are central to understanding the concept of social class and its formation. Here I will elaborate on these ideas, but I would like to highlight that I do not attempt to describe in full Bourdieu's concept of social theory, rather just aspects relevant for this thesis.

Habitus is a "system of dispositions common to all products of the same conditionings" (Bourdieu, 2000, p.59). It is like soft rules of action that we don't verbalize or note down but react to in the same way for that particular environment - that is, if we are from the same position in social space. But these are soft rules, they are not normative in the sense of explicit rules to follow and they also change over the course of time, which is why I think it is so challenging to appropriate a new position in social space. Social space shows positions of people to each other (relationality) based on the various types of capital. People's position in social space gives them resources for the action which is guided by habitus.

Habitus comes out through practice (actions/what we do) and allows individuals to perceive, decipher and act in situations based on past experience and structures that govern that

experience. Habitus ensures that we respond to a particular situation 'correctly' without even knowing how. Habitus tends to be homogenous across social class, because the members went through similar experiences and were exposed to similar conditions. In Bourdieu's theory they are not static structures, but they can form from a space where people have common interests and want to work together, which can change over time.

Habitus is inscribed through the body; it is the central mechanism of acquiring habitus. People are social agents *"endowed with habitus, inscribed in their bodies by past experiences"* (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 138). The body is in permanent interaction with its environment, be it physical or social space and thus it is exposed, shaped, and conditioned by the physical and cultural conditions it develops and grows up in.

At this point Bourdieu also makes an interesting point that "the degree to which the body is connected to the world, determines the involvement and attention to the world" (Bourdieu, 2000, p141). This would suggest that those who are disconnected or marginalized from the society and thus are not exposed, will not be disposed to engage in the world, thereby will be furthermore disconnected (creating a vicious circle). I believe Bourdieu had marginalized communities in mind when he was writing this, but I think it can be applicable also for young people and participation. If young people are kept out of meaningfully participating at their school, community or country, they are going to be disinterested and disengaged in these institutions as well. They are not learning the rules of the game, and the later they connect to them the harder it will be to understand them and the more lost they will be since the rules are constantly changing (in symbolic interaction between body and environment). In homogenous groups where people are products of similar conditions and conditioning, they mutually legitimate each other's responses and comply with the collective will because they are mutually 'keeping each other in check' through collective expectations. *"This way the heritage and the system gets perpetuated - the dominant groups ensure their own perpetuation"* (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 156).

Bourdieu and academia

Scientists and researchers are always partly dependent on the structure of their field and *"therefore on the history of the positions constituting the field and of the dispositions they favor"* (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 99). Every field is characterized by institutionalizing a *"point of view in things and in habitus"* (Bourdieu, 2000, p.99) like dress-code or manners, which also defines the space for legitimate discussion and regulates entry to the field.

Bourdieu then goes on to say that scientific worlds are like other social worlds in that they have a certain distribution of power and capital. However, unlike other social worlds, they are constrained by reason instituted in the structures and dispositions. The power struggle is thus also different: it's about winning the monopoly over scientific authority which is framed by symbolic power and technical competence.

Bourdieu posits that the objective reality simply refers to what everyone in the field explicitly or implicitly considers as such and is instituted through the work of objectification, through self-censorship of the field and through habitus. The objective structures which determine what is still within the scope of the field and what lies beyond, and which also determine human actions *"arise in the relationship between habitus and the field"* (Bourdieu, 2000, p 115). In other words, the actions that are produced in the field are determined by the specific logic of the field, its structure, and dispositions, determined by its history.

Acquisition and transformation of habitus

Acquisition of habitus or specific dispositions (tendency to act certain way; habitus is the choice of positions according to one's dispositions) are not mechanical and forced but are carried out through a series of constraints embedded in the structure of the field and are enforced by the agent her/himself and institutions.

According to Bourdieu people suppress their ambitions and desires to adapt to new invisible structures and buy into the game (illusio) if they believe the game is worth playing. Bourdieu says that transformation is possible in the process of orienting him/herself in relation to others. The motivation to suppress one's ambitions and desires comes out of the search for recognition, for symbolic capital (glory, honor, credit, reputation, fame). This search for recognition will perpetuate as long as the person believes it is worth the cost. The transformation or acquiring of alternative habitus is possible only with reteaching and counter training, which is without pain.

The individual chances and expectations coming out of habitus are adapted to the objective chances they have. Thus people adjust their interests, desires and readiness to invest accordingly to the chances they perceive to have, which are also influenced by interventions from the family and educational system. To summarize:

> *"the power (capital, social energy) governs the potentialities objectively offered to each*
> *player, her possibilities and impossibilities, her degrees of empowerment, of power-to-*

be, and at the same time her desire to power, which being fundamentally realistic, is roughly adjusted to the agent's actual empowerment." (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 217)

3. Methodology and research approach

The third chapter deals with the methodology, research design and methods used in this research. I outline the basic assumptions guiding my research, research strategy and focus on presenting the research design. I also present the steps of data collection and its analysis, while reflecting on the decisions made along the way.

Figure 2: Summary of the research approach

Constructivist, interpretative paradigm

Qualitative research design

◊ Method of data collection: biographical narrative interview according to Fritz Schütze

◊ Method of data interpretation: hermeneutic case reconstruction and global analysis according to Gabriele Rosenthal

Field work:

Total number of interviews - 5 (3 men and 2 women)

◊ June-August 2016 (1)

◊ October-November 2018 (3)

◊ March 2019 (1)

Location: Bratislava and a smaller town close to Bratislava

Target group:

◊ Leading representatives from Civic and Advocacy Organizations in Slovakia engaged in policy making in the field of civic and human rights, many of whom had also been directly involved in formal politics

◊ 35 - 40 years old at the time of interview - fall of Communism in early childhood, fall of Meciarism in teenage phase of life, accession to the EU in early twenties and all but one of the interviews took place after the murder of investigative journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová

3.1 Methodology and research design

I was interested in lives of the lead representatives who engage in policy making in the area of civic and human rights in Slovakia. I looked at the path through their biography and at what were the experiences and context that shaped their lives. Additionally, the aim was to reconstruct the subjective meaning that guided their actions and the choices they made along the way. To that end, I aspired to uncover patterns of involvement, engagement and participation and thus offer a deeper understanding of the participation phenomena (political participation and civic engagement).

The goal of this research was to bring the perspective of the interview partners into participation research. I looked at how the interview partners constructed their meaning of life and tried to understand and reconstruct their interpretation of the situations. This research was based on the assumption that reality is socially constructed, and individuals seek understanding of the world by ascribing meaning to the actions of others. They construct the subjective meaning by socially and historically contextualizing it and then negotiating it in interaction with others. Furthermore it was my understanding that people develop multiple ways of looking at the reality and thus as a researcher I looked for complexity, rather than reduction of the phenomena. In order to reconstruct the subjective meaning I acknowledged that as a researcher I needed to position myself into the perspective and situation of the actor and in the research constantly reflect on my own role in the process. Looking at the goals of the research and the basic assumptions made, the constructivist and interpretative paradigm, and qualitative research design was the most suitable research approach.

In terms of theory development process, the interpretative research is characterized by a bottom-up research strategy when generating knowledge. The theories are developed in cyclical process, where stages of data collection are followed by interpretation, which inspire going back into the field and which guide the choice of other interview partners until theoretical saturation. Thus, the theory emerges from the data (Froschauer & Lueger, 2009). In my case, I carried out the first interview in summer of 2016, then analyzed it and due to other work and personal projects had a two-year break and went into the field and carried out three other interviews, interpreted them and went back into the field one more time in March 2019.

I decided to use abductive research strategy, which is typical for a reconstructive research approach mainly because neither the inductive nor deductive reasoning helped me to answer questions I intended to research. My research started with implicit assumptions about the phenomenon. I had a feeling that young people do not just appear at the age of 18 ready to

participate without any experience prior to it. It was a feeling which was based on my preliminary observations of engagement of young people. However, the whole process was exploratory as I went into the process with no theories or hypotheses to be confirmed at the end. Rather the hypotheses and theories were developed and confirmed or rejected in the process of case reconstruction and then generalized in a case structure uncovering the social structure. At the beginning of the research, I was hoping that it will deliver not only conclusions about the individual case of participation (microlevel) but will provide insights about general structure of the phenomenon (macrolevel).

"Dieses Fallverstehen läßt sich aber nicht durch Deduktion aus der anzuwendenden Problemlösung gewinnen, auch nicht - wie gezeigt - durch induktive empirische Generalisierung über fallbeschreibende Meßdaten, sondern nur durch rekonstruktive, dem abduktiven Schließen homologe Strukturgeneralisierung auf der Basis einer Operation der Fallrekonstruktion (Oevermann, 2002, p. 169).

The choice of qualitative research design was also guided by pragmatic reasons. Most of the participation research used quantitative methods to study participation in Slovakia (Bútorová 2017, Gyárfášová & Bútorová 2010, Rada mládeže Slovenska 2018, Správa o mládeži 2018). Thus, to provide a fuller picture and deeper understanding of participation I saw an added value in offering a perspective that is rarely represented in the context of Slovak research on participation.

Moreover, the quantitative participation studies often relied on similar instruments (for example questions from the European Social Survey) and mostly looked at the traditional political participation activities like voting, attending protests, and being a member of a political party and less at informal types of political involvement or civic engagement. Thus, only a part of the phenomenon was analyzed.

The consequence of using these instruments was that it create a biased picture about the participation patterns and determinants of participation, as certain populations were under- or mis-represented. They got labelled as disengaged yet in reality they chose different forms of participation and engagement. This was particularly true of women, minorities and young people. According to Walther "*gender differences are less correlated with the propensity to participate and more with the type of the activity. Women are more likely be engaged in a non- or informal type of activity rather than a formal one*" (Walther, 2011, p. 214). Roose und Harris (2015) for example found out that young Muslims in Australia prioritize local and informal actions over traditional forms of political participation within organizations and initiatives.

Additionally, we have seen that the interest of youth in formal politics like membership in parties and general elections had been decreasing over the last 15 years, however this trend was also counterbalanced by an increasing involvement in single-issue movements like Occupy and anti-World Trade Organization demonstration (Bennet, 2005). These examples illustrated that some groups were likely to be underrepresented in the traditional participation research.

To summarize, the constructivist and interpretative paradigm, and qualitative research methods were a suitable way to address my research questions. Additionally, there was a gap in participation research and this paper hoped to help provide deeper understanding of the concept of participation and engagement in the Slovak context. Lastly, qualitative research design gave voice to populations that are often underrepresented in traditional participation research.

3.2 Description of the sample and access to field

I carried out five interviews with three men and two women. The interviews took place between June 2016 and March 2019. One took place in June and August 2016, three took place in October and November 2018, and the last one took place in March 2019. Four interviews took place in Bratislava and one took in a smaller city close to Bratislava (for the purposes of protecting the identity of interview partners I do not want to be more specific). The shortest interview took 1 hour and 40 minutes, the longest one 4 hours and 20 minutes. One of the interviews took 3 sittings, others were completed in one sitting.

At the very beginning of the research, I carried out one more interview that is not included in this study, because it was broken off by the interview partner prematurely. Based on the analysis, which is labelled as Case Zero in the results chapter, I concluded that my interview partner was put off by the interview situation and the type of interview framed by the opening question asking for family history. Since then, apart from changing the phrasing of the opening question, I also tried to be more reflective, open and reactive towards my interview partners, especially at the beginning of the interview situation in order for the opening to be less of a negotiation and power struggle. When arranging the interviews, I also explained more about the course of the interview, making sure I mentioned it will be a narrative interview, which differs from other forms of interviews in that mostly open questions will be asked.

When arranging the interviews, I reached out to one more interview partner but that interview never took place. The initial request for this interview was done by my friend - a gatekeeper - and the interviewee agreed to exchange email addresses for the purpose of arranging an

interview. But after I followed up with more details about the research, the person never got back to me despite sending two reminder emails over the course of a month. I met her briefly about a year later and she recognized my name and apologized saying she was busy at that time. This is plausible explanation, and it could be that the person simply overcommitted. But based on my experience with Case Zero it is also possible that this type of interview, which can be very personal and almost intimate, does deter interview partners in this particular field since many of them are known to either the general public or professionals working in the field. This hypothesis was supported by an observation that two of my interview partners, which were not my acquaintances explicitly made remarks something along the lines of "*I didn't think this* [family history and personal life] *belong here"* and a third one opened his narration by saying how uncomfortable the situation was for him.

I interviewed leading representatives who engaged in policy making in civic and human rights sphere in Slovakia. To narrow down the scope of my research, I chose to interview a range of representatives who promote civic and human rights issues from both the third (non-profit) sector and public sector (members of parliament or member of political parties who were running for office). All of my interview partners were at some point in their career part of civic and advocacy organizations belonging to third sector. They were the so-called new advocacy organizations, whose main function was to influence policy to address major social issues and further the promotion of human rights on behalf of particular vulnerable groups of society. Here I would like to explain the distinction I make between public sector organizations according to their function (Frič, 2014). The typology had another dimension, which was not relevant for my analysis, thus it was not explained here. Based on the function of the nonprofit organizations we distinguish two types. Those that focused on providing service to their clients (e.g. helped them with integration, represented them in court etc.), are called service organizations. Those that primarily focused on advocacy in favor of, for example, furthering the rights of women or particular ethnic groups, were called advocacy organizations. Although most organizations covered both service and advocacy functions, they typically had a primary focus (although it often changes in the course of the time). The advocacy organizations were the ones which came into closest contact with the political, as their main function was to influence policy making. This focus allowed me to have a more congruent research sample and thus more comparable results. However, as you can see in the next paragraph, my sample included interview partners whose professional paths also offered enough variation to provide the different perspective necessary for contrasting cases.

In terms of occupation, I interviewed people who were actively setting the agenda and legal framework, be it from the perspective of third (non-governmental) or public sector (political

representatives and state employees) working to promote civic and human rights issues. I interviewed persons who have dedicated their whole life to working in the third sector only (be it on the research and advocacy side or advocacy and working with clients' side). I interviewed a person who spent time in public sector and then went to work in third sector, first working with clients and then transferred to working directly on (research and) advocacy. I also interviewed a person who had both business and third sector (advocacy) experience and then transitioned to public functions. I also interviewed a person who transitioned between third and public sectors repeatedly. Here is a summary:

- Third sector – research ➡ third sector - research and advocacy
- Third sector – working directly with clients ➡ advocacy
- Business and third sector - advocacy ➡ business and public sector
- Public sector ➡ third sector - working directly with clients ➡ advocacy
- Third sector ➡ public sector ➡ third sector ➡ public sector

In terms of civic and human rights issues they dealt with, I interviewed people who cover discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and social origin, and general defenders of human rights. I was not able to arrange an interview with those defending sexual orientation and identity minorities, which could be viewed as limitation of this research.

In terms of age, at the time of interview all my interview partners were 35-40 years old and thus could be considered belonging to the same generation when looking at the events that have shaped their upbringing and socialization as well as their involvement in NGO sector. These events include but are not limited to the fall of Communism, the fall of Meciarism, and the murder of an investigative journalist and his fiancée, Jan Kodiak and Martina Konnikova[7]. On one hand they all experienced the fall of Communism in their early childhood (they were 5-10 years old) and the fall of Meciarism[8] in teenage phase of life (they were 15-20 years old). All but one interview took place after the murder of Jan Kodiak and Martina Konnikova. The three interviews took place 7-8 months after the murders and the last interview took place a year after the murders.

The choice of interview partners followed the principles of theoretical sampling. I started with defining the group of people I wanted to interview based on an assumption that these are the

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[7] the first interview took place before the murder of the investigative journalist
[8] meciarism refers to an era of governement of Vladimír Mečiar who was the prime minister of Slovak republic from 1993-1998. In this period, especially towards the end, his government was plagued with political and corruption scandals, his administration was labelled autocratic and resulted in isolation of Slovakia in regards to the EU and NATO.

people who are directly engaged in policy making on the civil and human rights issues. Based on my observation these were the ones who came through various roles in third (nonprofit) sector, and some went into politics or administration (public sector), but some did not, and I found this dynamic very intriguing.

My first interview partner was a friend of a friend, whom I had briefly met before and knew that that person had experience with both nonprofit and public sector and was working on promotion of human rights on behalf of a particular vulnerable group in society. I was being intentionally vague in these descriptions so as to avoid possible identification of my interview partners, since the pool of possible interview partners was limited. The next three biographers were then selected by a snowball system, and they were arranged by two gatekeepers who made the connections.

To achieve minimal and maximum contrast in cases (Froschauer & Lueger 2009) I chose to interview those who had different perspectives on policy making, be it advocacy built on research or advocacy, built on direct work with clients (service organizations), or from the position of being an elected representative. After the first three interviews I also wanted to interview people with different thematic focus - different human rights agenda for contrast, so my last two interviews were with people who focus on promotion of human rights on behalf of different vulnerable group of society. With the fifth interview I felt like I have reached a certain degree of theoretical saturation that was appropriate for Master thesis and I wasn't getting new insights for my analytical framework and theories.

3.3 Method of data collection: Narrative interview by Fritz Schütze (1983)

The choice of narrative interview as a form of data collection was directly linked to the goal of my research. The goal of this research was to bring the perspective of the interview partners into participation research. I wanted to look at how the interview partners constructed their meaning of life and to understand the particular perspective they took on it and how it developed over their life and how it got presented in the context of the interview. The narrative interview best achieves this goal. The nature of the opening question as well as the follow up questions (focused on producing narrations rather than argumentations and justifications; see next paragraph) gave the biographer a lot of freedom to choose what they wanted to talk about and what they wanted to leave out. The interview situation context therefore gave them the space to bring their own perspective into explanation of the topic and gave me, as a researcher, insight into the relevance structure of the phenomena from the perspective of the interview partner.

Each interview began with an opening question that invited the interview partner to give a full narration of events and experiences in their life. The precise formulation of the opening question changed over the course of the first two interviews. Based on reflection, I ultimately settled on using the following opening question for the latter three interviews: "*Today's interview is about how people become active in their field or community, especially in the field of human rights. Please tell me your life story. Please mention everything that comes to your mind and you consider relevant*". The exact working of all questions are listed in the Appendix 3: Interviewer's guide.

In the first interview I asked the biographer how <u>young</u> people become <u>leaders</u> in their field or community. In the second interview I avoided the words 'young' and 'leader' but did not specify the field of human rights. The reason why I discarded the word 'young' was based on a micro-analysis of the opening sequence of the first interview, where my partner, right at the beginning, clearly distanced himself from being defined as young. At first, when coming up with the opening question, I aimed to reconstruct the interviewee's story, which takes place mostly during her/his youth (childhood, adolescence, youth and young adulthood), but at the time of the interview my partners were 35-40 years old and could be insulted by that label. In the case of my first interview partner, it was taken as flattery, which also created specific dynamics of the interview.

Similarly, my first interview partner disassociated himself with the label 'leader' already in the pre-interview phase. Since this phase was not recorded, I analyzed and reflected on it based on my notes of the interview situation, which I wrote into the memo right after the interview. He said that there were other people who were better candidates for being labelled as leaders and gave me their names as a recommendation for interview partners. In the reflection phase, after the interview was transcribed and analyzed, I came to the conclusion that the term 'young […] leaders' framed the discussion to a great extent and posed an additional pressure on the interviewee to justify their position towards this label. On top of that, this framing could have led to using more argumentations instead of narrations as a way of presenting the biographer's life story, in an attempt to position themselves in the context of the interview situation. Therefore, I replaced the word leader in the second interview and asked broadly about being active in their field and community.

After the second interview, I decided to add the phrase 'especially in the field of human rights', to specify my field of interest directly in the opening question. All interview partners were briefed about my research interest in the phase of arranging the interview and I specified that

I am interviewing those who are active in policy making in the field of civic and human rights, but I felt like it was important to also have that framing in the opening statement. Reflecting on it now, it might have been unnecessary. It also framed the interview in a certain way. However, I made this decision based on feedback I received in a class when talking about the selection of my interview partners. They commented that the sample could be too diverse to compare and contrast meaningfully. In hindsight, upon reading more about sample selection in a qualitative interview, I perceive it differently but due to this concern, I included this statement in my opening question as justification and explanation for their selection. Unlike the above-mentioned labels, this phrase did not become a point of discussion or interaction, either directly in the interview or the pre/post-interview phase, leading me to conclude that the interviewees felt like it accurately applied to them.

In the narrative interview it is important that the partners are prompted to provide accounts of their life in a form of a narration, rather than argumentation or justifications, which more often than not provide general statements taken over from public discourse or legitimizations of their own actions and decisions and not their own personal sense of their life and events. (Rosenthal, 1993)

In my research I decided to narrow the opening question down to ask only about their life story, not the full family history, as I believe it gave respondents the power to decide whether to draw in family history or leave it out, or whether they want to focus on their own history, say of their professional achievements they deem relevant in answering the main research question. It proved to be the right strategy in this case, as some have decided to give a full narration of their story from "I was born into a family…" and their narration included the family history as well, and others focused in the opening narration on what they considered were the relevant experiences, be it professional, educational or personal challenges in their life. This provided me with additional insight into the relevance structures of my interview partners and provided depth for my analysis.

I tried my best not to interrupt the main narration, which was prompted by the initial opening question, by any further questions to give as much space for self-presentation and relevance setting by the biographer as possible. I tried to encourage story telling by eliciting active listening cues such as 'mmhmm', nonverbal signals such as nodding and sometimes prolonged periods of silence, which prompted the interview partners to continue speaking. The main narration phase lasted anywhere between 5 minutes and 25 seconds to 1 hour and 7 minutes.

In the second part of the interview, follow up questions were asked that were directly pertinent to the account provided by the interview partner (immanente Nachfragen). However, again, the aim of these questions was to generate narration and encourage my interview partner to provide a greater detail on the already mentioned event, experience or period in their life under discussion.

At the very end of the interview, I had a set of questions that I asked all the respondents regardless of the subjects covered in the interview (exmanente Nachfragen). These included their reflection on how they believe people become active leaders in their community, as well as whether they think there are regional differences, or who were very important persons in their life history. For a full list, please see the list of questions in Appendix 3: Interview guide. However, I did not use them for the analysis presented here, as they became redundant, or were too specific and off topic for my analysis and interpretation.

The product of the interviews were audio recordings. These were then transcribed word-for-word into interview transcripts (disregarding the rules of grammatically correct written language) and so texts became the data for analysis. Rules of transcription are outlined in Appendix 4: Transcription rules.

3.4 Method of data analysis: global analysis and hermeneutic case reconstruction by Gabriele Rosenthal (1993, 2005)

I decided to use hermeneutic case reconstruction method mainly to stay within the same methodological perspective. When conceptualizing her procedure of hermeneutic case construction, Rosenthal drew from Ulrich Oevermann's objective hermeneutics, Fritz Schütze's method of narrative and text analysis, and Wolfram Fischer's thematic field analysis (Rosenthal, 1994). Therefore, it seemed to me that using this multistep analysis procedure, which took into account not only the accounts of biographers but also the biographical construction process, was more suitable for my research interest.

Firstly, all five interviews underwent cursory global analysis. Based on the transcripts and memos that were prepared after each interview, I analyzed the biographic data as well as reconstructed their life story and history. I summarized the main themes that were present in the interview, gave overview of the participation story and highlighted the historical events relevant in their lives. I contrasted and compared them with the other cases.

Before explaining the actual steps of the hermeneutic case reconstruction, I would like to explain the two basic assumptions of this procedure: reconstructive analysis and sequentiality (Rosenthal, 1994). The former means that the main approach to analyzing the data lies in reconstruction of the structure of the particular sequence and from that the general structure was inferred. The main method of analysis I used was reconstruction rather than sub-summation.

The second basic assumption was sequentiality in the process of case reconstruction. The reconstruction of the sequence "*starts from the assumption that every action represents a choice between the alternatives*" (Rosenthal, 1994, p. 5). These alternatives were then evaluated based on "*the range of possibilities open to the subject in a certain situation, the selection he or she makes, the possibilities he or she ignores and the consequences of his or her decision*". (Rosenthal, 1994, p. 6).

As described above, the method of abductive reasoning was used to arrive at the conclusions. Firstly, hypotheses were formulated based on the data present in the first sequence. In the next sequence these were confirmed or rejected and in the next sequence the process repeated itself again. Secondly, the researcher tried to deduce the next possible developments by creating follow-up hypotheses based on the data they observed in the previous sequences and based on the hypotheses that were developed. Thirdly, the hypotheses were then confirmed by contrasting them with the actual data in the next sequence. This process was repeated throughout all sequences and the structural hypothesis describing the general structure of the case emerged out of the sequences. The sequential principle of analysis is applied in the analysis of biographical data, and in both reconstruction of the life story and life history (steps one through three of the analysis, see below).

The steps of hermeneutic case reconstruction analysis (Rosenthal, 1994, p. 6-7) are:
> 1. "*Analysis of biographical data*
> 2. *Text and thematic field analysis - reconstruction of the life story*
> 3. *Reconstruction of the case - life history*
> 4. *Microanalysis of the individual text segments*
> 5. *Contrastive comparison of life story and history - case structure*"
> Rosenthal's later text (2005) also includes step 6 of the analysis:
> 6. *Building of typology*

In the first step, 'the analysis of biographical data', the most important biographical data were noted and written in the actual chronology of events in life. Gathering the actual chronology

allowed me to compare the life event and how narrators ordered the experiences in the matter of importance to them (in step 2) as well as to see which narrations match with the given biographical data and how (in step 3).

The second step, 'the thematic field analysis', aimed to *"reconstruct the form and structure of the narrated life story, i.e. the way in which it is temporally and thematically ordered in the interview."* (Rosenthal, 1994, p. 8). This step allowed me to look at the order in which the experiences were presented as well as which experiences and events were presented and in what thematic context. In this stage of analysis, the opening narration was separated into sequences based on the following criteria: change of theme or subject being covered, change of speaker (interviewer vs. narrator), and change in types of texts (Textsorten). In regard to types of texts, I distinguished between narration, argumentation and description as three basic forms of presentation.

> *"**Narrations** refer to single sequences of events from the past. Sequences of actual or fictitious occurrences, which are related to one another through a series of temporal or causal links. **Descriptions**: „..[sic] the decisive feature distinguishing them from narrative is that descriptions present static structures" (Kallmeyer & Schütze, 1977:201). **Argumentations**: abstracted elements occurring outside the story-telling sequence - theorizing: declarations of general idea. They show the narrator´s general orientation at the moment."* (Rosenthal, 1994, p. 8)

In the process of analysis I also distinguished between three types of narrations: reporting (biographer talks about a chain of events without going into detail), stories (biographer picks and retells an individual event) and evaluation (which are argumentations with narrations, they serve the purpose of emphasizing the relevance of that statement following or proceeding it) (Rosenthal, 2005).

After sequencing, hypotheses were formulated and verified or rejected in the next sequences until the end of the opening statement. The reason to look at narrations was because they were accounts of past experiences and allowed us to look at them from the perspective of the past, whereas argumentations provide the insight on the events from our current perspective (Rosenthal, 1994). Thus, the main goal of this stage was not to analyze the experiences themselves, but to inspect the way in which themes are presented, how the experiences were presented, and why this way and not in any other way.

In the third step, reconstruction of the case - life history, *"the biographical data and experiences are contrasted with the narrations and self-interpretations of the biographer."* (Rosenthal 1994, p. 7). They are also contextualized in the historical context, in my case, for example, the fall of Communism or Meciarism. The main goal of this step is to reconstruct the *"perspective of the past, to reconstruct the biographical meaning which the experiences had at that time when they happened."* (Rosenthal, 1994, p. 7). To be specific, in my research in step 2 (thematic field analysis), I reconstructed at which point of their self-presentation did the biographers talk about which side of the barricade in the fight against Meciarism they were on and in what thematic context did this narration arise. In the third step, when reconstructing life history, I looked at when this identification of affiliation against Meciarism happened in their life and what other events took place and were relevant around the same time.

Similarly, in step two I looked at when the interview partners talked about their first formative experience with the given minority and in context of which themes. In the third step of the analysis, I looked at in which point of their life did this happen and what other experiences were important. In the reconstruction of the life history, I looked at milestones that were personally as well as historically significant.

In the fourth step, 'microanalysis of the individual text segments', sequential analysis of individual text segments took place. These segments were selected from either the opening narration or alternatively from the second part of the interview where follow-up questions are asked. The latter ones are typically segments, which seem to contradict the developed hypotheses or where we think something was going on. In the first three steps of the hermeneutic case reconstruction, hypotheses about the meaning of the experiences in the life history and evaluations of their live story, and their mutual dependence, were developed. These are now checked against those gained from the sequential analysis of micro-text segments.

The fifth step, 'contrastive comparison of life story and history' - case structure, gave an opportunity to compare the different perspectives provided in the accounts of the narrated and lived life, and to analyze it against mechanisms of selecting the stories to tell. To illustrate it with an example from my research, my interview partner mentioned she wasn't civically engaged during her high school years, yet from the analysis of life history it became clear that she took part in student led protests and was a member of the student council at high school. This comparison allowed me to look at what function did such presentation of life story fulfil and what biographical experiences led to such self-presentation. The contrasting comparison

helped me, in the end, to uncover the general rules and structure of the discrepancies between the story that is lived and that which is told.

After the individual case reconstruction is completed, it is possible, based on this case reconstruction, to come up with a typology for a particular research question (step 6 - building a typology). In my case that would be to look at the subjective meaning and relevance of participation in the lives of professionals working in human rights NGOs. To do this is beyond the scope of this research and thus I have only looked at the reconstructed cases to compare and to contrast with the aim to deepen the understanding and contextualize the case within broader perspective.

3.5 Quality control

To control the quality and rigorousness of my work (of qualitative research) I took a number of steps, I felt were important to contribute to the trustworthiness of my conclusions.

In this research, I leaned on quality criteria as defined by Froschauer and Lueger (2009). In their understanding *"Qualität ist dabei ein prozessuales Kriterium: Sie ist nicht einfach einem Ergebnis inhärent, sondern muss an vielen Stellen des Forschungsprozesses systematisch angestrebt werden."* (Froschauer & Lueger, 2009, p. 201). In my thesis I employed quality control on three levels: methodology, research process and the process of scientific inquiry.

On the methodological level to the maximum possible extent, I tried to systematically question and keep my preconceived ideas about the concepts at bay, be it in the interview situation or when analyzing. To decrease the influence of the researcher and to get multitude of perspectives in, I tried to interpret the data in a team however this was possible only at 3 occasions. Most of the analytical work was done independently, which was definitely a shortcoming of this research.

I carried out extensive sequential analysis of the data, be it in the biographical data analysis, thematic field analysis or the microanalysis of the individual text segments to systematically confirm and reject hypotheses developed within the material. I also brought in the perspective of the context and looked at the life story and history and comparatively contrasted them, which helped to look at the *"two sides of the one coin"* (Rosenthal, 1994, p. 5). I then compared the hypotheses produced in these steps against the hypotheses from the microanalysis of the segments. All of these steps brought in multitude of perspectives, which helped increase the reliability of my conclusions.

At the level of research process, it was <u>organized in cycles</u>. I carried out three cycles of data collection and analysis to reach theoretical saturation. Throughout the process I allowed for enough reflection phases and with the help of memos I reflected on each interview. This resulted, for example, in adjusting the wording of the opening question (see section on 3.3 Method of data collection) and my own positioning and behavior in the field as a researcher. I also followed principles of theoretical sampling when selecting my interview partners. As depicted in the chapter 3.2 Description of the sample and field access I chose interview partners with different professional paths as well as different thematic focus, to allow for similar but different research material with enough potential for comparison, variation and contrasting.

At the level of scientific inquiry my aim was to contribute to the current research on participation in Slovakia by carrying out a qualitative study (as already mentioned in the beginning most of the participation research relies on quantitative data analysis), which focused on populations and themes that were often underrepresented in traditional participation research (civic and human rights issues).

The principle of transparency of the research process was and still is one I value greatly and this is very important. Thus this paper aimed to describe the steps of data collection, the interview context, transcription rules, steps of data analysis and literature sources in great detail. To that end, I also talk about problems and shortcoming of the research I encountered along the way and how I addressed them, and those that still remain as points of critique.

Applying this idea to the structure of the thesis itself, I tried my best to make the overall structure of this text as easy to read, follow and understand as possible. My argumentation should be sound and clear, supported by relevant citations from my interview partners to support my argumentation and conclusions.

Finally, in order to uphold the ethical principles of good research, I anonymized all data, be it name of the persons, locations, dates and specific events that could lead to uncovering the identity of my interview partners. Name of the cities, other than Bratislava, were changed or omitted and the new names have no connection to their actual names. Substitute names of people were given according to how they appear in the Slovak name calendar starting on January 2[9]. Female names were given to the female interview partners and male names to the male interview partners.

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[9] http://kalendar.aktuality.sk/meniny/

4. Results

The fourth part of the thesis presents the results of the research. The main part of this section is dedicated to the reconstruction of the selected case of Karina. According to Rosenthal (2005), after the individual case reconstruction is completed, it is then possible, to come up with a typology for a particular research question, which in my case was the subjective meaning and relevance of civic engagement and participation in the lives of young professionals (35-40 years old) who promote human rights.

True typology, as Rosenthal meant it, would require full case reconstruction of the other cases which is beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, what I did was to come up with general structure of the case and context. The other interviews underwent global analysis. I analyzed the biographic data and themes as well as the course of the interview, and for each case summarized the participation story and relevant themes and context. I contrasted and compared the participation stories as well as the themes and contextual events with the main case of Karina. The first three cases were presented in greater detail, as they were the interviews with representatives coming from the same human rights area (working with a particular minority). The last two interviews were with representatives working in different human rights fields and the aim was to compare and contrast them in order to better contextualize the findings.

At the very beginning of my research, I carried out one more interview that was not described in the sample, but it was very interesting and good learning experience for me as a researcher, and it shaped the reminder of the research. That is why I include it in this section, with the label case zero.

Drahoslav: Participation as a means of finding a sense of belonging and constructive force to channel the generalized anger against the other

> *"the terrible years in high-school these were truly the: the fundamental reason why I stared to that led me to want to revolt against all figures of authority"* (excerpt from the opening narration)

At the very beginning of the research, I carried out one more interview that I have not included in this study, but I think it is nevertheless interesting to be analyzed briefly. This very first interview ended within 10 minutes. The opening narration lasted five minutes and 30 seconds. Based on the micro-analysis of the interaction in an interpretation group, I concluded that the interview was cut short because my interview partner, Drahoslav, was put off by the interview situation and by the opening question asking for family and life history. Since the interview was cut short, I could not gather any biographical data and it made sense to do only a fine analysis of the opening narration and a rough thematic field analysis and draw conclusions from them.

Drahoslav had a childhood and family history, which he was not ready to talk about. I felt the discomfort from the beginning of his narration, as he opened his narration with "ok, this was the question (2)" and then followed with a statement about his parents: "I was born in hospital in X town11 to: to two persons named Milada and Silvester". The family history was mentioned right at the beginning and so was therefore central to his story. Very soon he made me aware that his parents were source of tension and discomfort and that he was not ready to talk about them, and he quickly jumped to the period of his formal education.

He centered the narration around himself. He did not identify other important people named in the whole interview. He described his parents as those that brought him to this world. All the other people he mentioned are abstract figures of authority but not specific people he talked about.

Revolting and fighting are central terms Drahoslav uses to describe his story. These themes appear in the context when Drahoslav explains he is a fighter, a lone wolf, and how his

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[10] His name was anonymized. Substitute names of interview partners are given according to how they appear in the Slovak name calendar starting on January 2. Female names are given to the female interview partners and male names to the male interview partners.
[11] The name was anonymized

childhood bears no relevance on who he has become. He presents himself as one who has always rebelled against the authorities and to this day considers this fight the main driver of his career. Through socialization in a youth organization he gained skills and it is during these times that the revolt against authorities became planned and strategic instead of being reactionary and driven purely by anger.

Participation story:

From this case we can see that participation in youth organization gave Drahoslav a sense of belonging and emotional backing. It provided the rooting, a place where he finally belonged and a safe place for self-actualization. Participation can be seen as a constructive force to channel the generalized anger he felt and thus it could be seen as a transformative force to manage the generalized anger of me against the world, and more specifically of me against the authorities.

The main theme that came out of this interview was the feeling of me against the world. He learned to control and manage the generalized anger against society through socialization in a youth organization and he found an outlet for it – working for an advocacy youth organization. It appears that the generalized anger transformed, to a certain degree, into a positive outcome through which he wanted to contribute to the wellbeing of the community around him. The life-saving experience of being in a youth organization gave him the grounding and sense of belonging. It also transformed his connection to the community and society as well, in that he now wanted to become a figure of authority himself. But, at the time of the interview, he had not yet made it yet, which brought another level of frustration, which at times broke through the controlled generalized anger.

Drahoslav broke off the interview right after the opening narration phase, when I asked whether he would talk more about where he started, about his parents. I believe that it was a matter of power dynamics, where he, in his eyes, made it clear in the opening narration that childhood had no bearing on who he became, thus it is no longer relevant and should not be asked about. His narration in the opening segment came across as annoyed and full of contempt. From the micro-analysis, it became clear that it was the generalized anger and the fact that he was refusing to dig into his early times for the purposes of my thesis, if ever. I opened up a theme that he was not comfortable to deal with and disrespected his wish not to dig deeper into the subject of his childhood. Based on my experience with case zero, for future interviews I decided to make it clear when agreeing to the interview, that my prospective partners should be made aware that the interview will take the form of a narrative interview, where life stories will be

asked about and analyzed. I also made a pledge to myself to be extra careful to listen to the cues from the beginning of the opening narration, which are extremely important for the remainder of the interview, not to confront this situation again. This experience also made me question whether narrative interviews are a suitable method for interviewing leading professionals active in the public sphere.

4.2 Case portrait nr. 1: Severín

Severín: Participation as means of getting recognition, of standing out and getting into positions others sooner than society would have you and at the same time guided by clear almost binary vision of right and wrong

> *"I was always very outspoken eh: I was always the one who called things out I was always the one who talked smart not only at [name of a youth organization] (2) but against the authorities stood up against them […] I contradicted what the adults so: the:re is something from like from early childhood that like that you are not going with the stream tha:t you don't accept in full extent the authorities you question what they say or that you are active or whatever you want to call it[…] the managers they chose* **me** *I was their point of contact I was a: (3) middle men it didn't belong to me because I was the youngest one I was I was the: least (2) experienced I was just very outspoken"* *(quote from opening narration)*

Severín came from a middle-class family from a larger city in Slovakia. Both of his parents were highly educated and instilled the drive towards achievement in him. In their eyes success was measured by a cum laude university degree and a stable position as a lawyer in a prestigious firm. He shared the drive towards achievement but he did not share their vision of success. Their relationship was very independent and they were highly supportive of him. The recognition and pride he received from his family was important to him. His family was devout communists, who believed in its ideals and they had a hard time adjusting to the regime change in 1998. We learned this fact when he described coming to Bratislava to study at the university and how the worldview he was brought up in, was questioned and changed. A change he illustrated thought changing the newspaper her read from Pravda[12] to reading SME[13]. This change was brought about by his roommates at the college, who were not only top in their field later on but had the right values; a fact he did not fail to mention as he worked for at the company his roommates founded after graduation.

Severín presented himself as the type of person who did not come from an established family in general or within the profession he chose. He always had to work hard, and from the way he presented his life story I came to the conclusion that he was guided by the linear vision of

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[12] Newspaper Pravda https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pravda_(Slovakia)
[13] Newspaper SME https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SME_(newspaper)

success that was presented to society after the fall of Communism - the so-called ethos of the American dream. His understanding of achieving success in life meant work hard, follow basic moral principles, call out things that need fixing and succeed. However Slovak society was and still is a fragile democracy and so injustice, unequal opportunities and nepotism have long been obstacles in achievement in his life. His life story was presented as a series of ups and downs rather than a straightforward success story. Let me present the key pillars central to his self-presentation that help with answering the research questions, starting from the last one.

Severín portrayed himself as better than average and successful from the first lines of the interview. To get into a selective school was already a success. To be the best there, represent the class and even then to dare to challenge authorities was to be supremely successful, and brave. However, early on in the opening narration it became clear that his life success was a not linear, that it involved a series of cumulative successes and then major falls. These points were presented as dramatic reset points that turned his life upside down but also provided catharsis, from which he emerged stronger and more dedicated to succeeding. From his narration we saw that he drew clear lines of who the good guys and bad guys were and portrayed himself as moving on and aspiring to yet another higher goal.

His self-presentation was a combination of a success story with lots of restarts, his career was very non-linear, and he was fighting societal pressures that he, at his age, should have made the transition towards the rooted and stable life of a middle-aged man. He was single and without a socially expected career path of recognizable success. On one hand he pointed out that his parents were not pressuring him, trusted his choices and they were proud of his successes. but, on the others, he was internally torn and wanted it himself and could not quite figure out why he doesn't have it. This became clear in the micro-analysis of the opening segment. Firstly, it was a powerplay to determine who will have the upper hand in the interview. He tried to establish himself as the leader. Secondly, he rejected the label "young leaders" from the opening question as he felt accomplished, and this label insulted him. Nonetheless he pointed to the fact that there are others who have been more successful than he.

Severín presented himself through strong values, of honor and justice. His narration was full of reports and stories of injustice and unfairness either towards him or the various group he was defending. The foundation for such strong values was laid in the family and it was something that he absorbed thanks to his parents as role models. His mother was an especially strong role model for him. He talked of her as an unattainable idol; a prototype of decency, kindness, honesty and willingness to help. He said this was unrealistic because it flowed from her natural personality as opposed to him who had to mature into it. Him telling us this story highlighted the effort and progress over time it takes in order to develop it. The topic of values

wasn't directly verbalized in the family, rather his ability to express and reflect upon values came out through his membership in a youth organization.. Membership in the youth organization was in his eyes the primary source of working with values and their meaning in his life. In his eyes this was the inception point when his *"fight for good"* began. His vision of the world ran, to a great degree, along a binary definition of good and evil, which he demonstrated by telling us about reading the books of Jaroslav Foglar, and 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Three Investigators' books by Robert Arthur Jr.

Being successful and standing out of the crowd even by going against the crowd was central for Severin. Standing out meant being different than others, which was important for Severín despite the fact that it caused him problems. One of the more relevant distancing took place against the students and colleagues from his profession. In his narrative, he distanced himself from fellow students in his university because they went to study the field , for the prestige and money and not for fighting to achieve justice. He presented himself as different from the people in the first private firm he worked at as well. He presented himself as a person who could succeed in the private world (by mentioning bonuses and the possibility to advance in his career very fast), but he chose not to because it would be against his values and he would become one of the persons he distanced himself from, those who helped the rich to get even richer. This would not be fulfilling for him. This dissonance between his values and work caused him frustration and the desire to leave his employer, which translated in taking a position in a government office.

Formative historical events

The historic formative moment of his youth was the fall of Communism. For him it was more important and thematized than the fall of Meciarism, because it was biographically closer to him. His parents were devout believers in the principles of communism and he had to come to terms with that, gain independence from it, and break away from their belief system and face the consequences. Meciarism was easier for him to break with as his one stance on the subject matter was clear.

Participation story

Severín portrayed himself as one who, since he was little, has represented and defended a group in need against those in power, be it among friends, in a classroom setting or in work environment (teachers, foremen in factory, managers). He assumed positions as an (in)formal representative on behalf of any given group je was part of, which he achieved because of his assertiveness, drive and ability to communicate. It became clear from the interview that he

believed that these personal traits and his basic attitude towards life (stand up) were preconditions to becoming active in civil society and politics, rather than any formalized participation or engagement.

Severín described himself as one who, since he was 12 years old, read newspapers. Even when money was tight he made sure he got a copy. In primary school he was a class representative, and he was a member of a youth organization, which he claimed was a very formative period for him. However, he did not label any of these acts as becoming civically active or a part of civic society. On the contrary, he was sure to point out that he did not volunteer for an organization during his high school or university years. During his university studies he was busy, he travelled a lot and in his later years he worked for a prestigious private company, but he stressed that civic or political participation was not on his agenda.

After university he continued working for a private firm but within a few years he felt it was at odds with his image of himself. In what he described as 'the moment he felt the calling', he took a position in a government ministry and he aspired to change the workings of the country systematically towards a more just future.. However, the government fell apart prematurely and thus his work ended. The new administration did not share his values and principles.

From a high-status job, he decided to move to work locally in the field doing social work to see and get a taste of the direct work with target group. The work was hard, frustrating, required long hours, and left little space for work-life balance. Taking on this job meant a downgrade in his position in social space, to use Bourdieu's terms, especially in financial and symbolic power. However, he took it as a challenge where he wanted to get a deeper understanding of the target group and also change the nature of the work, of the organization and the position of the sector, as he had seen its shortcomings from the other side in his previous job. Later, he reached a point where he realized that the NGO system itself needed to change its fundamental thinking, but that it was resistant to such change. He reached a point where he saw the cause was not worth the price of the emotional hardship and he decided to leave.

Severín took on an even more local position and helped directly in a community center. The nature of the work brought about further downgrades in his financial capital and was a mismatch due to the low cultural and social capital that this place offered. However, it provided the cathartic moment he needed and the realization that this is the field he wanted to work in. It brought about a greater motivation to work in this field and a desire to improve the human rights conditions of this minority. Thanks to this experience he also realized that the right place for him to change the social order at was on the level of policy making - pushing for systemic

change rather than being focused on direct services work. As a result, he ran the political campaign for a local politician who promised such change and he started working for an NGO whose focus was on improving human rights, which is where he was at the time of the interview.

4.3 Case portrait nr. 2: Alexej

"yeah, yeah: (4) well ehm (2) I was born into a family (2) which coincidentally and I am very grateful for it like that it had a great diversity among its members" (first sentence in the opening narration of the interview partner after I posed my opening question)

Alexej's participation story intertwined with his biographical patters

The best way to characterize his participation story is to use his own words: "bolo mi to dané do vienka" which could be best translated as 'endowed to me at birth'. Alexej grew up in a very diverse environment in terms of ethnic background, mental and physical disability. He grew up in an ethnically diverse, small industrial town, he defined as traditional and small-townish. It was characterized by close-knit ties, which provided some cohesion but also (mostly latent) manifestations of xenophobia and homophobia. In stark contrast with the mindset, which was common in his family, he was socialized into an inclusive mindset, where being different and otherness were considered normal. The belief that helping others was good and beneficial was socialized and instilled in him as well. Alexej put emphasis on the fact that these values did not come naturally, as social expectations would have you believe, but children have to be socialized and educated to perceive otherness as normal. This principle stayed with him in his adulthood when finding his place of belonging and career.

The formative role models for his vision of an active person were his grandma and his cousin, who had a mental disability. Grandma was important in that she was a hardworking woman, doing double shifts, working and taking care of the extended family. She was helping with taking care of him and the cousin with a mental disability, and she had a husband who was an alcoholic. Through her he came to believe this life and society are not necessarily comfortable places, rather one has to fight for things. It was an imperative to speak up, to stand up and say something when someone is treated unfairly.

The other formative person was his cousin, who had a mental disability. Through his stories about his cousin, how Alexej treated him and how their relationship went through a serious transformation, we can observe how tolerance and inclusiveness are internalized over a longer time. These narrations would also be a good material for studying the institutional conditions for persons with disabilities and their level of integration into society over time. However, that is outside the scope of this thesis.

Alexej portrayed himself as a person whose outlook on his role in society changed when he went to study abroad. It also changed his outlook on education, as there were higher demands and higher expectations which translated into more motivation from his side. It was the quality of education and an emphasis on being active, be it in arts or civics. Upon returning home he started working for a government agency and later in the NGO sector, focused on minorities. He worked with teachers who were enthusiastic and willing to change their approach, attitudes and style of work. However, he soon learnt that many, when going back to their home communities, hit a wall and couldn't implement the things they learned due to personnel or structural limitations in the formal education settings they worked in.

Gradually Alexej realized that he needed to transfer out of direct service-oriented activities to advocacy to improve the position of the given minority. He said that it was a 'need' as opposed to a 'desire', which for me emphasized the change of his role in this field and the urgency and importance he placed upon it. He claimed that his role now is to change 'the system', which I would understand as the social order, to actually be more inclusive. Through his work on the ground, where he made an impact on the individual level, he gained a position and power in the field. Thanks to that, he next wanted to impact the structural level, and for that the most direct avenue would be, in his words, entering politics as a representative, because elected officials are directly involved in policy making. In his eyes, in order to make changes to the social order, one needed direct access to policy making and a strong mandate from the electorate which in turn yielded political backing to implement tough changes. He claimed he did not have the ambition to become politician. It did not align with the social role he saw for himself. He thought that politics were not only about being an expert, but one needed to have the political backing and to be effective in pushing ideas and proposals through, one had to bend morals. He considered politics dirty, and not aligning with his values, which is why he presented himself that he doesn't have the stomach for it. He did not want to be the leader on the podium, but he saw himself as the person behind the scenes, with expertise, ideas and soft power.

Formative historical events

From the historical events Alexej thematized the fall of Communism the most. His father was active in the political movement Public against violence[14] which was founded during the Velvet revolution and helped overthrow Communism. Alexej's father became disillusioned shortly after, as the hopes he had for the political change brought about economic downturn in the society and financial instability and hardship for the family. The fall of Communism was also

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[14] Public against violence movement https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Against_Violence

personally relevant because it meant financial hardship as his father went on partial disability state support and they became a single income family with mother being the sole breadwinner. By telling us stories of alcoholism in his family, changed behavior towards, and treatment of, people with disabilities, and attacks on minorities, he portrayed the tangible impacts that the fall of Communism had on people's everyday lives. The fall of communism brought about freedom but it was directly associated with an economic downturn in society, which translated also into downturns in social cohesion and the breakdown of community ties.

4.4. Case portraits nr. 3 and 4: Daniela and Ernest

4.4.1 Daniela

> Daniela: "I don't feel like an expert I am an enthusiast maybe even naïve" (quote from the first few minutes of the opening narration)

Daniela identified herself as a political representative and not an expert in the human rights field. She portrayed herself as an enthusiast. By doing so she defined her social role as one who helped to drive the change on a structural level through attempting to change the legal framework and set the agenda from the top. However, portraying herself that way also pointed to the fact that there is a hierarchy in the system, likely based on history and expertise, that comes from work on the ground and that she was not at the center of this hierarchy. By saying that there were individuals who were more expert and thus more relevant for interviewing, and by labelling her story as not so interesting or even boring, she also distanced herself from the 'true' activists who work on the ground and were 'true' experts. Her source of recognition comes from her business success and in the public domain it is associated with being a national level political representative, which is where she believed she could make the most impact.

She described herself as being taken to rather than herself driving towards being a political representative. She described that when opportunities came, she viewed them suspiciously as bearing negative consequences later. Portraying herself as being naïve in politics painted a picture about Slovak politics and political socialization of the next generation of political representatives. It highlighted the gaps in political socialization and building up elites within political parties as very few of them have youth political organizations or young representatives in the main party that are taken seriously. There is very little political grooming going on.

Her participation story was the story of being on a pathway to self-understanding and finding a social role she could play to help others. On one hand being active meant supplementing the failing state in the arena of human rights of a particular group. On the other hand being active was also about finding her self-worth, a reflection on her way to being comfortable with herself, which was strongly connected with the field of human rights she devoted her political career to.

Injustice was already a theme for her at high school. She spoke up when some injustice was perpetrated against an individual or group, which is why she had to work harder than others to compensate with the teachers. She portrayed herself as a rebel at high school, but one who

worked twice as hard hard, being active in school competitions, and in regional sports to prove her worth towards herself and gain recognition in the eyes of the others.

She also spoke strongly about the nature of the work in the field. She was strongly disillusioned by other people from her same identity group who did not identify with her topic as strongly as she did. She blamed them for perpetuating and allowing the systematic means of discrimination by not helping to promote her agenda or in worse case scenarios by putting hurdles in the fight to improve the conditions of the group.

Additionally she spoke of inequalities within the field, be it based on gender or socioeconomic background. More details on the gender discrimination will be highlighted when comparing the cases at the end of the thesis. In her narration she raised awareness about an important feature of the sector and that is socioeconomic dimension that limits the opportunity of participation. She said that people can be active in the society and invest time in this agenda only when they have support from their environment and when they have the financial resources to make ends meet. Both of these are unequally distributed among the population and disadvantaged are especially people in the eastern part of the country (lower socioeconomic background and status) and women.

The key historical events of Fico's era and the death of the journalist Jan Kodiak and his fiancée Martina Konnikova are the most relevant for her. In the case of the latter, it brought about the upending of Fico's regime and thus a chance for her party to be in the government. It is interesting that from the Fico era she spoke mostly of her own political agenda and not the larger scale political events. This reinforces the point she made earlier about her political naiveté.

4.4.2 Ernest

> Ernest: *"it is like difficult to reflect upon oneself like I am not good at it myself and it is not comfortable but I will try because I don't feel like such that I am not a pamätník (a person who is a monument of the past) who recapitulates his life here"* (quote from the first minute of the opening narration)

Ernest opened up his narration by openly saying how uncomfortable the interview situation made him feel and at the same time doubted his relevance for speaking about this subject. This introduction underlined the leitmotif of the interview as it points to the image, he had of an ideal type of a person who is the activist in his field. According to his own words his activism

started late and he was a director of an organization predominantly occupied by professionals from a profession he does not have and thus a qualification he does not possess. Due to the nature of his work he receives recognition through collective work rather than his individual achievements, which is why he believed there were others who were more suitable interview candidates on this subject.

Ernest presented himself as a person who read the newspaper and followed current affairs but until his university studies he declared himself as non-engaged citizen. He attended his first protest "by chance", when he was walking from a collective sports training in high school, which is what sparked more intense interest in current affairs. He was in primary and high school during Meciar's regime. The regime polarized society and his family especially across generational lines, a similar process he saw happening during the Fico era. His strategy for coping with that was to not engage in discussion or persuasion. While he was at a Slovak university, he studied social sciences at a faculty where one could feel the ethos of dissent. He said that there was nothing to protest against since Meciar in 1998 as it was the golden years in pro-democratic orientation while he attended the university, which is why his interest in politics was first geared internationally.

In his eyes he was needed abroad more than at home, since the process of democratization was well on its way in Slovakia under Dzurinda's era. He spent a year abroad at a university, focusing on history and democratization processes of the region. This was an interest that translated into his first real job when he came back to Slovakia. He joined the NGO sector in the last year of university and his projects were about aiding with democratization processes abroad.

A few years later, when the first Fico government (with Harabin as Minister of Justice, who was a symbol of injustice), came to power he came to the realization that his work needed to turn to Slovakia. He was willing to take a step down in terms of his career advancement to align more with his changed vision of need and helping. He did not want to just describe the problems, inequalities and injustice, so academia was out of the question for him. He wanted to change the structural framework in which vulnerable groups and individuals operated. Thus, he became an activist and an advocate for a fairer and more just society for all. In his mind the real work happened at the political level and this was more acute than ever because Fico's government disregarded the rule of law and did not listen to arguments.

Ernest presented his organization, where he is the director, as the epicenter of the real change that needed to happen to Slovakia. At the same time he realized that as a non-state actor they

had limited impact. Despite what all the disinformation and conspiracy theories would lead one to believe, any argumentation was futile if there was no political will from the government. After a decade in the organization, fighting on the front lines, he felt disgusted by the political environment, the negative campaign being led against a certain part of the NGO sector. He was burned out and he was looking for an exit strategy. He presented himself that he never had the ambition to join a political party, because the politics was ugly under Fico's regime. But he also felt trapped, as there was no successor within the organization to take his position and he saw no options for himself either in academia or a political party.

Internalization of what it meant to be civically engaged was connected with taking on responsibilities. He claimed that it was not a typical ambition to be an activist, and one was forced by the environment. It was a period when you could not give up and had to grit your teeth and bear it.

Until university years he was in a junior team of a particular collective sport, which had a very formative impact on him. It taught him that playing together as a team and not as an individual is important to achieve a certain goal and that one needs to play fair, because when sets of clear rules of the game are not adhered to punishment follows. The participation in the sport made him respect the opponent as well as trainers and others as authorities where respect was due, while engaging in tough battles to win. He said that these qualities and values are really important when becoming socially or politically active.

4.5 Case portrait nr. 3: Karina - Hermeneutic case reconstruction

Karina: participation as a tool for intergenerational upward mobility, participation as means of finding a clear social role and sense of belonging, participation as means of getting recognition

Karina portrays herself as an independent and hardworking woman who is driving herself to the limits by her precarious self-drive. This search for finding a place to belong and be recognized of making it out of the blue-collar background, accentuated by the death of her mother, is the central self-presentation mechanism.

> *"hem this involves a private thing (2) important why I'm so: like I am the way I am when hem when I was fifteen years old my mother died (she swallowed audibly) I started studying at gymnasium and I had a: this big problem personal one you know to come to terms with it and I found myself such in a critical situation that I had that such that desire to commit suicide but not just so but you know I was in **such** a crisis and at one moment I really remember that that there was a minute when I said to myself and ok you either fall down completely now or you get into it and you will go (she breathes through her nose) and I actually somehow fought through the whole high school somehow myself and I went to college all alone as well and I **really** felt that I have to do it, that's probably also the source of this thing of mine that I that I won't give up I go and get things done"* (note: translation from Slovak, excerpt from the first follow up question after main narration when I asked about time before her first narration point - her university studies)

The interview lasted for 2,5 hours, the opening narration lasted little less than 15 minutes. It was the second interview within this project. Karina was working in the non-governmental sector (NGO) for over 15 years, at the time of the interview she was in a director position of an NGO.

The main narration phase of Karina was dominated by the topic of her professional life. She opened up the interview with the topic of university studies, and quickly followed with listing research projects (work), which she was engaged in. She ends the opening narration with describing the precarious nature of the work in the sector and burnout she feels. Throughout the 15-minute-long introductory narration, Karina mentioned only two private sphere experiences. One of them was a mention that she was pregnant one time. The second theme from private sphere is when she speaks of burnout and tiredness from work at two occasions during the opening narration.

Note on anonymization:

The pool of possible interview partners is, due to my subject matter, rather limited and so revealing too many details from their biographical data could endanger their anonymity. In order to protect the identity of my interview partner I refer to her as Karina (the first female name in the list of names in Slovak calendar). Additionally some data are purposefully generalized, so as not to reveal too many details that could lead to her identification, however in the analysis I worked with the specific dates and names.

Reflection on the interview context and research

Throughout the interview she mentioned the research context twice. Once during the interview she asked about how it is going to be cited and I replied I will anonymize it all. This came in the context of a difficult period she was describing when one of the founders of the organization left, not on good terms. After this brief matter-of-fact exchange, she went on with the narration where she left off. I interpret this to mean that she checked that there is a mutual understanding among us researchers about the good practice of the research profession and my answer reconfirmed her trust in me as interviewer.

The second remark she made in regard to the interview situation is when she said she felt like being in a therapy session. This is something three out of five interview partners also mentioned. The thematic context in which she said it was when she spoke of the nature of work in the NGO sector; specifically, about the fluctuation of personnel and how she cannot leave the organization, a choice she feels others have but she doesn't.

The third remark in regard to the research process came after the interview. A few hours later, just as I was about to write to her to thank her again for making the time, she messaged me on Facebook, the platform we used for arranging the date and time of the interview. She wrote that I am the first person who knows that much about her. I reassured her that it will remain just between the two of us and that the interview was very insightful for me. She responded that it was interesting and instructive in the sense that she learned from it about herself too as well because it forced her to reflect on certain issues. She then sent me a Facebook friend request saying that since I know so much about her, she deems it appropriate. The narrative interview as a method does feel very intimate, and also imbalanced. I know so much about her life and she knows little about mine. I had the same feeling with the first as well as the third interview partners, who both opened up after the recording was turned off. Whereas with them I shared some personal information right away, in this interview it did not feel like the balancing act was the same here.

Reflection on the analytical and writing process:

In the process of writing the analysis up, it became overwhelming at one point to keep track of the case, the themes and hypothesis that evolve, in a manner that would be easy for the reader to follow. Therefore, I decided the follow the logic of the case rather than showing the actual steps of the analysis, which is why the next segment is organized the way that it is. Here are some reflections or the analytical middle steps that still remained relevant and are useful in understanding the case reconstruction.

In the thematic field analysis, it became apparent that Karina described her life mostly using descriptions or narrations in the form of reporting, i.e., a way of presenting her life story as a chain of events without mentioning individual situations or even still-frames. These were frequently followed or preceded by evaluations. Evaluations are forms of narrations whose function is to make narrations or descriptions more plausible and often aim to explain why this experience is mentioned (Rosenthal, 2005). The second most common types of texts (Textsorten) she used was argumentation directly proceeded or followed by evaluation.

Stories, as a form of narration, are used very sporadically. In the opening narration Karina uses only a few stories. One of them describes how she became interested in and hooked on her field - the topic of research on challenges facing a particular minority. Another one is when she speaks about the demanding nature of work in the NGO sector and how trapped she feels in it. Further themes that were also presented in the form of a story in the post-opening narration phase (immanente nachfragen phase of the interview) include a story about the moment when she decides to make it in life after the death of her mother. I have selected these for microanalysis since they seemed crucial pieces of the puzzle in reconstructing Karina's case.

These types of texts are often connected with the assessment of the interview situation (Rosenthal 2005) and I wonder whether, to a certain extent the, number of evaluations used throughout the interview don't take place because she interpreted the context as two social science researchers speaking with one another, which is the feeling I noted down in my interview memo. This would be supported by the fact that in the pre-interview talk we bonded as researchers when we talked about how the recording devices have changed and simplified the work over the years and made the recording less intrusive. Secondly, this sort of descriptive and reporting form of presenting herself could also be connected with her profession, predominantly as a researcher and then as an advocate, where she has to justify her work on a daily basis. For these reasons, it's worth analyzing these narrative sequences, as they show particular relevance for the interviewee.

4.5.1 Karina's biographical data

In this section I would like to highlight the most important biographical data in the actual chronology of events in the life of my interview partner.

Karina was born in Bratislava in the early 80s to a family she herself labelled as blue-collar. Her father was significantly older than her mother. He had managerial position within a blue-collar job. Her mom was of an ethnic minority background and came to live in Bratislava from the east of the country. She did not have a family in Bratislava. She was a kindergarten teacher by profession. My interview partner was growing up in part of town that was at the time labelled as a blue-collar neighborhood. She had a sibling.

Karina was not only from a blue-collar family, but she was also grew up in blue collar part of town. She went to a local primary school at first then, in a move initiated by her mother, transferred to a more selective primary school focused on learning foreign languages She was in the first four years of her primary school when the Velvet Revolution took place in 1989. She continued her education at a gymnasium (selective high school for those who are expected to go on with tertiary education). She did not make it through entrance exams into the bilingual program of that school she wanted so she attended the regular state school within the same gymnasium. She was the classroom representative of the student body for the four years of high school. When she was in the second grade her mother passed away. After that Karina had struggled mentally, but during high school, she recollects making a decision that she "would make it" in the sense of learning how to cope with the loss and would not allow it to stop her from seeking and achieving recognition for herself and in her own eyes. She took on menial jobs on the weekends to make extra money, as their household's financial situation was tight due to their family being single income blue collar family with her father of pensioner's age.

Directly after high-school graduation, Karina went to university in Bratislava. In 1998 the Meciar regime was toppled. This event took place at the beginning of her university studies. In the second year of the university, she began working in the field and has continued ever since. Soon enough she worked on pioneering projects with leading figures from Slovak non-governmental organizations and in particular from one of the leading Slovak NGOs at the time. Already during university studies, she was earning enough money to drop her menial jobs and focus only on her university and NGO work. She moved out of the home where she lived with her father and brother. Then, she graduated from university in the regular time allotted for studies and simply continued working for the established NGO, where she and a few other

young colleagues were running their own research program (focused on minority issues). After Slovakia joined EU and funds for research in this field decreased, they split away from the established NGO and, together with a few colleagues, they started their own organization.

She got married a few years after she graduated while still working at the established NGO. Then her father, whom she was taking care of, passed away, which made her, in her own words, want to start a family and have a child. She took a year to stay home with her child and then shared the childcare with her husband equally. She returned to the organization she helped to start and has worked there since then. Shortly after coming back from maternity leave, she became the director of the NGO and under her supervision the organization shifted towards focusing on themes that they deem are important (agenda setting) and started engaging in public policy making and advocacy on national and local level.

4.5.2 A brief digression into Karina's formative historical moments

Karina spoke of two historic events that had a direct impact on her life, the fall of Meciarism and Slovakia joining the EU. She mentioned the fall of Communism as something that happened but did not really develop as a theme and did not bear any significance in her life story as she presented it. Nor did it seem important for reconstruction of the case or microanalysis of the selected segment.

The topic of Meciarism came up already in the first few lines of the interview, when she mentioned that her university studies started in the same year as Meciar's regime fell. This gave an indication that this historic event is highly relevant for her biography and understanding her take on civic engagement.

Karina made sure to position and present herself in the anti-Meciar camp. She demonstrated it through a story when she worked a summer job at a kiosk during summer between high school and university. To fill her time, she would observe people who were buying daily papers Slovenská republika and SME (symbols of pro- and anti-Meciarism respectively) and imagine their ideal types and based on that she would then try to guess which people were pro-Meciar and anti-Meciar without having the newspaper. At this point in the interview she said, just to confirm, that she ostentatiously carried around the daily SME.

Other events that she mentioned and are related to Meciarism were the unsolved 1996 murder of former policemen Robert Remias that is believed to be the work of secret service police under Meciar's auspices and student led protests for Meciar's removal from power, which were

heavily supported by the NGO sector. All of these took place while she was in high school and could be seen as her first occasions of civic engagement, although she doesn't perceive herself as active during high school. This is an incongruency I discuss below in her participation story.

The EU accession was thematized in the context that many interesting research projects she worked on were pioneering and took place in the pre-accession period and were financed through grants from the EU in the period of accession talks that started in 1999. The EU was then thematized in the context of financial crisis in the NGO sector when a lot of funds dwindled away, not only from the EU but also other foreign NGOs. As a result of Slovakia's accession to the EU, Slovakia was no longer eligible to use money from funds available to accession countries to map and monitor meeting accession criteria. Many other non-EU funds or donors pulled out their funding as well, as Slovakia was perceived to be 'democratized' and should be able to find funding internally or from other EU schemes.

4.5.3 Karina's participation story

Finding her way of participating in civil society gave Karina a clear social role, a sense of belonging to her place in the NGO network and also in her life. When comparing her biographical background with her participation story (what she presented and how, and what she left out) it has very little to do with the abstract idea of civic engagement. Especially in her early years (at high school) she did not present herself as engaged, on the contrary she said she was not active at all. Her story up to her university years sounded more like a story of coping with her biographical situation. Whereas her success in university and career thereafter were presented as a story of successful participation, that is when she recognized that she had started to make a difference for vulnerable groups. Her career in research and advocacy for marginalized groups was, on one hand, her way of helping and engaging with society and, on the other hand, it is where she found her place in life and is a source of recognition.

She thematized the subject of aid, or helping, directly in the interview. She wanted to make sure that I understood that she is doing her part, but on her own terms. According to her, helping, and thus connecting with society, must take place in a partnership-like manner. The help cannot take the form that is typical for humanitarian and intervention or religious organizations. She explained that this creates an asymmetric relationship: those in need are on the receiving end, which creates dependency. Karina used the example of patronizing and infantilizing help of religious organizations that systematically perpetuate the situation. She believed that it is not the most effective way of helping and sometimes it is even more harmful than no help at all. From the analysis it became clear that she transferred her own upward

mobility principle of succeeding in life and applied it to her idea of how society should help those in need. This can best done by creating equal opportunities, so that those from disadvantaged groups can move up using their own effort while being supported by inclusive non-paternalistic measures.

Karina said that she started to be active started at the university level: *"I didn't do anything active alongside [high] school I: had to do temp jobs [brigádovat] to have some money"*. This would seemingly explain why, when asked about how people become active, based on her life story (paraphrasing of opening question), she started her answer with success at the university and her job.

This statement would also support the existing research which shows that participation and engagement are influenced by socio-economic factors: "*Political participation - propensity to vote and political interest, as well as social - engagement in clubs and organizations is directly correlated to education and at least indirectly to social milieu and ethnicity. "(*Walther, 2011, p. 213). The reasoning Walther offers is that people with lower educational status or with ethnic origins tend to hold more/side-jobs to cover their immediate needs and therefore do not have the time or means to be engaged. I would also argue that in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, meeting primary needs takes priority over self-actualization or helping others.

However, it became clear when comparing life story and history that it is not the case. Karina was actually quite active already at high school, she just did not present herself that way.

In the first grade of high school she was named the class president and regularly spoke up on behalf of the class. She organized and took part in school events, she read newspapers every day, she was aware of current affairs (knew who Remias was and she was able to take a stand on the issue, please see description of historical events in the chapter 2.3 Historical context), she attended protest rallies against Meciar and against the politically motivated firing of a headmistress at gymnasium Metodova during his reign, which took place towards the end of her high school years. And, as stated before, she ostentatiously carried around the daily newspaper SME to show she was against Meciar, which was like wearing a badge with political message.

Using the typology of Ekman and Amnå (2012) she was already involved in acts of civil participation as well as manifest political participation in high school. On the individual, pre-political level she was interested in politics and society and perceived politics as important and at the collective level she identified herself with the anti-Meciar movement. At the level of action

she was civically engaged (she followed news about political issues, volunteered in the student council and in school events) and engaged in legal activism (attending protests, wearing political symbols). These are only the things she spoke of in the narrative interview, I did not ask her to elaborate further using the matrix. Looking at the Ekman and Amnå matrix (2012), the only type of participation she did not engage in during her high school years was formal political participation which is understandable because she was not of legal age to vote, she had student jobs that did not have trade union backing and simply this form of participation was not accessible to her at that age.

If Karina were to fill in one of the questionnaires used by Slovak researchers measuring participation and the state of civil society, she would actually score quite high on the participation index. To provide some context: 59% of young people between 15 and 29 years old are currently less active than she was at the time when she was in high-school and the situation is similar for the adult population as well as for her age cohort specifically (Čavojská et al, 2020, p. 279, Bútorová & Šumšalová 2020, p. 148). As a side note, the scales used by these authors are typical instruments used in international comparative research, which supports my call for more qualitative studies or mixed methods in participation research and constant reflection on these instruments. To Karina these actions were not recognized as activism or civic engagement, yet they are among the most frequently mentioned activities among young people and adults when it comes to activism and being engaged nowadays (Čavojská et al. 2020, Bútorová & Šumšalová 2020).

Karina presented herself as one who was not active before university and only started then. So, what function does such self-presentation of her life story fulfil and what biographical experiences or historical context led to such self-presentation?

My interpretation is that she did not perceive it so herself because that was not the perception she has in mind of one who is active. Karina presented herself this way because of the distorted image people have of those who are labelled as truly active or what does it mean to be active. People do not perceive the pre-political as part of doing good for the benefit of others or as being active. This is especially true for activities carried out during high school. Research from Bútorová and Šumšalová (2020) confirms this. It suggests that 27% of adults cannot describe what constitutes an 'active person' and 39% of adults think it is a person who is not only interested about public affairs but also does something (like taking part in discussions, voluntary activities, giving donations etc.). This distorted image of an active person is even more deformed when it is about being active when below 18 years old. The research from Čavojská (2020) summarizes that one of the barriers for higher engagement of young people

is that young people feel they are being underestimated and not taken seriously as equal partners, especially by adults and public institutions. As a result, young people do not trust themselves and feel disincentivized to participate. I believe this dominant patronizing discourse influences societal perception of what counts as just 'playing around' and what does counts as being an active member of society.

Moreover, the definition of who is perceived as active is also linked to gender. Walther (2011), when describing gender differences in participation, claims that women do not participate less, they do it differently than men: they engage in non-formal or informal activities. Based on this, I would argue that this is what happened in Karina's interview - she evaluated her activities as being informal and non-formal activities, which do not count as formal participation. The general discourse often presents the formal participation as the one that counts and thus, she did not identify herself that way.

4.5.4 Seeking a sense and place of belonging: Karina's drive toward upward intergenerational mobility

Karina portrayed herself as an independent and hardworking woman who was driving herself to her limits. This search for recognition, to make it out of the blue-collar background she was born into, accentuated by the death of her mother, was the central self-presentation mechanism of her early days.

Blue-collar background

Karina was born into a blue-collar family and lived in a blue-collar neighborhood which could have meant that she stayed within the same milieu and status as her parents. Since the father was significantly older, there was a generational gap between them. Karina spoke about her mother much more and also mentioned that she had to take care of her father, suggesting a completely different dynamic in the relationship. All this suggested that the mother was the more significant role model. This confirms itself in that it was the mother who was depicted as the more proactive one towards better education for her daughter (transferring her away from the neighborhood primary school into a more selective school). Good formal education was seen by her mother as the vehicle towards upwards mobility and better life in general. This upward mobility orientation was seen by the family as being a value.

The blue-collar topic came up repeatedly, especially in the context of her upbringing and during primary school: *"we weren't the intellectual family" "I am not from a good Bratislava family" "I am not elite like the others"*. The last time this topic was thematized was when she spoke about

the entrance exams to university *"I didn't have connections at the faculty"* referring to nepotism that was taking place during the Meciar era.

This identity work and leaving her past behind was an arduous process. She said, *"I had to beat it from within me"* and *also "I had to prove it prove to myself" "I had to come to terms with the fact that I am not elite like the others"*. She started working in her field (research in the NGO sector) from the second grade at the university. With her blue-collar background, Karina did not have the social or cultural capital of the well-educated upper middle or upper class but had to appropriate it, to use Bourdieu's terminology. She had to work hard on getting there, even overcompensating in school "*hrala som čaju, aby som zakryla to biflošstvo*" (very hard to translate but something like: *"I put on the mask of a cool girl to hide being a nerd")* or at work *"what do I have to do all in order to prove you I can"*. She never felt like she was quite fitting in in academia and thus chose a profession of an advocate for the less privileged members of the society who are often at the edge of poverty.

The hardest was not proving it to others but even more importantly to herself that she belonged in the white-collar club *"I am an anti-procrastinator"* and *"cítim sa sama sebou hnaná"* which could be translated as *"I feel like I am driving myself down or I am being haunted by myself"*. The recognition - and coming to terms with herself - seemed to be somewhat satiated when she achieved recognition at work - where she got by herself on her own merit. But the feeling of the drive and driving herself down remained with her for the rest of her life, as something that was layered over time.

Bourdieu's concepts of capital and habitus and the way they are inscribed in the body by past experiences seems to offer further depth to my analysis. This drive for recognition is directly linked with chances and expectations people have. Bourdieu claims that power arises from the amount of financial, cultural, social and symbolic capital people have, in other words, what their position in the social space is, governs what their objective chances are and how much they feel like they can achieve. It also regulates how empowered they feel and how much desire for power they have. Bourdieu adds that: *"The ability to control the future, is dependent on ability to grasp the present."* (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 221).

From Karina's self-presentation we can see that despite the fact that the family had lower economic and social capital resulting from their blue-collar background, her mother had some cultural capital (working in education) and her father had some social capital and symbolic power as he was in a leading position within his blue-collar job. This power and these personal traits were passed on to their daughter and thus provided the empowerment and motivated

her to grasp the opportunity for higher education. The possibility to attend a more select primary school allowed Karina to aspire to more achievement and power and seeing she could succeed there provided her with further motivation and desire to succeed elsewhere.

Karina's family provided a source of recognition, letting her know she was making them proud. The family backing and first success created the orientation towards upward social mobility, and later the death of her mother, who was an important source of recognition, resulted in striving and working even harder. Bourdieu (2000) claims that people who are in disadvantaged positions are less equipped for the demands of the world and are thus more prone to self-exploitation or violent outbreaks. He continues that since the order is relatively rigid and collectively confirmed, it is mentally difficult and costly to break out of it. This helps us to understand why Karina spoke of being pushed by herself and why she kept on overachieving until the present day, despite achieving significant success and recognition through her work.

Moving up from blue-collar background was not only arduous process but according to Bourdieu it can never be fully successful as tendency to act certain way does not become completely natural or automatic. Habitus comes out through practice and it allows individuals to perceive, decipher and act in situations based on past experience and structures that govern that experience. Habitus ensures that we respond 'correctly' to a particular situation without even knowing how. We saw this in Karina's story about interacting with the political elites and being visible at official parties of embassies and galas of state institutions. She claimed that attending these is part of her job as a director of an NGO, but they do not bring her pleasure on the contrary they take her energy away. She introduced this story in the middle of talking about how she had to beat the working-classness out of herself and in the context of getting recognition for making it to her current position. Karina offered an explanation that the discomfort she feels in these situations is because she is an introvert. While that is also plausible because she presented this story within this particular thematic context, it in my opinion pointed to the latent mechanism of acquiring habitus. From Karina's self-presentation it became clear that she made it to the same league with the other intellectual elites of NGO sector, but this story also showed us that she does not quite belong as the manners and appropriate behavior does not come to her naturally. As a result of her blue-collar background, dispositions she acquired through education over time and the cultural and social capital she gained through her work, she learned to decipher and respond in the 'correct' way however she always has to be looking out not to slip up in her new role and that takes energy away.

Mother as the role model and a driver of upward intergenerational mobility

The upward mobility life orientation, which include core values of individual effort, perseverance and hard work were instilled in her upbringing and were personified by her mother. Already the biographical analysis suggested that mother was the critical role model that provided guidance even after she passed away. Her unexpected death provided a critical turning point in Karina's history that had an important impact on her work ethic and identity and motivation as a person in general.

The figure of her father was described to a lesser extent and more flatly, whereas her mother was described more often and as dynamic character. The mother was depicted as the more proactive one towards better education of her daughter (transferring her away from the neighborhood primary school into a more selective school) and was likely to play a key role in shaping her attitude towards education as a tool for upwards mobility.

Furthermore, it seems likely that it was her mother who instilled the core values of individual effort, perseverance and hard work into her daughter's attitude towards life. Her mother had a tough position to start with, in that she came from a different city and did not have the support of her family, and because she was from a different ethnic background. Karina saw her as someone who 'made it' in her context. Preliminarily, I would say she believed her mother made it thanks to her own individual effort, perseverance and hard work. These values were passed on to her daughter and seem to have been strong formative values in the work ethic and identity of my interview partner.

The research into intergenerational upward social mobility supports my findings: studies in the US show, that mothers spend more time doing homework with their children and also are more active in the interaction between parents and school. Research from Slovakia also shows that Slovak men and women do not share the childcare evenly: only 16% of men participate in childcare in comparison with 60% of women (Šedovic 2020). Even during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the division of labor did not change. Research from Minello and Blossfeld (2017) showed that in Germany mothers play a crucial role in the education and career of their daughters, especially if they have higher education themselves and their daughters are currently in their 30's (like my respondents). This was not so for the fathers. This could be due to the fact that women started to play more active and more important roles in the job market. Additionally one could say that they share common paths and face similar challenges in terms of dual segregation on the job market and have to deal with the dilemma of combining both their career and their duties at home. Minello's and Blossfeld's research points also to the fact

that in Germany it has become the norm for the girls to have high school level education and that it is due to pressure from the mothers that they are now aiming more for universities. Universities are seen as a necessary precondition to having a better position on the job market than their mothers had. Currently there are more female university students than males but I did not find research into role of mothers in Slovakia, however I believe the trend of mothers pushing for higher education of their daughters is applicable to Slovakia as well. The countries are comparable in terms of gender disparities in, for example, the gender pay gap (Ortiz-Ospina, 2018) or Gender Inequality Index from the Human Development Report, thus I believe it is plausible to believe that these processes translated into Slovak reality as well.

Despite the pro-upwards intergenerational social mobility orientation in the life of Karina there seemed to be two potential critical points in her life, which could have held her back: the fall of Communism and the death of her mother. After the fall of Communism, the blue-collar workers were the group that was hit the hardest and they were at risk of losing their socio-economic standing (for more see chapter 2.3 Historical context). Karina does not thematize the fall of Communism much. The risk of falling into poverty and possibly maintaining the blue-collar position was enhanced by the death of the mother during her high school years, which was exacerbated by her father being around pensioners' age. This could be supported by her statements that she had to work menial jobs on the weekends and after school to make money for herself. This continued well into university when she earned enough money with the expert work in the field.

The second critical point was the death of Karina's mother. This event had an impact on her mental health and likely also on her family relations. Apart from the psychological level, the death of the mother, who seemed to have been the instigator and motivator for her to aspire for higher goals, could have led Karina to give up, which was prophesied by her social environment and important other influences (school). From her life story we learned that there were societal expectations that she would take on the role of the mother/female figure in taking care of her father, brother and household. In the case of Karina, it was not the case. Instead, they all went their own way, dealing with the mother's death individually and pursuing their lives and careers. It is unclear how the division of labor and typical female jobs looked like in their household as she did not offer any information about the subject. She only talked about her own family where childcare duties are divided equally among the parents and in terms of the household chores, her husband takes on more.

To contextualize what is at play here, I would like to help myself with quote from Judith Butler on mourning:

"Perhaps, rather, one mourns when one accepts that by the loss one undergoes one will be changed, possibly forever. Perhaps mourning has to do with agreeing to undergo a transformation (perhaps one should say submitting to a transformation) the full result of which one cannot know in advance. There is losing, as we know, but there is also the transformative effect of loss, and this latter cannot be charted or planned." (Butler, 2004, p. 21)

The last excerpt about the transformative effect of losing someone dear whose impact cannot be foreseen is useful when trying to understand Karina's self-presentation. This life altering event, which forced her to see her life in two extremes to 'make it or fall down', had a transformative effect and pushed her towards doing everything she could to 'make it'. This seemed to be the main driver and motivation for the rest of her career path and life attitude in general. This could be seen by her getting into a very competitive university degree program as well as to leading NGOs. The strong drive to achieve, which was instilled by her mother, transformed itself after her death into an even stronger motivation 'to make it' in the milieu into which she was not born into but had to appropriate. We saw that sometimes she drove herself too hard, even beyond healthy limits. We saw some indications that this was so when she was working on the expert projects, at school and at her day jobs to make ends meet at the same time or when she lunged herself into a high impact job with lots of responsibility so early on in her career, to nowadays when she speaks of burnout.

Sama (alone and on my own) and self-efficacy

"What grief displays, in contrast, is the thrall in which our relations with others hold us, in ways that we cannot always recount or explain, in ways that often interrupt the self-conscious account of ourselves we might try to provide, in ways that challenge the very notion of ourselves as autonomous and in control" (Butler, 2004, p. 23)

It would seem from Karina's self-presentation that she did everything to prove Butler wrong. Shortly after her mother's death she portrayed herself as autonomous and in control. She presented herself as a lone fighter. She presented herself as making it *sama* in the sense of the word 'on her own' and she took pride in doing so and making it in life despite the fact that she recognized its hardship *"well it is possible but it has its cost".* She processed the grief from the death of her mother by herself. She also made sure to mention she successfully got through high school and university by herself and she found a job in her field of study and could drop the menial jobs already during her university years while living on her own. Karina portrays herself as a self-made woman as a researcher as well: *"he threw us into the situation" "we*

were thrown into the water" as they rose to the occasion and completed the tasks on their own and well.

There are two instances when *sama* had a negative connotation and was used to mean 'all alone'. One instance was related to her work, when, as the director of an NGO, she felt the burden of responsibility for the organization. She felt overwhelmed and trapped and had to do a lot of invisible and unpaid work no one else did and, more importantly, no one recognized.

The second instance when she used the word *sama* in the sense of 'all alone' was after her father passed away. She mentioned it in the context of her work again where she said that there was no one to be genuinely proud of her anymore and call her up when she accomplishes something important. She spoke of unconditional unsolicited genuine pride and 'true' recognition a child gets from her/his parents. The death of her last parent left her all alone. That unconditional source of recognition that she did not have to fight for was gone. This was the moment when she decided to start a family with a child of her own.

The thematic and microanalysis of the uses of *sama* showed that in both instances it was about recognition - either for her achievements, or the hardships she faced. Coming back to Butler, losing and grieving for someone posed a challenge to Karina's self-presentation of an independent, lone wolf who made it on her own. It challenged her to the core and in her search for 'true' recognition she decided that she did not want to be *sama* 'all alone' anymore. She wanted to have that closest loving, supporting, nuclear family which would provide that unconditional love for which she would not need to overachieve.

4.5.5 Sources of recognition – Academic achievement

Apart from the immediate family being a source of recognition, there was also the professional life that provided it. The steppingstone to that professional recognition was a university degree, as a solid stamp of approval that she made it. She did not feel the need to be admired by the masses but by a few relevant people, who matter in her professional and personal life. Her seeking recognition was about getting confirmation that she, an outsider, now belongs in the place of belonging of her choice.

Karina opened the main narration up with her university studies and then switched to work almost immediately. She mentioned the year she started university and we know that it was the same year that Meciar's regime toppled. Right after that she mentioned that already in the

second year of university, she was invited to do field work for a research project and that was the extent of this theme in the opening narration.

Education was seen as the vehicle for upward intergenerational mobility, not as a source of knowledge. The primary school was the arena where the transition from blue collar background to middle class and being intellectual began. High school was a phase of development of social and civic skills, and also the period where the development of her identity as a lone fighter was sealed. The university degree was seen as the ultimate proof that she successfully came to terms with her biographical past – be it her blue-collar background or the death of her mother. It was also the gate opener in terms of her professional career. To put it metaphorically, education was the elevator to the top floor and allowed her to succeed in her professional life.

We know very little about her life in primary and secondary school (it was not thematized within main narration). The theme of primary school came up when she spoke about the non-intellectualism in her family and how they lived in a blue-collar neighborhood. This was the first time we heard about her blue-collar background. She described her first primary school as blue collar where her classmates would grow up to be hairdressers and aim for vocational schools (only secondary school education). She also mentioned her mother had her transferred into a more select school focused on languages which allowed her to move to a different environment and milieu and to aspire for more. This was the period when she had to do the most of her identity work *"I had to beat it from within me"* and when most of what Bourdieu calls 'misrecognitions' took place. These are mismatched perceptions and understanding of situations and actions based on different dispositions in the form of habitus.

A bit later Karina mentioned she went to gymnasium (more select high school) and that she wanted to get into its bilingual section but was unsuccessful. This was the only time she spoke of not succeeding in education of her choice. From then on, high school was mentioned only three times and that was in the thematic context of societal engagement and participation. Firstly, it was mentioned when she narrated a story of how she was selected by the headteacher to be the class president, something that happened to her and she did not actively seek out. Secondly high school was mentioned in the context of its location. Every time she went to or from school she would pass a cross, and candles being lit for the unsolved political murder of Robert Remias, who became a symbol of the totalitarian practices of the Meciar era. The last time when school was mentioned is when she stood up for a student who was pushed to side-lines of the group by his classmates due to his mental disability. None of the accounts connected with high school were about gaining intellectual knowledge but were about developing of social skills. My interview partner did not explicitly label them as such, but they

were also the first steps in civic engagement, be it practicing skills as student representative, standing up for people with disabilities or by being aware of and getting knowledgeable of the political context around her.

University was mentioned as the first event, and thus one would think that university studies were of great relevance to her - and they are - but not in the context of acquiring academic knowledge. University was not portrayed as an institution for gaining knowledge or skills necessary for her future career, but it was presented as a qualification minimum (as something that must be done) and a steppingstone towards working in the field. University provided the gatekeepers who must recognize her talents and personal traits to allow her to make herself a researcher. As already mentioned, the university degree is proof of her triumph over her biographical past.

University was mentioned as something that started and finished and it was another piece of the *"I won't give up and fall"* puzzle of who she is. From the whole 5 years of her university studies two events were talked about: her entrance exams and the graduation ceremony. The entrance exams were hard and selective but also intriguing and challenging, where not only repetition of facts but also applied knowledge and argumentation was required. She said that she could not believe she got accepted, referring to nepotism and lack of any social or cultural capital to do her any favors. The second event she talked about was the graduation ceremony which was mentioned in the context of the death of her mother. She presented a story about her friend telling her about what her home class teacher from high school said after the death of her mother:

> *"when I was at the graduation ceremony then my friend classmate told me you know that when your mother died then our home class teacher called us all in and said she that Karinka is finished that it never not even will be she will never go to university that she will have to take care of the household and so (inhaled through her nose) and when she told me that day of the graduation ceremony it was just such strong feeling that no that it is possible"* (note: Karinka is a diminutive from Karina suggesting endearing and more personal connection)

The university degree was seen as the ultimate proof that she came to terms with, and triumphed over, her biographical past. That the fight and arduous work was worth it and she did not have to fall or yield to societal expectations of taking on the housewife role in her family and putting her professional aspirations and her aspirations for a better future on hold. It was proof that there is a way out of the blue-collar milieu if one tried hard enough.

In the second part of interview when I asked to follow up questions about life before university she mentioned her mother being *priebojná žena* 'fighter-like woman' and in that context said she never studied abroad, which she perceived as a handicap. Then she distanced herself from academia altogether and said she never wanted to do anything theoretical but was interested in studying and advocating for problems of real life. She then mentioned how she was invited to teach but declined the offer. In the next sequence she mentioned that the organization she works for does more of an engaged research where they not only study but also want to impact the life and added that they get criticized for it from academics because they are not objective. But, she went on, you cannot be objective in social science research and again she distanced herself from academia. A few segments later she came back to study abroad and said she felt like she couldn't leave the country with her mum being gone and her father needing her care. She also argued that from her generation only a few select people were lucky enough and had the foresight to study abroad.

In context of university Karina also talked about two accounts about teachers. Only two educators were mentioned positively. They were the ones who either recognized her talents and personal traits and offered her work in the field and those who gave the recognition for her extracurricular engagement in the field of study. Additionally, since most faculty were pro-Meciar, they were morally and ideologically in the other camp. She felt there was a great gap between her teachers and there were very few role models she found inspiring. We knew that Meciar's regime toppled at the beginning of her studies and yet her teachers were predominantly Meciar leaning, which exacerbated the frustration and pointed out how slowly academia changes. In the chapter 2.3 Historical context I talk about one more story that accentuates the level of frustrations she must have felt: to fill time when selling newspapers at a kiosk summer job she practiced her observational skills and tried to guess who was pro and who was anti-Meciar, only to find out that the pro-Meciar people were to be her next role-models. She found other relevant and important people at work in the non-governmental sector. They were morally and ideologically closer to her own values. At this point, work took over as the primary environment where she would find her own place and meaning.

These accounts show that Karina contemplated the idea of academia being her place in life. After all education was the elevator, to use a metaphor, from her blue-collar background to a better life and thus university and academia would be the natural place to give her a sense of belonging. However, university and academia disappointed her on a few levels. Despite the fact that she had high hopes based on the intriguing entrance exams, the academic quality of the school disappointed her. Unlike some of her colleagues (researchers she would meet later)

who went to universities abroad and experienced better quality of education, she did not have this opportunity because of her biographical past. Coupled with nepotism and ideological incongruence she did not meet other important influences and role models who would inspire her towards a career in education. So, when the opportunity presented itself, she turned her attention to professional life in non-governmental sector soon after beginning her studies.

Later, Karina again entertained the idea of academia when she had successfully established her place in the NGO sector, however it did not align with her vision of the role of research and academia, and it did not align with the vision of her place in the civic society and society in general. She believed that Slovak academia in her field, was not accepting of engaged research geared towards doing data-based policy and is not about to change. To develop this point a little further I turn to Bourdieu again. He posited that it was the objective structures of a field (of academia) which determined what is still within the scope of the field and what lies beyond and defines the space for legitimate discussion and also regulates entry to the field. Bourdieu claimed that scientific worlds are like other social words in that they have a certain distribution of power and capital. In this case it is the dominant groups with more power and capital who ensure that their way of doing research is perpetuated and since Karina was not part of this group and thus had lesser power and capital, she saw no hope in changing this outlook of academia on research anytime soon. And since she had no experience with academia abroad, academia does not seem to be a viable exit strategy for her at all, whereas the NGO world brings her more satisfaction and fulfilment.

4.5.6 Sources of recognition – Professional life

As already mentioned Karina found her place in the non-governmental and non-profit sector, as it aligned with her ideological placement in the anti-Meciar camp and thematically aligned with her vision of her place in the civic society and society in general. Her work in the third sector was a source of recognition and validation. Detailed analysis of the opening sequences of the interview gave us important pointers relevant for understanding her case: she presented herself as a relevant speaking partner, who was 'there' in the important so-called 'golden years' of the third sector and when her field of interest was taking off and foundational work was being done. She was also there when the resources in the sector dried up and, together with others, she founded an organization which withstood that rocky period and now does not only contract research but also advocacy and sets the agenda in its field. She runs a relevant and established organization that is, to various degrees, recognized by state actors and other stakeholders within and outside of the third sector. She found her place of belonging and recognition, however, to get there professionally and to maintain it was hard, arduous and

mentally challenging work which left her feeling burnt out and questioning whether it was worth it.

When she entered the work environment, she was a young female from a blue-collar background with no social capital to build on, and few relevant skills or qualifications (2nd year student at the university). So how was it possible that she gained access to such ground-breaking research so quickly? On one hand she had strong personality traits and work ethic and when the opportunity presented itself, she jumped at it. On the other hand, the historic context was opportune for such action. The door to the third sector was opened by two gatekeepers, project leaders from her first few research projects. One of them was her professor at the university, by whom she was approached. Because of her work ethic and the quality of her work she was invited back a few times and after a while she joined the research team of a leading NGO of the time.

Finding her place – the thematic focus of her work

Karina found her place of belonging and sought recognition in this field because it was thematically aligned with her vision of her place in civil society and society in general. She felt that disadvantaged groups were wronged and she wanted to help not in the paternalistic way, but by treating them as equal partners. She helped by giving insights about their world to policy makers and the general public and advocating for improvement of their chances and conditions- their position in the social space, to use Bourdieu's terminology.

At the beginning of her career her attitude towards the minority group was empathetic. She could relate to the members of the disadvantaged group and some of their hardships, because of her own journey from her blue-collar background to where she was now. This transition had given her the ability to relate to the target group in a way that people who had not had some similar experience would not have. Over time, her attitude towards the target group and her role has changed and at the time of the interview she aimed to persuade policymakers to act, develop specific measures and help to implement them.

Karina's first experience with the minority group was difficult. From her current perspective of narrator of her story, she felt almost ashamed of her preconceived ideas about the nature of the field before her first contact. She felt very conscious about adopting the dominant discourse that was present in the society, because it tarnishes the image of the tolerant and open person who wanted to help that she had of herself. In the next segment she reconfirmed her image of being a fighter and she faced her own fears and prejudices in the field. This experience of

interaction with the field is presented as a rite of passage ritual that will result in being either fully in or fully out of engaging with the minority group because it was such a strong formative experience. For her, it meant she had found her calling, that she identified with it, as it aligned with her background and fits with the idea of her social role, the way she wanted to help society. To describe this rapprochement with the topic she used words connected with the early stages of love such as *"it elicits a romantic feeling"*, *"I fell in love"* and *"it is exciting"*, which were meant to emphasize that she found her true calling. This phrasing underlines the nature of her attitude towards the minority group. At the beginning of her work in the field it was empathetic. Just as romantic relationships evolve and have occasional period of frustration, so did her relationship with the target group and her work. She felt personally responsible because injustice was still being perpetuated and thus she felt obliged to stay with the topic. Her change of language highlighted the change in relationship. Now, the romance was gone, she aimed to persuade policymakers to act, come up with specific measures and helped to implement them on local and national level. Analysis of this theme helped us understand what made her stay in this precarious job and field and why she was ready to pay such a high price. She looked at her relationship with the target group more realistically. She perceived that the injustice on this group was still being perpetuated and she personally could not step down, as addressing them was her raison d'être in the society.

Karina's beginnings: Self-actualization in independent but difficult work

Karina portrays herself as a self-made researcher. She uses a lot of strong words to describe the way she gained experience in the third sector, including *"s/he threw brutal responsibility at us"*, *"we were terribly responsible types"*, *"they threw us into the deep end"*, *"museli sme si to odmakat'"* in the sense of '*we had to* work very hard'. These underline the challenging nature of the self-actualizing moments when she became active and connected to the NGO sector. The work was difficult not only because of the features of the work with the target group described above but also due to the work environment shaped by the structures of the NGO field and broader society.

Karina's self-presentation helped us to reconstruct and, in a way, also diagnose, the nature of the NGO sector and society in the late 1990's and early 2000's. Deeper and broader analysis of the sector is beyond the scope of this thesis - in fact, it could be the subject of a master thesis of its own. But I will highlight two themes that are relevant for my research questions and her case structure, namely the uneven distribution of responsibility and recognition, and the precarious position of a young female researcher.

Uneven distribution of responsibility and recognition

"simply into the space he le: **no** on one hand let us in on the other like threw in"

Karina talked about the times when she was invited to join the NGO environment. The beginning was tough, and she had to work very hard not only on research but also management tasks. Since she and a group of young researchers had to carry out the activities without much supervision she spoke about taking on "brutal responsibility", which in the context meant on one hand having a great deal of liability but also being dependable. In exchange for that she got a lot space for self-actualization, and also found herself in the center, doing groundbreaking and meaningful work. On top of that, it was also the period when she was able to become independent, move out of her family home and drop the menial jobs. These achievements served as internal validation that she had made it from the working class to the intellectual elite. However, recognition from external sources came only at a later stage, when she had made a name for herself and organizations started inviting her personally to carry out research and lead projects.

The late 1990'sand early years of 2000 was a period when Slovakia was changing generations and there was a lack of elites without blemished past from Meciar or Communist era. It was a time when hard working young people who, when at the right time on the right spot, were allowed to break through and work on projects which now would not be accessible for young people of that age, with that limited experience. They had these opportunities because the existing elites were not skilled or willing to engage in these new subjects and areas. If one had enough stamina and determination, a skillset and was willing to work hard, one could have gotten to a high impact position faster than it is possible in this field today. I have no actual research to support this claim, but to illustrate this, ¼ of the ministers from the government of Dzurinda (2002-2006) were between 30 and 40 years old and the Prime Minister himself was in his early forties when he took office. This phenomenon could be seen across many areas of society.

Karina presents herself and her colleagues working with her as *mladé baby or* 'young girls'. Throughout the main narration she mentioned her young age (18-21) a few times, always in disbelief at how it was possible that such young people carried out the whole project (design of the research, management of the field, data collection and analysis) independently with limited supervision. She compared it with the current situation when students from universities or young university graduates do not have the same work ethics and are not able to step up to

the challenge and work independently as she and her classmates had. More importantly, she also felt that they lack the feeling of responsibility and loyalty she and her colleagues had.

To answer her question why is it that it was possible then but, as she presented it, today young people need so much guidance, Bourdieu offers some insight. Karina started in a period when a new generation, 'class' in Bourdieu's terminology, emerged. According to him, this can happen when positions within social space are uncertain due to, for example, potentially new fields of science (in her case new research areas) emerging and as a result these positions possibly demand different dispositions that those habituated until then. Alternatively, it could happen in case of crisis or sudden change. In Karina's case, both of these situations happened - new areas of research emerged and there was a major political change in the ousting of Meciar. So there was a *"margin of freedom"* (Bourdieu 2000, p. 235) for the establishment of a new class. Karina herself mentioned that the "time period gave us a nudge". As mentioned in the section 2.3 Historical context it was the time when the NGO sector unified to work as an important societal force against the authoritarian practices of Meciarism, there were high expectations from the public and NGOs in terms of economic and social reforms and promises of transparency and the rule of law. Thus, through her personal story, we learned that the people from her generation felt the nudge as well and from the description in the historical context we found out that as a result indeed the NGO sector grew in size after the fall of Meciar.

Precarious position of a young female researcher

While being part of the research team of an established NGO, Karina and her female colleague were young women who were considered new to the research world. They were considered the new generation, doing ground-breaking research but still labelled as "dievčatá" (girls) and engaging in topics that were not connected with prestige and recognition. I will very briefly elaborate on the issue of sexism in the next segment, but I want to focus on their insider-outsider status first.

Their small team was considered an add-on to the established organization, integrated but detached and with a topic that was of secondary interest to the organization. In Simmel's language, she and her colleagues would be considered 'the stranger' ("*der Fremde*") a wandering person with the potential to uproot herself anytime, one that "*comes today and stays tomorrow*" (Simmel 1992, p.764). Karina became an element of the group she wandered into but was always labelled a stranger.

Simmel saw strangers rather positively as those offering goods that were not available in the old environment thus it could be understood that strangers brought progress and innovation. And this was what indeed they brought to the organization. Theirs was a new topic area that the organization could add to their portfolio and publications and thereby increase their sphere of influence and recognition. But, as Simmel rightly pointed out, strangers also occupy positions on the outskirts of society, or in this case the outskirts of the NGO and thus they were always going to be vulnerable in times of economic hardship. Since the stranger resided in the community but was not from there, she enjoyed little protection from networks that form among members of the internal community. This is exactly what happened in the NGO after the accession to the EU when funding for NGOs diminished. She and her team members were not dismissed but they were given conditions that were in their eyes not acceptable and so they were forced to make a fresh start.

To expand on Simmel, Bourdieu was less positive about the position of strangers. He saw them as people who were not part of the same class and who did not share the common dispositions. He believed that strangers who did not have a fixed, in this case integrated, place in an established organization would have lesser degree of symbolic power and social capital. The precariousness of Karina's position - of young unestablished researcher who was not only young and female but also was working on topics that were considered less prestigious, was further exacerbated by the financial hardship NGO faced as a result of accession of Slovakia into the EU.

Karina said that sexism and machismo-ism were a big part of her career when she started and still remained something that shaped her work, profession and degree of recognition at the time of the interview. Karina's research unit within the well-established NGO was dubbed the "Charlie's girls". The person's name is altered for anonymization purposes. I chose the name to point out that that the relationships and nature of the work was analogous to that of the agents from popular series called Charlie's angels[15]. In the series the attractive young girls did most of the work independently and Charlie gave them assignments, patted them on the back at the end and got the recognition. This was very like how Karina described her work and the relationships as well. Karina presented herself as having played along as was expected of her and that she hated it, because the Charlie's girls were not only doing all the intellectual and managerial work but on top of that they were making coffees and performing according to expectations in social interactions (laughing at sexist jokes, dressing up nicely). She spoke of frustration and anger that was associated with working doubly hard to prove herself. It made

[15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie%27s_Angels

her frustrated also because she was aware of it happening and her active role in it. To compensate she commiserated at length in an informal group (the new 'class' of young researchers in Bourdieu's sense) they formed with likeminded researchers and other professionals working in the field of human rights. Karina ended by saying that she viewed it like yet another obstacle or bitter pill to swallow on the way to establishing her position in the field, although that meant working doubly hard just to prove she belonged.

Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power (2000) helps us with the analysis here. The concept of symbolic power aims to explain how a person culturally and socially dominates the other and as a result it implies disadvantage and discrimination. He posits that the dominated needs to acknowledge the domination, albeit on the subconscious level and unwillingly. The dominated often help to construct and perpetuate the symbolic power but it is not of their own will, but it is a result of habitus, the embodied history of perceptions and dispositions, that guides their actions in the particular situations. Despite the fact that Bourdieu's model of social theory was not deterministic, there was little wriggle room for those like Karina, in disadvantaged positions but to play along since the cost of breaking through would be too high. Bourdieu claimed that only reteaching and counter training of both the dominated and dominating would help transform habitus which is a transformation that needs to happen on a societal level. According to Karina some of these changes had been happening over time.

Karina continued that it took her a long time before she had her legacy and symbolic power and therefore the ability to step out of the shadows of her older male researchers. Karina's self-presentation told us a lot about the nature of the NGO world and society. She also reflected on how it changed. The overt sexism and machismo-ism that was for her so strongly connected with the era of Meciarism and early 2000's was no longer present as there was a generational shift both in the NGO world and society. However, latent sexism and discrimination of female NGO representatives was still omnipresent. Women were disadvantaged and discriminated against in that men were listened to more, were invited to present as experts and their word had higher value and impact as more people are likely are to share their thoughts in online space and traditional media too. This would support Wetterer (1999) who questioned the possibility of neutralization of structures in terms of gender. She claimed that reteaching and counter training may have a structural effect on de-institutionalization of gender however as long as women reproduced and adjusted to the men's norms and patterns of behavior they only validated and legitimized the hierarchy. More research would be necessary to see the perception and strategies other women of Karina's and a younger generation of scientists employed and whether there had been a real change.

The precarious position of a young female researcher was further exacerbated by the fact that the NGO organizations in the field of human rights protection were heavily femininized. Most representatives of this segment of NGO sector, with the exception of those focused on legal counseling and economic analysis, are predominantly women. Karina offered the diagnosis that the reason why the sector is so feminized is due to the fact that the work was unstable, financially unattractive and attributed a weaker position in social space.

Drawn to the field like a moth to a flame

On one hand, the cost of being in this field and in her position currently seems very high, as she fights with burnout and fatigue from her work and the (position in) the NGO sector in general. On the other hand she feels trapped and has no viable options but to stay:

> *"you invest a lot of energy into it but I think it is like problem of each eh: boss of an organization that the fluctuation that you work with someone for a year and invest in them quite a lot of energy and he then leaves that that it's like you know I told myself and now I have it like a therapeutic sessions (laughter) I told myself a few times dammit but that I cannot do it that I simply have responsibility for the organization the organization is like my second child like like mhm I feel such a terrible responsibility lo-loyalty and actually all that the organization is currently I there is a terrible amount of such work also such that is invisible and unpaid" (quote from almost the end of the main narration)*

Karina said that she cannot leave the organization, because she felt like it was her second child. In this context it is clear to both interviewer and interviewee that, given ethical reasons and societal norms, it would be unacceptable, unless in the most extreme situations, to abandon your child, which is why she used this very strong metaphor to accentuate that she had no other options but to stay.

Karina cannot leave and escape the hardship not only because she felt responsible for the organization and she was the face of it. It was about losing her place of belonging and beginning the search for it again. On the individual level she would lose her rootedness, which was important for her personally. On the larger scale, she perceived that the injustice against the target group was still being perpetuated and she personally could not let go as it was her social role, her function in the system, to improve the welfare of others. To use Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital and its maintenance, he posited that the individual is willing to orient one's desires and buys into the illusion of what needs to happen in order to maintain the

symbolic capital as long as they deem that it is worth it. In this case the stakes were high: she talked of burnout, mental health problems and a lot of unpaid and invisible work, which was frustrating because none else will do it.

> *"well it it is possible but it takes its toll"* (excerpt from the end of the opening narration, she then said *"now you can ask questions"* by which she ended her opening narration)

Karina stayed but felt trapped, because she saw no other alternative for herself but to stay, neither within the sector nor in academia. She saw no alternative for herself in academia because, as mentioned above, she believed the Slovak academy's outlook on engaged research was not going to change anytime soon and thus it would not provide the social role and recognition she desired. On top of that, due to her biographic past she was not able to develop social capital with academia abroad and thus these doors were in her eyes shut as well. Karina saw no alternative within the NGO sector either, because she presented that these issues which mentally drain her are true for all director positions within the whole third sector. Seeing that the injustice towards the minority was still perpetuated and having no viable options are the main reasons why she stayed despite the fact that the working conditions were precarious, unstable and mentally draining.

One last comment to this excerpt from the interview: to describe her situation at work Karina used the term invisible and unpaid work, which is often used when talking about the double burden faced by women who worked and took care of children and household and thus were responsible for earning money and for a significant amount of unpaid work related to domestic duties. My interpretation was, and this is where the group interpretation would have been really useful, that this pointed to the subtle theme that went on in the background of the whole interview. It seemed that the double burden and finding a way to balance work and family life was a topic Karina had to face sooner than most women. When her mother passed away, societal expectations and her biographical background would have had her take on the role of the woman in the family, meaning she would be focused on getting recognition through her role as homemaker. Yet because of her drive she broke away from those expectations and chose to actualize herself through her career, which is also why I think she decided to mention only one personal event in the opening narration.

4.5.7 Resumé

Karina portrayed herself as an independent and hardworking woman who was driving herself to her limits and at times beyond healthy limits. Karina's life was a journey to find a new place

of belonging or, in Bourdieu's terms, position in the social space, that began in a blue-collar environment. The upward intergenerational social mobility mindset was important in the life of her family and demonstrated itself throughout Karina's life story as well as in her way of engaging with society. This mindset solidified itself even more firmly after the death of her mother and transformed into a "make it or falter" take on life, and she was determined to make it, sometimes at the expense of her well-being and mental health. Hard work, taking responsibility and perseverance when overcoming obstacles were the key traits which defined the life of her mother and Karina adopted and applied them herself in the drive towards achievement and seeking recognition in the academic and professional life.

The fall of the Meciar regime, which took place in her first year of university studies, came up already in the first few lines of the interview. The large biographic relevance of this historic event for Karina's life was confirmed later on when she reiterated that this period gave her and other young people from her generation an impulse to get more involved. Indeed, the analysis of historical events confirmed her story: the fight against Meciar unified the whole NGO sector and mobilized even larger numbers of people to attend the protests and participate in the parliamentary election of 1998. Moreover, this greater involvement resulted in the growth and diversification of the NGO sector in the few years thereafter.

Her life before university and her personal affairs in general were notably absent from her opening narration, which would suggest Karina deemed them irrelevant for her presentation of how leading representatives like herself become active. Karina presented herself as not active at high school at all. However, when comparing her life story and history I realized that she was actually quite active and civically engaged already before university, she just did not perceive and present herself that way, which was in stark contrast to how she presented her civic engagement and participation during her university and professional career. It was presented as a time when she recognized that she had started to make a difference for vulnerable groups. Her career in research and advocacy for marginalized groups was, on one hand, presented as her way of helping and engaging with society. On the other hand, being part of the civic society is where she found her place of belonging and it served her as a source of recognition.

Finding her way of participating in civil society gave Karina a clear social role, a sense of belonging in her place in the NGO network and also in her life. She achieved this position due to her lived experiences that were combined with the specific historical circumstances when it was possible for a new class of young researchers and activists to break through the social order and shape it so as to carve out space for themselves. It however came at a cost: Karina

never felt 'at home' in elite environments or at the events she considered necessary to attend when being an NGO director. The drive towards overachieving came at a high cost of significant mental pressure. The structural conditions of the NGO sector exacerbated the mental pressure and caused feelings of fatigue and burnout. She could not escape the situation as she saw no exit strategy, either through academia or other NGOs.

5. Discussion

This section provides the interpretation of results by setting them in the context of existing theories. Additionally, it serves as space where the main case structure of Karina's is compared and contrasted with the other cases to provide further depth of argumentation and breadth of observations.

The thesis aimed to analyze the path towards being socially and politically active and what subjective meaning and relevance did engagement and participation have in the lives of leading promoters of human rights issues in Slovakia. It also looked at which biographical experiences and historical events were important in their life stories and how they shaped their engagement and participation. Due to the complexity of the research question, I used interdisciplinary theoretical framework for the interpretation of the results.

The primary focus of the thesis was on engagement and participation, thus I used theoretical concepts from this field, primarily that of Ekman and Amnå (2012). In the process of analysis and interpretation it became clear that sociological theories, especially Bourdieu's theory of social space provides the central explanatory framework for the reconstruction of the path to becoming socially and politically active. I also drew from other theoretical disciplines to provide further depth to my interpretations. Psychological theory and values theory showed the importance of the endogenous factors like personality traits and guiding principles, and core values and motivations in influencing the actions and decisions of my interview partners. Finally, the organizational setting of the NGO world played a key role in shaping their path to becoming socially and politically active, making it an inherent part of the analysis and interpretation.

Contrary to the popular perception which to a degree was reflected in the narrations of my interview partners as well, participation does not start at the age of 18 when an individual reaches maturity and legal age for formally participating in society (most commonly demonstrated by voting eligibility). From the analysis of Karina's life story as well as the other respondents, we see that participation is woven through their whole life story, although they might not be aware of it or they might not perceive it as such. The following conclusions are based on analysis of interviews with leading representatives active in human rights NGOs, who were between 35 and 40 years old at the time of the interview. Their broader validity and generalizability would have to be confirmed in a larger scale study comparing more generations of NGO leaders.

5.1 Factors that influence becoming socially and politically active

Endogenous factors

Analysis of the interviews showed that there are particular personality traits which are relevant to becoming socially and politically active. Most of my respondents either presented themselves as or expressed the opinion that certain personality traits such as being hard working, dominant, outspoken, self-assured, and standing up to the authorities and generally active during high school were a precondition to becoming socially and politically engaged. Being active was understood very broadly almost in the sense of non-passive. They mentioned for example being a member of a sports club, member of a youth organization, class representative, or informal spokesperson. These are all positions where the individual is faced with intensive social interaction in varied environments and has the opportunity to practice and sharpen the social skills which are necessary for successful engagement with society or political participation. Some interviewees presented these personal traits as a precondition to becoming active in civil society or politics. For some the personality traits were even more important than any type of formalized participation or engagement in the early years in education.

In Karina's life story there are three main factors that, on personal level, shaped her life story. Firstly, her mother played a crucial role in the education and career of Karina. The core values of hard work, perseverance, responsibility and individual effort were passed on to her daughter and had a strong formative effect on her work ethic and identity. On top of that, her mother was the instigator of upwards intergenerational mobility efforts in that she pushed for transferring Karina to a more selective primary school. Research from Minello and Blossfeld (2017) confirms this. It showed that in Germany mothers played a crucial role in the education and career of their daughters, especially for the age cohort of my respondents. This was not so for the fathers. Interestingly enough, all but one interview partner spoke of their mothers or grandmothers as being their role models in terms of their personality or values orientation. It would be interesting to see if this pattern could be generalized for the post-communist youth generation, however I have not found such research available.

Secondly, the loss of her mother had a transformative effect on her life story (Butler, 2004). This life altering event, which forced her to see her life in two extremes to 'make it or fall down', reinforced the approach to life that was instilled in her, especially by the mother. The belief in self-efficacy or 'making it' was one of the main characteristics explaining the rest of her career path and life attitude in general.

Lastly, Karina presented her life story as a story of determination and self-efficacy, a belief in her own ability to combine knowledge and skills to achieve the desired goals (Bandura, 2012). According to the self-efficacy theory presented by Bandura in 1977, self-efficacy beliefs are the most important determinants of individual's action and how much resilience one shows when faced by challenges. Later Bandura revised his theory to include also environmental factors into what is known as social cognitive theory. This theory claims: *"human functioning is a product of the interplay of intrapersonal influences, the behavior individuals engage in, and the environmental forces that impinge upon them"* (Bandura, 2012, p 11). Karina demonstrated this through her narration of the events which took place after the death of her mother. She decided to make it (determination) and believed she was able to coordinate her efforts to at first graduate high school, then university and then succeed in a career on her own. My other interview partners also narrated their lives in such a manner that I was made to believe in their ability to reach their goals despite the setbacks. Perhaps the best example for this is Severin's non-linear life trajectory of a series of successes and setbacks.

The concept of self-efficacy and the associated personality traits provided good insight into the different psychological processes that accompanied the lives of my interview partners and shaped their life stories. These personality traits and the belief in self-agency are important however, believing that they can override real world structural and situational restrictions would ignore reality and underestimate their role in guiding people's actions. Therefore, the social cognitive theory also fell short in explaining the role of the environment as it doesn't give enough weight to the structural conditions which limit an individual's belief in their own ability to achieve their goals. This is where sociological theories, in particular that of Bourdieu's social space, capital and habitus, better capture the relationship between structure and action.

Exogenous factors

Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus and social theory were the main sociological theoretical concepts I employed to conceptualize the case structure. Bourdieu did not look at individual's action through the prism of their personal traits or attitudes instead he talked about the realm of possibilities and expectations in general in connection with symbolic power. He posited that chances and expectations people have are directly linked with the recognition an individual received, or in other words, the symbolic power they had. Bourdieu claimed that power arises from the amount of financial, cultural, social and symbolic capital people have. Or put differently, people's position in the social space governs what their objective chances were and how much they felt like they could achieve. So, Bourdieu's concept of social space did not

dispute the concept of self-efficacy, he just claimed that individuals' position in social space limits how much self-efficacy they can believe they have. It also regulates how empowered they feel and how much desire for power they in the present have.

From Karina's self-presentation we saw that the family had lower economic and social capital resulting from her blue-collar background and their decline after the fall of Communism. However, her mother had some cultural capital (working in education) and her father had some social capital and symbolic power as he was in a leading position within his blue-collar job, which gave them a position in the social field that Karina was able to grasp the opportunity for higher education. The possibility to attend a more select primary school allowed Karina to aspire for more achievement and gain more power. Seeing she could succeed provided her with further motivation, boosted her belief in her ability to achieve her goals and desire to succeed elsewhere. It also gave her more social and cultural capital to grasp more power and more space for maneuvering, towards higher status and higher position in the social space.

This was possible due to specific historical circumstances as the upward intergenerational mobility orientation was a shared experience of my interviewees' age cohort, especially for girls and young women. When they were in primary school Communism fell, which brought about massive transformation of societal and economic structures. In terms of the labor market, it meant growth in predominantly middle-class jobs. As a result, the education patterns changed, resulting in more opportunities to acquire high school education with graduation certificate (matura) and increased interest in attaining university education, especially for girls. Research by Džambazovič and Gerbery (2018) shows that in terms of relative social mobility, women, in comparison to men, had seen significant decrease in the share of non-qualified workers and greater expansion of the upper classes. The move up was particularly more difficult for men no matter what class they were in.

Karina's story illustrates the dynamism within Bourdieu's social theory (2000) well. He claims that action ('practice' in his usage) gets reinterpreted within the particular social interaction, see Figure 3. The action is a result of structure via the means of habitus, which, through perception of historical circumstances and practice again shape the structure. Habitus comes out through practice and it allows individuals to perceive, decipher and act in situations based on past experience and structures that govern that experience. Individuals do things that structure pre-disposes them to do - however, it is applied situationally and thus there is a room for interpretation when acting. The degree of room is dependent on the situation, area of activity and the position individuals occupy in the social space.

Figure 3: A scheme of habitus in action
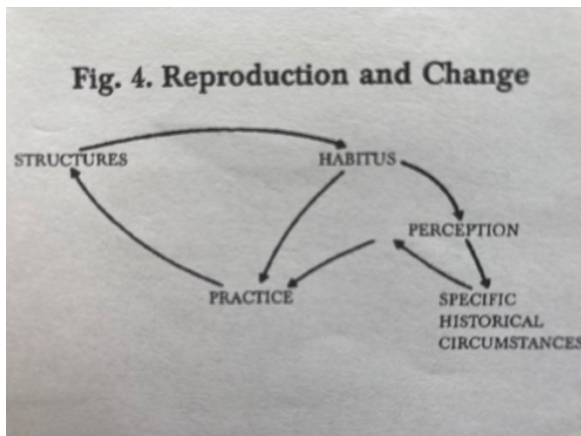
Source: Robbins 2000, p 169

The fact that moving up was particularly more difficult for men in Slovakia did not mean that it was easy for Karina and other females from her generation. Moving up from a blue-collar background was not only an arduous process but, according to Bourdieu, it can never be fully successful as the tendency to act a certain way did not become completely natural or automatic. We saw this in Karina's story about interacting with the political elites. Her self-presentation within this story pointed to the latent mechanism of reproduction and change of habitus. Form her narration we knew Karina inhabited the same social space as intellectual elites of the NGO sector, but this story also showed us that she did not quite belong as the manners and appropriate behavior did not come to her naturally. As a result of her blue-collar background, dispositions she acquired through education over time and the cultural and social capital she gained through her education and work, she learned to decipher and respond in the 'correct' way, however she always had to be aware not to slip up in her new role, and that required additional mental energy.

Personal values

From my analysis of all the interviews it became clear that personal values and standing on the right side in moral conflict and in historical events was of high importance to my interview partners. Fairness, equality, justice, respect, tolerance, achievement, and caring for others were the highest values that transpired as highly relevant from the life stories of my interview partners. Many of them spoke directly about feelings of injustice, which translated into an imperative to speak up and to stand up and say something when someone is treated unfairly, which was one of the main drivers to join or remain in the NGO sector. Many were socialized into believing that helping others is good and beneficial.

In the case of Karina, but also the others, standing up for what was right, defending an individual or a group and addressing injustices of this world was central in their narrations of themselves. It was something they did not only in their careers as adults but developed and practiced over the years in their personal lives as well. Karina found her place in the NGO sector rather than academia as it aligned with her ideological placement in the anti-Meciar camp and, in terms of values, aligned with her vision of her place in civic society and society in general.

The theory of basic individual values of Shalom H. Schwartz (2012) provided further depth to the analysis of the personal values of my interview partners in two ways. According to Schwartz, people's personal values can be understood by looking at small sets of values which he called 'value types'. These are arranged in a circular model (see Figure 4 below). An individual will often score higher on a few dominant value types and lower on those placed directly opposite. Based on robust data, Schwartz developed the model further and developed two motivational dimensions which help to explain people's actions.

Figure 4: Proposed circular motivational continuum of 19 values with sources that underlie their order
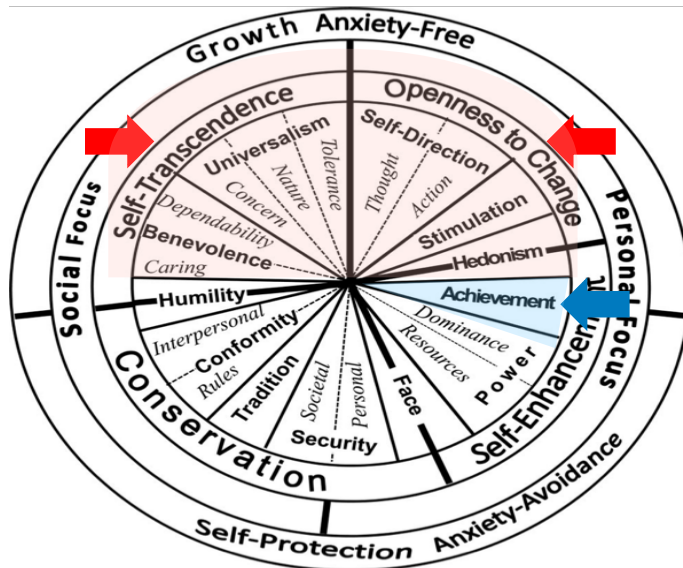
Source: Schwartz et al. 2012, p. 7

Schwartz's theory helped me to describe the motivation drivers of leaders in human rights NGO sector to engage with others, which translates into their work. Firstly, based on the analysis of the cases, we saw that leading representatives in the human rights NGO sector are more likely think about themselves and others with a focus on societal outcomes as opposed to individual

outcomes. This is a hypothesis formulated in the process of my qualitative research and its general applicability for human rights NGOs would need to be verified using quantitative methodology.

According to Schwartz, people who think with a focus on societal outcomes are more likely to think along the lines of 'if others are doing well, so will I' and the joint outcomes for themselves and others. They are likely to be concerned about others' welfare and thus are likely to work in jobs that serve public interest rather than their own individual successes and achievements. This does not preclude them from being ambitious and driven towards success, on the contrary. As we observed on my respondents, they were all driven towards achievement. However, their thinking about themselves was not that they need to advance in terms of expertise or dominance in order to enhance their own chances in life but rather they need to succeed in order to enhance chances for others, which will in turn make their life better.

Schwartz's model stipulates that people who focus on societal outcomes consider the value types 'universalism' and 'benevolence' important, which means the values they consider as most important are more likely be tolerance, dependability, care and concern for others. We saw these values throughout Karina's narration. For example, when she spoke of her beginnings in the NGO sector, she said that one of the reasons why she was able to succeed at challenging work without much supervision despite her young age and lack of work experience was her dependability. Also, when Karina speaks about her inability to leave her job despite feelings of burnout and serious health impacts, one of the things she said is that her job is not done, the injustice on the minority group is still perpetrated and thus she cannot leave. In doing that she prioritized the welfare of others over her own wellbeing. When looking at the top values the interviewees presented, they were all either directly linked to Schwartz's value types of universalism and benevolence or were closely connected (tolerance, caring for others, fairness, equality, justice, respect).

Secondly, Schwartz's theory helped me to understand another dimension of motivation for the actions of my respondents which could not be explained by either the endogenous or exogenous factors. Being able to think and act independently were highly valued and recurring themes in the narrations of all my interview partners. Karina presented herself as such that it was important for her to learn and achieve for herself, and that the independent albeit challenging work of a young researcher was fulfilling and thrilling. Independence and self-reliance (see the analysis of 'sama' in the sense of 'on her own' in Karina's case) was also the central narration theme when she spoke of overcoming her biographical past, be it her blue-collar background or loss of her mother. The term 'sama' or 'sám' was also often used in

narrations of two of my other respondents, who spoke of self-reliance but also the loneliness of being in a director position, which is full of complex and challenging work which remains invisible and one does not get recognition for. Schwartz argued that people who score high on self-direction and stimulation are extremely open to change as opposed to conservation and maintenance of the status quo. It was very characteristic of my respondents at the beginnings of their career to be able to fight against the status quo, challenging the norms, people in power and their positions in social space (as a new class). And for some it remained an important motivational factor in their life trajectories. However, two of my interview partners felt burned out and tired of the work yet they felt trapped in their current positions and are maintaining the status quo. Thus, I wonder if this motivational dimension of openness to change is not more influenced by age, rather than motivational drive.

Lastly, as I already mentioned, the leading representatives of human rights sector were narrating their lives through the prism of achievement. This value was important for all of them, as most of the life stories of my interview partners were narrated as a chain of successes and in some cases setbacks as well. On one hand, an orientation towards achievement is a necessary precondition to become a leading representative in any field. On the other hand, my interview partners did not all display the same dimensions of achievement as defined by Schwartz, which could point to an interesting dynamic among leaders in the NGO sector. Most of my interview partners would probably see themselves strongly agreeing to their self-description as *"He thinks it is important to be ambitious."* however items *"Being very successful is important to him."* and *"He wants people to admire his achievements"* (Schwartz, 2012, p 25) would receive a greater variety of responses from those believing it is not like them and those claiming it is very much like them. It is my hypothesis that the degree of agreement with those two items would correlate with their score on items from the hedonism value type (the adjacent value type next to achievement).

Achievement was closely connected with recognition, as I believe achievement needs to be recognized and validated, internally or externally, in order to be perceived as such. Karina for example, did not feel the need to be admired by the masses but by a few relevant people who matter in her professional and personal life. The ultimate recognition for her was the pride her parents felt and the unsolicited and unconditional recognition she got for her achievements from her family. The other source of external recognition came from her work environment and she felt like she had to fight for it. She felt that recognition in her research field is unevenly distributed. At the beginning of her professional career in research, age and seniority were the discriminating factors, later in her career it was gender. In the roughly first half of her career, it

was the senior project leaders (publicly well-known persons) who received the external recognition, despite the fact that it was Karina and the other young researchers who carried out the tasks. She then remarked that even at the time of the interview, men researchers and experts in her field were being recognized for the same work, they were invited to more panels and discussions, followed more on social media and their contributions got more traction. Daniela felt the unequal distribution of recognition already in high school and experienced it on regular basis even at the time of the interview (see more below in gender aspects of working in NGO).

Formative moments of history

At the beginning of my research, it was my assumption that there would be one most important formative moment in the life stories of my interview partners, which was shared by them all, namely the fall of the Meciar regime. However, even for this generation of young professionals there was no single event which seemed to be the defining one. The most important one for Karina was the fall of Meciarism, for Severín and Alexej it was the fall of Communism, for Daniela it was the murder of Kodiak and for Ernest it was when Fico became Prime Minister for the first time and Harabin was appointed Minister of Justice. The most important moment was selected based on subjective meaning and the biographical importance of the event for the life of the individual. It did not mean that the others were deemed irrelevant. On the contrary, they were considered very relevant for the society, just not as impactful for their own life. These events served as a strong impetus for active young people to become more energized and engaged. These events were seen as those that brought about societal change that resulted in some larger space for maneuvering and rearranging of the social space and social order.

5.2 Participation and engagement

Participation and engagement before becoming professionally engaged

Whereas Karina's success in university and career thereafter were presented as a story of successful participation, she explicitly said she was not active during high school. However, when contrasting her life story and history I found out that Karina was actually quite engaged already at high school. This pattern was shared by all of my respondents.

Using the typology of Ekman and Amnå (2012) we can see that Karina was engaged in high school more than most young people between 15 and 29 years nowadays. Looking at the

matrix, the only type of participation she did not engage in during her high school years was formal political participation, which is understandable as most forms of formal political participation were not accessible to her at that age (i.e., voting, being in unions).

In terms of my other interview partners, they were all either involved, civically engaged or participated politically (see Ekman and Amnå matrix (2012) on page 15 for more details) to some extent: all were following current affairs, all mentioned that they read newspaper and many reported carrying them around ostentatiously as a political symbol. Three interviewees had mentioned attending the anti-Meciar protests, all but one mentioned they were class representatives, one was a member of youth organization and two were members of youth sports clubs yet none of these acts were presented as being civically or politically active. On the contrary some were sure to point out that they did not engage in, nor did they volunteer for an organization during high school or university years and focused on personal growth, which gave me the insight that their perception of what counts as being engaged before devoting their time to it professionally is very narrow.

My interpretation is that my respondents did not perceive it so themselves because that was not the perception, they had in mind of one who is engaged and participating. They were judging their past participation and engagement from the current perspective, so their frame of reference was likely the level of participation of young people nowadays or even themselves currently. The civil society sector is more developed, differentiated and formalized than that of 20 years ago, the possibilities of young people to be engaged were more limited, volunteering was not so widespread and accessible.

Additionally, it was common to perceive the pre-political not as part of doing good for the benefit of others or as being active. This is especially true for activities carried out during high school. Research from Bútorová and Šumšalová (2020) confirmed this trend. It suggests that 27% of adults cannot describe what constitutes an 'active person' and 39% of adults think it is a person who is not only interested in public affairs but also does something (like taking part in discussions, voluntary activities, giving donations etc.).

Moreover, the definition of who is perceived as active was also linked to gender. When describing gender differences in participation, Walther (2011) claimed that women did not participate less, they did it differently than men: they engaged in non-formal or informal activities. Karina did not engage in any forms of formal political participation. The general discourse often presented the formal participation as the one that counts and thus, thus she did not identify herself as participating. Additionally, analysis of the other female interviews

uncovered that there are societal expectations to how girls and boys should behave. Being active, dominant, outspoken, self-assured, and standing up to the authorities was associated with behaviors typically connected to males and most of these were also traits my interview partners mentioned as relevant in the context of their life stories of becoming active in social and political life. Thus, characteristics that predispose one to become engaged and participating in society were more likely to be associated with boys and men rather than girls and women. Bourdieu also made an interesting point which was relevant here. Those who are kept-away from the society and thus are not exposed, will not be disposed to engage in the world, thereby will be that more disconnected (creating a vicious circle). Bourdieu spoke of marginalized communities however I found it relevant also for the young girls. If they were kept out of meaningfully participating at their school, community or country, they were going to be disinterested and disengaged in these institutions as well. They would not be learning the rules of the game, and the later they connect the harder would it be for them to understand them and the more lost they would be since the rules are perpetually changing (in symbolic interaction between body and environment).

Additionally, the analysis showed that engagement and participation was linked to socioeconomic background. Some of my interview partners mentioned that they could not get actively engaged in a formal organization as they were focused on making money to help support the family. Based on their stories I found out that one is more likely to be active in the civil society and invest time in NGOs when they have support from their environment and when they have financial resources to make ends meet. Both of these are unequally distributed among the Slovak population. This was supported also by Walther (2011) who claimed that political interest, political participation and engagement in clubs and organizations are linked to socioeconomic background because those who hold more jobs or have side-jobs to cover their immediate needs do not have the time or means to be engaged.

Working in the NGO sector

Most of my respondents belonged to the new class of young people who, after fall of Meciarism, were ready to be part of the reconstruction and transformation of Slovakia towards a stable democratic country. The others joined the fight when Fico, threat to the pro-democratic orientation, came to power. Karina identified with the sector as it gave her a sense of belonging in life. Severin felt a calling, when he was offered a job which aligned with his values. He had the right set of skills and motivation and was willing to take on a challenge when approached. Once this alignment was gone, due to political change, he left the job. Alexej was growing up with an inclusive mindset but felt the need to become engaged upon returning from year at a

university abroad. It was the quality of education, and an emphasis on being active, be it in arts or civically at the university abroad, which translated into more motivation to get engaged upon return. Daniela described herself as being drafted into party politics based on her successful career in the NGO world. She described it as when the opportunity came, she took it and dealt with the negative consequences later. Ernest was working aboard when Fico came to power and he came to realize that his work needs to turn to Slovakia. In his mind the real work happened at the political level and was more acute than ever because Fico's government disregarded the rule of law and did not listen to arguments. All of my respondents at some point in their career realized they wanted to change the structural framework in which vulnerable groups and individuals operate and thus turned their attention to advocacy and influencing policy making.

When my interview partners entered the workforce they were considered the new generation - new class, to use Bourdieu's terminology - with new drive, new skills and their past unblemished from being involved in Communism or Meciarism. The emergence of their new class and relatively easier access to high impact work in the otherwise closed and hierarchical world of NGO's was possible due to a *"margin of freedom"* (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 235). This period lasted for a few years when positions within the new social space were uncertain. This enlarged ability for maneuvering in the social space was because the time between 1998 and 2004 brought major political change (ousting of Meciar from politics) and the emergence of new research fields and growth in the NGO sector.

As a result, the new class had a lot of space for self-actualization, they were carrying out ground-breaking and meaningful work and it allowed them to become independent from the nuclear family. However, it came at the cost of hard work and significant responsibility, which was connected with mental hardship. As a result of the emergence of a new class, the young NGO workforce was also in a precarious position. They were considered the strangers (Simmel, 1992), who bring innovation and new project areas but also occupy positions on the outskirts which makes them vulnerable in times of (economic) hardship. We saw this precarious position in case of Karina in particular, where she and her team members were given work terms and conditions that were not acceptable and so they were forced to start from the beginning. For Bourdieu (2000) they were a new class, which means they did not share the common dispositions with the 'old' NGO and researchers' class. They did not have a fixed and integrated place in the social space and thus had a lesser degree of symbolic power and social capital. They had a lot of freedom but had to work extra hard to achieve success.

Gender played a substantial role in the engagement and participation of the female interview partners. Daniela spoke of different treatment based on gender in high school already. She mentioned that she was not ready to adhere to typical female behavior expectations, which she described as being less active, dominant, outspoken, self-assured, and standing up to authorities than her male classmates. When comparing the list of Daniela with Slovak research (Čerešník 2011), men are expected to be aggressive, independent, dominant and decisive, which aligns with what Daniela was mentioning. As a result, she had to excel and work twice as hard academically and she did not receive as much recognition for her extra work as her male counterparts.

Karina spoke about gender differences only when joining the labor market. Karina spoke of frustration and anger which were due to the fact that she had to work twice as hard to prove herself and she was expected to also carry out typically female jobs (making coffee, taking notes). It made her that much more frustrated because she was aware that she was participating in the maintenance and reproduction of these norms and structures that were discriminatory towards females. Both Karina and Daniela said that overt sexism and machismo-ism were a big part of their career when they started, and gender inequality still remained something that shaped their current work and manifested itself especially in the degree of recognition females received. My male interviewees did not thematize gender aspects of work at all.

Another aspect that only my female interviewees talked about was work life balance and balancing the feeling of guilt when devoting time to work and family. Both my interview partners said that having a supporting partner who takes on household and childrearing responsibilities is a prerequisite for double career relationships and is compatible with work in an NGO. Having it all is not possible without the supporting network of a partner and extended family. I would like to mention that only one of my male interview partners had a child, so the conclusion that this is a theme only for females in human rights NGOs would have to be confirmed on a larger sample and has probably changed to a certain degree during the last year of lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alternatively, the non-thematizing of childrearing and housework could be also attributed to the fact that NGOs in the field of human rights protection were heavily femininized. Most representatives of this segment of the NGO sector, with the exception of those focused on legal counselling and economic analysis, were predominantly women and thus it is a non-issue for the few men who are present.

It is worth highlighting that the emergence of a new class as a result of the margin of freedom meant structural changes where young people were accepted at the table, but gender

structures remained largely unchanged, and they took a generation to improve. Bourdieu (2000) believed that only reteaching and counter training of both the dominated and dominating would help on a societal level and thus also at the organizational level of the NGO sector. Wetterer (1999) however questioned the possibility to neutralize structures in terms of gender. She claimed that as long as women reproduced and adjusted to the men's norms and patterns of behavior they only validated and legitimized the hierarchy. Daniela felt strong disillusionment about other females who did not identify with the topic as strongly as she did. She blamed them for perpetuating the systematic means of discrimination by not helping to promote the agenda or, in the worst-case scenario, by putting up hurdles in the fight to improve the conditions of women, something that was still happening at the time of the interview. It would take further research into the perception and strategies of different female generations in NGOs to see what has changed over the years and how, in the area of gender balance.

6. Conclusion

The thesis aimed to analyze the path towards being socially and politically active. It focused on uncovering the subjective meaning and relevance of participation and engagement in the lives of leading professionals who are 35 to 40 years and working in the non-governmental sector on human rights issues in Slovakia. It also looked at which biographical experiences and historical events were important in each person's life story and how those shaped each person's engagement and participation.

To that end I carried out five narrative biographical interviews (according to Schütze) and employed biographical hermeneutic case reconstruction and global analysis (according to Rosenthal) for the analysis of the data.

To interpret the results, I used interdisciplinary theoretical framework. The primary focus of the thesis was on engagement and participation, thus I used theoretical concepts from this field, primarily that of Ekman and Amnå (2012). In the process of analysis and interpretation it became clear that sociological theories, especially Bourdieu's theory that of social space provides the central explanatory framework for the reconstruction of the path to becoming socially and politically active. I also drew from other theoretical disciplines to provide further depth to my interpretations. Psychological theory and values theory showed the importance of the endogenous factors like personality traits and guiding principles, and core values and motivations in influencing the actions and decisions of my interview partners. Finally, the organizational setting of the NGO world played a key role in shaping their path to becoming socially and politically active, making it an inherent part of the analysis and interpretation.

My researched showed that leading representatives in the human rights NGOs were presenting themselves as not civically or politically engaged prior to university or professional life. However, when contrasting their life story and history I found out that all of them were actually quite involved, engaged and participating already at high school, even though they themselves did not perceive that way. That led me to conclude that people do not perceive their 'pre-political activities' (in the sense used by Ekman and Amnå 2012), as real civic engagement or political participation. These 'pre-political activities' include taking an interest in politics and society, discussing politics with friends, following news. What is even more puzzling that classic political activism such as attending protests, signing petitions or wearing a political symbol is equally not considered as true participation, when done at a younger age (high school). The reason why this finding is significant is because traditional quantitative

instruments often do not capture this dimension when measuring engagement and participation of young people especially, and thus it creates a false conclusion that young people are disengaged.

Secondly, the research showed that people in this age cohort belonged to the newly formed class that emerged as a result of major political change (ousting of Meciar from government) and emergence of new fields in lieu of growth in the NGO sector. As a result, the new class had a lot of space for self-actualization. They were carrying out ground-breaking and meaningful high impact work which in times of a stabilized social order would not necessarily be accessible to young people. However, it came at a cost of hard work and great responsibility, which was connected with mental hardship and burnout which persist until the present day. Additionally, as is typical for a new class, which is still not fully integrated and is located on the outskirts, the young NGO workforce found themselves in a precarious and vulnerable position. This finding is alarming because it described the NGO sector, which aims to help others, as a precarious and mentally unhealthy environment. Such a situation is unsustainable and could be one of the leading reasons why the sector has such trouble in attracting and retaining talented young recruits.

Last of all, gender played a substantial role in the engagement and participation of the female interview partners. Differences in treatment and discriminatory practices were already perceived during high school, but they became more pronounced as they entered the labor market. As a result, women interviewees reported they had to excel and work twice as hard, they had to endure overt discrimination and they did not receive as much recognition for their work as male counterparts. The overt discriminatory practices disappeared over the course of a generation, however latent discrimination persisted into the present days. Additionally, my research found that personality traits that predispose one to become engaged and participating in society were more likely to be associated with boys and men rather than girls and women. This finding shines a light on the problem with the lack of females in formal politics in Slovakia, which as we see, starts already in education when girls are systematically discouraged from participating and in this way we are losing key talents for the benefit of us all.

While the size of my sample, focusing on constructing only one full case structure, and, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the inability to interpret more often in a group setting, may limit the generalizability of my results, I believe this analysis made a significant contribution to increasing the understanding of the complex interplay between involvement, civic engagement, activism and formal political participation. These conclusions need a larger scale

study to increase their validity and to make them more generalizable for NGO leaders in general. It would, for example, be valuable to compare these findings with the new generation that has entered the NGO world recently to uncover their participation paths, their perception of discriminatory practices based on gender and socioeconomic background and their perception of working conditions and mental health. It seems, from partial statements within this research, that they might be more self-protective and assertive than their older counterparts. In my research I have discovered that mothers seem to be primary role models for people who decide to work in the NGO sector. It would be interesting to see if this is applicable on a larger scale and also to further study the role mothers play in the upward intergenerational social mobility of their daughters. More research should be done to understand the roles mothers play in their daughters' careers and how it influences their career choices and decisions.

This research also confirmed that we need more qualitative research or at least mixed methods research designs in engagement and participation research in order to grasp the diversity of political and pre-political activity. Only then will we be able to capture fully what role young people play in these activities. Only by gathering data that paint a more complete picture can the relevant stakeholders come with effective measures to support active citizenry and political socialization and education of political representatives. These conclusions should also raise alarms to the relevant stakeholders as it calls for an audit of the working environment, including mental health and wellbeing of workers and volunteers, in non-governmental organizations.

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8. Appendix

1. Abstract - English

2. Abstract - Deutsch

3. The interview guide / opening questions and questions from exmanente Nachragen

4. Rules of transcription

5. Sequencing categories (Rosenthal, 1995, pp 240-241)

Appendix 1: Abstract in English

The research shows that people do not perceive their pre-political activities as part of the political engagement and participation process. Traditional quantitative instruments often do not capture this dimension when measuring engagement and participation of young people especially, and thus it creates a distorted image of young people being disengaged. Secondly, the research pointed at precariousness of work in the non-governmental sector that leads to mental health problems and burnout among the leading representatives of the sector.

The research on participation in Slovakia mostly uses quantitative methods to look at either determinants of participation, or at patterns and degrees of how civically engaged or disengaged people are. However, these approaches do not bring the perspective of the respondents themselves, and thus lack a deeper understanding of the participation processes and the meaning of participation in the young people's lives. This leads to the fact that only part of the complex phenomena of participation gets analyzed and also that certain populations are left out of the research altogether (such as women, minorities, youth).

The purpose of this thesis is to shine light on the subjective meaning and relevance of participation and engagement in the lives of leading professionals working in the non-governmental sector in Slovakia and thereby analyze their path to being socially or politically active - to show a broader spectrum of what engagement and participation in the public sphere means. To that end I carried out five narrative biographical interviews (according to Schütze, 1983) and used biographical hermeneutic case reconstruction and global analysis (according to Rosenthal, 1993) for the analysis of the data.

My findings call for a larger scale research into the mechanisms of how people become active and engaged or disengaged. It also calls for improvement of standard research tools used to measure engagement and political participation. Only by gathering data that paint the full - or at least more complete - picture, can the relevant stakeholders come with effective measures to support active citizenry and political socialization and education of political representation. These conclusions should also raise alarm at the level of relevant stakeholders as it calls for an audit of the working environment, including mental health and wellbeing of workers and volunteers, in non-governmental organizations.

Key words: narrative biographical interviews, biographical hermeneutic case reconstruction, participation, engagement, Slovakia, non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations

Die Masterarbeit zeigt, dass Menschen ihre vorpolitischen Aktivitäten nicht als Teil des Engagement- und Beteiligungsprozesses wahrnehmen. Oft berücksichtigen die in der Slowakei bei der Erfassung des Themas verwendeten traditionellen quantitativen Instrumente diese Dimension nicht, was besonders bei der Messung des Engagements und der Beteiligung der jungen Menschen als problematisch wahrgenommen wird, da dadurch ein verzerrtes Bild ihrer Engagiertheit und Partizipation entsteht. Die Untersuchung wies weiter auf die Prekarität der Arbeit in den gemeinnützigen- und Nichtregierungsorganisationen hin, die bei den führenden Vertretern*Innen des Sektors zu psychischen Problemen und zum Burnout führt.

Die Partizipationsforschung in der Slowakei verwendet vor allem quantitative Methoden, um Faktoren oder Muster und Grade des bürgerschaftliches Engagement und der Beteiligung zu untersuchen. Bei diesen Ansätzen fehlt jedoch die Perspektive der Befragten selbst, und daher fehlt ein tieferes Verständnis der Beteiligungsprozesse und der Bedeutung der Teilnahme am Leben der jungen Menschen. Dies führt dazu, dass nur ein Teil der komplexen Beteiligungsphänomene analysiert wird, und bestimmte Bevölkerungsgruppen, wie z.B. Frauen, Minderheiten und Jugendliche, von der Forschung ausgeschlossen oder in ihr falsch dargestellt werden.

Damit ist das Ziel der Masterarbeit, die subjektive Bedeutung und Relevanz der Partizipation und der Beteiligung im Leben der im nichtstaatlichen Sektor in der Slowakei tätigen führenden Fachkräfte zu beleuchten, und damit die Analyse ihres Weges zur sozialen oder politischen Aktivität aufzustellen, um eine umfassendere Darstellung davon zu gewinnen, was das Engagement und die Beteiligung an der Öffentlichkeit bedeuten. Zu diesem Zwecke führte ich fünf narrative biografische Interviews nach Schütze, und für die Datenanalyse die biografische hermeneutische Fallrekonstruktion und die globale Analyse nach Rosenthal durch.

Die Schlussfolgerungen meiner Forschung erfordern eine umfassendere Untersuchung der Mechanismen, welche die Menschen aktiv und engagiert oder nicht aktiv machen. Ausserdem erfordert sie auch eine Verbesserung der Standardforschungsinstrumente zur Messung des Engagements und der politischen Beteiligung. Nur dank der Erfassung der Daten, die ein vollständiges oder zumindest vollständigeres Bild vermitteln, können relevante Interessengruppen wirksame Maßnahmen zur Unterstützung einer aktiven Bürgerschaft und politischen Sozialisierung sowie zur Bildung politischer Beteiligung ergreifen. Diese Schlussfolgerungen sollten auch auf der Ebene der relevanten Interessengruppen Alarm schlagen, da sie ein eine Überprüfung des Arbeitsumfelds erfordern, welches auf die

psychische Gesundheit und das Wohlbefinden der Arbeitnehmer*Innen und Freiwilligen*Innen in den Non-profit- und Nichtregierungsorganisationen Einfluss hat.

Schlagwörter: narrative biografische Interviews, biografische hermeneutische Fallrekonstruktion, bürgerschaftliches Engagement, Beteiligung, Partizipation, Non-profit- und Nichtregierungsorganisationen

Deutscher Titel: Biografien junger slowakischen Persönlichkeiten in der Politik und Gesellschaft

Opening question:

Slovak:

Úvodná veta v 1. rozhovore: **Dnešný rozhovor je o tom, ako sa mladý ľudia stávajú lídrami v ich oblasti a komunite.**

Úvodná veta v 2. rozhovore: **Dnešný rozhovor je o tom, ako sa ľudia stávajú aktívnymi v ich oblasti a komunite.**

Úvodná veta 3.-5. rozhovor: **Dnešný rozhovor je o tom, ako sa ľudia stávajú aktívni v ich oblasti a komunite, špecificky ma zaujíma ľudskoprávna oblasť**

Rovnaká veta pre všetky otázky: Chcela som ťa/Vás poprosiť porozprávať mi ten tvoj/Váš životný príbeh, všetko čo ti/Vám k tomu napadne a považujete za dôležité. Zober/te si na to toľko času, koľko budeš/te chcieť. Nebudem ťa/Vás prerušovať. Len si budem písať poznámky, ku ktorým by som sa vrátime neskôr.

Opening sentence in first interview: **Today's interview is about the way how young people become leaders in their field or community.**

Opening sentence in second interview: **Today's interview is about the way how people become active in their field or community.**

Opening sentence in third fifth interview **Today's interview is about the way how people become engaged in their field or community, specifically I am interested in human rights field.**

Same narration question for all: I wanted to kindly ask you to tell me your life story, whatever comes to your mind in this regard and you consider relevant. Take as much time as you want. I will not interrupt you. I will write notes and then come back to them when you are finished.

List of follow up questions in the last phase of questioning (exmanente Nachfragen phase)

Slovak: Ktoré miľníky považuješ/te v tvojom/vo Vašom živote za dôležité, ktoré ťa/Vás spätne pozerajúc priviedli až sem?

English: Which milestones do you consider important in your life that have brought you all the way here?

Slovak: Boli osoby, ktoré formovali tvoju/Vašu cestu? Ktoré to boli a v akom smere?

English: Were there any persons that were relevant on your journey here? Which ones and in what way?

Slovak: Ako sa ľudia stávajú aktívni?
English: How do people become engaged?

Slovak: Vnímaš, že sú rozdiely na geografickej úrovni?
English: Are there any differences across the regions of Slovakia?

Slovak: Sú nejaké predpoklady, vlastnosti, ktoré majú ľudia, ktorí sa aktivizujú a stávajú lídrami?
English: Are there any prerequisites or characteristics that people who become actively engaged leaders share?

Len v 2 rozhovoroch: Sú podľa teba rôzne typy lídrov v sektore ľudskoprávnom?
Only in 2 interviews: are there different types of leaders in the human rights sector?

Appendix 4: Transcription rules

,	= short pause
(4)	= duration of the break in seconds
Yes:	= Prolonged sound
((laughing))	= comments of the person transcribing the interview
/	= beginning of the commented phenomenon
no	= stressed
glass-	= interruption, unfinished word
( )	= content of the speech is not understandable; length of the parenthesis tells about the length of the speech, which is not understandable
(he says)	= unsure about the content
Yes=yes	= quick connection
//mhm//	= the sounds of interviewer during active listening
yes we were no so what	= talking at the same time from 'we'
[ ]	= dismissing parts of text when citing the interview

Note: These rules are taken from the class SE + UE Biographisch-narrative Interviews und Diskursanalysen taught in winter semester 2012/13 by Dr.in Maria Pohn-Weidinger at University of Vienna.