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# Questioning Mentalities of Governance: A History of Power Relations among the Roma in Romania

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By

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Doctor of Philosophy  
Sociology

University of Edinburgh  
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## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis - “Questioning Mentalities of Governance: A History of Power Relations among Roma in Romania” - has been written by me and is based on original material collected during my ethnographic fieldwork. It has not been submitted to other institutions or universities for different other degrees. The thesis is an original work composed solely by me. Following the academic standard, it includes citations and quotations of literature and other information used.

Signed

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Cerasela S. Voiculescu

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## **To Roma**

*“The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing these rules, to replace those who had used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them; controlling this complex mechanism, they will make it function so as to overcome the rulers through their own rules” Foucault 1984*

## **Abstract**

The thesis explains the socioeconomic differences among the Roma through a historical exploration of the relations established between Roma and significant Others at local, regional, and central levels in different, overlapping spheres of power (state, politics, religion, informal economy). Through a historical-ethnographic analysis of difference and power struggles, the thesis seeks to bring the political aspects of Roma lives back into the discourses of empowerment which are highly depoliticized by both the state and transnational neo-liberal governance (World Bank, UNDP, EU etc.). It is largely an explanation of transformations undergone by two Roma groups in Romania who experienced utterly different living conditions (while some got 'poorer', the others became more affluent) in the period from socialism to post-socialism.

The qualitative analysis, based on 7-months of ethnographic fieldwork, overcomes the flaws of policy-oriented research based primarily on statistics. The latter is produced by state and transnational development actors and ignores qualitative differences between Roma groups, the context of Romanian and Eastern European transformations (e.g. clientelism, informal economy, neopatrimonial state) and constitutes 'identities' ('the poor', 'the marginal', 'the vulnerable') through which the Roma are governed and maintained in a subordinate position. These symbolic categories are used as part of a larger neoliberal problematization of governance called 'social integration', which constitutes itself as a 'regime of truth' and follows an economic rationality which reproduces the status quo and does not necessarily empower the Roma.

In addition, these 'regimes of enunciations' are adopted un-reflexively as objects of study in social science and Romani studies. Distancing itself from these academic and policy practices, my comparative historical ethnography of power relations and discursive practices among the Roma challenges and brings a reconsideration of the current mentality of governance as social integration.

Furthermore, my thesis constitutes an important contribution to Romani studies by 1) challenging a unilateral perspective directed by political agendas, and 2) producing reflexivity in relation to the object of study. It indicates that the

historical study of power struggles as “an ascending analysis of power” (Foucault 1980: 99) is more beneficial in terms of empowerment than the study of predefined themes of governance (e.g. poverty and marginalization). The Roma continuously negotiate their relations with the Others in interaction with an uncertain socioeconomic environment, and these struggles constitute mechanisms of transformation in their lives.

My thesis thus reveals different interactions Roma have had within and across spheres of power struggle (economy, state, politics, religion), which suggest an explanation for the two Roma groups’ different living conditions. A ‘mobile’ or a ‘sedentary’ interaction with the socialism-to-postsocialism socioeconomic transformations provided opportunities or restrictions for the improvement of the Roma’s material living conditions. While a ‘mobile’ and trans-local approach was adopted by Caldarars, a ‘sedentary’, localized socioeconomic practice was experienced as a restriction by the Romanianized Gypsies. Although these ‘patterns’ largely correspond to the groups studied, there was a variation in terms of mobility and wealth within both. Nevertheless, the mobile-sedentary distinction is relevant as it shows different ways of governance. While a trans-local mobile approach with low levels of subjection to state governance worked as a form of self-governance, a local ‘navigation’ of limited field of possibilities restricted access to better living conditions and increased the subjection to state governance.

My thesis also draws attention to possible sources of empowerment (Roma politics) which are blocked by particular transformations of state and politics (patronage politics and political patronage), or translated by the state into the language of ‘social integration’ (e.g. Pentecostalism as self-governance). To sum up, I consider that my thesis undertakes a re-evaluation of the existent problematization of social integration and constitutes a reflexive knowledge base for the support of genuine forms of empowerment among the Roma.

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# Introduction

## 1. Research Questions and Thesis contribution

The thesis is an analysis of a history of power relations, from socialism to post-socialism, among two Roma groups living in the same geographical area - a cluster of villages - but with different historical life trajectories: the Caldarars<sup>1</sup>, former nomadic Gypsies, who are portrayed by locals and media as the wealthiest Roma and the Romanianized Roma<sup>2</sup>, former seasonal labourers and workers during socialism, who generally experience poverty and are portrayed as the poorest. My thesis is based on an ethnographic case study, which arose out of numerous field research observations I made as a sociologist involved in community development projects, in different Romanian regions<sup>3</sup> (see Voiculescu 2003, 2004a, 2004b, Radu 2007a, b).

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<sup>1</sup>Caldarars is the English translation of the Romanian ethnonym 'Căldărars' used by former nomadic Roma themselves and locals. The term can be literally translated 'Cauldron makers'.

<sup>2</sup> Romanianized Roma is the translation of 'Tigani Romanizati', the name Roma, former seasonal labourers and workers in cooperative farms and state factories, use to characterize themselves.

<sup>3</sup>My BA in sociology and two Masters degrees in Sociology and Anthropology were all based on research with different Roma communities in the various localities and regions: 1. Fieldwork with Gabors (former nomads) and *Hazi Cigany* ('Home' Gypsies in Hungarian) in Sangeorgiu de Mures – Transylvania was the basis for my BA dissertation in Sociology (University of Bucharest) and an article about identity construction among Roma communities; 2. Fieldwork with communities of Gabors (former nomads) and *Hazi Cigany* in Atid, Harghita, Transylvania was the basis for my MA dissertation in Anthropology and Community Development (NSPAS, Bucharest) and a book chapter on the temporary migration of the Transylvanian Roma to Hungary; 3. Fieldwork with Caldarars (former nomads) and 'Romanianized' Roma in Costesti, Moldova, constituted the research basis for my MA dissertation in Sociology and Social Anthropology (CEU, Budapest). Other field trips with Roma have been carried out in Veresti and Patrauti (Moldova), a study on Caldarars and Romanianized Gypsies, as part of an integrated community development project funded by the Open Society Foundation, Romania. The report was published in the Soros Foundation's publications series entitled "Requirements and Resources within Roma Communities" available at: <http://www.soros.ro/en/publicatii.php?cat=16#>



Over the last 10 years of doing research <sup>4</sup> I have noticed that different Roma groups in Moldova and Transylvania (Caldarars and Romanianized Roma, respectively Gabors and Hazi Cigany) with different life and occupational trajectories (former nomadic groups with entrepreneurial activities, respectively day labourers and workers in socialism) who share the same geographical space, display sharp socio-economic differences. While the former ‘nomadic’ groups have decent to opulent housing conditions, historically ‘settled’ groups such as Romanianized Roma or *Hazi Cigany* can best be described as people living in poor to extremely poor living conditions. The pictures below illustrate the polarity I noticed throughout the years, especially during my Ph.D. field research carried out in 2009-10.

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth mentioning that my research on and with the Roma were commissioned to the Romanian government, Soros Foundation, the Research Institute for the Quality of Life, and various Roma NGOs.



**Figure 1** Romanianized Roma. Photos taken by the author, 2010

Upper left: Romanianized Roma woman outside her house. Upper right: Romanianized Roma father and child, Barlad River in the back. Lower left: Romanianized Roma house viewed from the garden in the rear. Lower right: Romanianized Roma family and their house.



**Figure 2** Caldarars. Photos taken by the author, 2010.

Upper: Caldarars' houses and courtyards in Costesti. Lower: Caldarars' houses and gardens in Liveni, a neighbouring village. Lower left: a Caldarar *bulibasa* outside his house. Lower right: two Caldarar women watering their garden.

It cannot be assumed that the two Roma groups have always had the same status or economic condition. During socialism, the Romanianised Roma were either seasonal labourers or workers in state factories and had access to better living conditions than today. During the same period, the Caldarars resisted proletarianisation, partially



accepted territorial sedentarisation and were less affluent than today. The two groups have experienced the political and socio-economic changes from socialism to post-socialism differently. Connected to these observations my thesis answers to the following research questions:

1. *Why these two Roma groups, usually included by national and international development organizations in the category of the 'poor' or 'disadvantaged' seem to experience strikingly different living conditions?*
2. *How these sharp socio-economic differences within the presumably homogenous Gypsy population can be explained?*
3. *How do the power relations and discursive practices, in conjunction with larger transformations from socialism to post-socialism, participate in the differential transformation of the two Roma groups?*

The questions show a research gap in both the field of Romani studies and the international programs of development / empowerment, which communicate and inform each other. *Therefore, my thesis primarily aims to contribute to the field of Romani studies by explaining qualitative differences between Roma groups, through an analysis of power relations in a historical relational approach.*

*Secondly, it offers a contribution to the field of empowerment programs for the Roma.* The latter blur qualitative differences and largely subsume the variety of experience within the Roma population<sup>5</sup> in un-reflexive categories of 'the poor' and 'vulnerable', which create their subordinate position in society and reproduce the status quo. *Without being over-reliant on statistics<sup>6</sup> the exploration of qualitative*

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<sup>5</sup> In reports issued by international organizations for development (World Bank-WB, United Nations Development Program-UNDP, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights - FRA, European Commission) Roma of Central and Eastern Europe are defined from the outset as 'the poorest' and 'most vulnerable minority' of Europe: "The report (...) shows that Roma are amongst the poorest of the poor in Central and Eastern Europe" (UNDP 2003a:1) ; "Europe's largest and most vulnerable minority" (WB 2005:3); "Roma – Europe's largest minority (...) live in deep poverty lacking access to healthcare and decent housing" (European Commission 2012:5); "Roma Europe's largest minority of 10-12 millions (...) they are marginalized and mostly live in extremely poor socio-economic conditions" (FRA, UNDP and European Commission 2012:3).

<sup>6</sup> Most of the time the identificatory categories are established in opposition to the majority and are mainly based on statistics: "Half of all Roma surveyed are found to live in poverty, and more than one in five live in extreme poverty, compared to the average of one in seven and one in 25 of the respective majority populations (...) Assessing poverty rates requires categorizing individuals or households as poor or non-poor on the basis of reported welfare levels" (UNDP 2006:17).

*differences can suggest alternative and more effective models of empowerment for the Roma.*

On the whole, my thesis produces a new reflexive research basis for looking at the governance and empowerment of the Roma. Following Inglis' (1997) suggestion that any form of empowerment should start with an analysis of power, my thesis is an inquiry into the historical aspects of power relations of the two Roma groups who experience utterly different conditions of living.

Generally, throughout my thesis, I concentrate my attention on relations between individuals and their discursive practices in different *spheres of power struggles* (informal economy, politics, state, religion). I pay special attention to the aspect of *struggle* through which the Roma negotiate their social relations with local, regional, and central government actors. Local and central state representatives, Roma leaders, local and regional politicians and bureaucrats act in different spheres of power struggle and have different degrees of participation in the power dynamic. In my analysis of power relations among the Roma, the difference between centres and margins is blurred (Massey 1999). The Roma are not studied in opposition to the dominant society (Sibley 1981; Guy 2001). On the contrary, their practices and local level relations are entangled in the on-going history of power dynamics.

Both individual practices and relations and state discourses of power are sources of transformation in the lives of the Roma. Socialist programs of modernisation and assimilation were received and experienced differently by the Roma, through either resistance or compliance. The Caldarars' collaboration with the local state representatives during socialism and their resistance to the central state's repression of their nomadic lifestyles are illustrations of negotiation with programmatic forms of power. In the thesis, I use an analysis of power from below, which emphasises local level power<sup>7</sup> relations and Roma as active and full participants in historical processes and not as victims, or passive recipients of the larger structures and state programs of assimilation and integration.

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<sup>7</sup>The phrase 'local level power relations' is used in correspondence with 'local level politics' conceptualized by Shwartz (1969) to argue that local politics is not local per se but connected through webs of power to central politics.

To contextualize the importance of my research questions, I continue my introduction with an important discussion on the implications of studying power. In the first section, I concentrate my attention on Roma empowerment and discourse of social development for the Roma in Europe and reveal a research gap in policy-oriented research. In the second and the third sections of the introduction, I expand the discussion to incorporate my analysis of the historical micro-power dynamics in the analysis of power and empowerment.

## **2. Why Power? Importance and Implications of my Thesis**

Most European policies (see note 5) informed by sociological research (see for example Sandu 2005) describe the Roma as a poor and marginalized population excluded from minimal conditions of living. NGOs and state representatives aim at improving their lives by emphasising the ‘option’ of their empowerment through ‘integration’ within the larger society (Barany 2001). In line with this option, there is also a great amount of academic work still focused on issues of poverty, marginalization or exclusion among the Romanies (Cretan and Turnock 2008; Barany 1995, 2001, 2004; Gabel 2009; Guy 2001; Ladanyi & Szelenyi 2003, 2006; Ruzicka 2012; Stewart 1997). These contributions adopt or reiterate the general political discourse on Gypsies, depicted and analysed as a powerless and helpless population. Nevertheless, a new literature questioned the degree of utility of the categories of ‘marginalized’ and ‘vulnerable’ used by ‘image makers’, researchers, politicians and journalists, in Romani studies, media productions and Roma empowerment programs (Clark 2004, Saul and Tebbutt 2004, Woodcock 2007). For instance, Matras (2004) criticises researchers of Romani studies for “*subordinating their findings to a political agenda*” (p.132) and Hancock (2004) calls for critical scrutiny regarding the use of popular culture in Romani studies, which might romanticise Roma existence.

My thesis argues that Roma do not have any fixed status (e.g. weak, poor, marginal, or powerful): their knowledge, actions and discourses vary in the course of different relations they have with local authorities, political, religious and economic actors, other Roma communities, their local neighbours etc. As Foucault (1980)

argued, power does not exist in a “substantive sense”. Power is not a stable ascription, but rather “relations, a more-or-less organized, hierarchical, coordinated cluster of relations.” (p.198). Power thus emerges from interactions and social relations from past to present, enacted by the Roma and ultimately transforming their lives.

On the other hand, the Romanian Gypsies’ history has been full of interventions by the state and, more recently, supra-state institutions such as the EU. All these ‘intrusions’ into the Roma's existence were aimed at imposing external categories and classification schemes (Brubacker, Cooper 2000). From enslavement of some Gypsies to the boyars’ courts and monasteries in the late Middle Ages to subsequent processes of peasantisation, proletarianisation, categorisation as an underclass, nomadisation, and sedentarisation, the Roma have been subjected to various forms of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991) through categories of identification aimed at transforming their socio-cultural identities and ways of living.

These days, transnational organizations like the European Union, the World Bank (WB), the United Nation Development Program (UNDP), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have all become interested in the governance and social integration of the Eastern European Roma. All these international actors are partners in the Roma Decade<sup>8</sup> initiated in 2005 - an EU framework, which monitors states’ implementation of policies aimed at reducing the socio-economic gaps between the Roma and the majority populations. It claims to be a project for the ‘social integration’ of the Romanies, who are considered to be part of the larger category of the “poor and disadvantaged” (UNDP 2003b, FRA, UNDP and European Commission 2012, World Bank 2000, 2005), almost ‘outsider’ groups or “groups in waiting” to be accepted into the larger society. (Drakakis-Smith 2007).

Both the states and international organizations, which promote development and social integration of the Roma in Europe use the rhetoric of sameness and homogenisation for a large variety of Roma groups to devise a stable basis for planning, policy-making and control. In Foucault’s terms (Foucault 1984: 86) it is

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<sup>8</sup>The Roma Decade involves a number of European governments: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovakia, Hungary, and Spain. It started in 2005 and is planned to run until 2015.

the “the power of normalization [which] imposes homogeneity”, “a system of formal equality” (p. 86), a fertile ground for general norms to be introduced and enforced. In the World Bank report (2005) the Roma are defined as “Europe’s largest and most vulnerable minority”, who “have no historical homeland” (p. 3). Similarly in the UNDP, EU, OSCE reports and website outlines<sup>9</sup>, Roma’s ‘vulnerability’ marginalization and discrimination are emphasised: the “Roma in the region [Central Europe and Central Asia] are excluded from economic, social and political life. Compared to non-Roma citizens, Roma are more likely to live in poverty, have a higher risk of unemployment, stay in school for fewer years (...)”<sup>10</sup>.

Nevertheless, nowhere in Europe have the Roma been a homogeneous group. As acknowledged by Zamfir and Preda (2002) there are almost 40 groups of Roma in Romania, each claiming different identity and status according to their traditional economic occupations (Sandu 2005, Badescu et al 2007). Among these, there are the “*rudari* (wood carvers), *aurari* (gold washers), *lingurari* (spoon makers), *caravlahi* (coal miners), *caramidari* (brick makers), *blidari* (bowl makers), and *caldarari* (boilermakers)” (Barany 2004: 257).

However, the policy statements regarding governance for Roma in Europe have created a symbolic division between them and Non-Roma, who are considered to be less poor and better educated, and a symbolic homogeneity among a variety of Roma groups generally included in the category of ‘poor’ and ‘vulnerable’. These profiles and descriptions imposed by outsiders upon Gypsies are not devoid of power and symbolic value. They are ways of envisioning the world, “the power to make things with words” (Bourdieu 1989 : 23), official discourses which establish the truth and “tend to picture the world as evident” (p. 21). As Rose (1999) warns, “language is not secondary to government; it is constitutive of it” (p. 29). The symbolic

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<sup>9</sup>UNDP- Roma in Central and Eastern Europe-  
<http://europeandcis.undp.org/ourwork/poverty/show/2180B041-F203-1EE9-B598F2648BEACB5D>

The World Bank and the Roma. World Bank Involvement in Roma Issues- [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org).  
Roma and Sinti issues – <http://www.osce.org/odihr/roma>

<sup>10</sup> UNDP- Roma in Central and Eastern Europe-  
<http://europeandcis.undp.org/ourwork/poverty/show/2180B041-F203-1EE9-B598F2648BEACB5D>



categories are part of larger discourses of empowerment, which impose themselves as authoritative maps of understanding the social, opaque layers over a much more complex dynamic of power relations enacted at the individual level.

In this sense, post-developmental studies (Rapley 2004) showed that programs of development/empowerment designed by states and transnational organizations decontextualize the social and political aspects of the problem (Iordache 2011) and follow a depoliticising discourse of governance. *The act of 'depoliticising' is understood as a discursive practice that reduces the complexity of the social and projects it as divested of conflicts, struggles and hierarchies and composed of 'horizontal power relations'* (Ferguson 1994, Harris 2001, Inglis 1997, Miraftab 2004).

For instance, in international programs of development “[p]articipation and empowerment are treated as independent of the structures of oppression”(Miraftab 2004:242). Furthermore, the governance’s projection of empowerment and development through the lens of social *networks or social capital* creates the image of horizontality of social relations (Harris 2001) and silences conflicts, hierarchy, and differences of power (patron-client relations). In practical terms, instead of empowering Roma communities in their material contexts of power relations, these projects can reproduce existing inequalities (e.g. patron-client). Resources could remain in the control of some prominent leaders, who pursue political interests rather than the community’s. Moreover, qualitative differences between Roma groups, which can place different demands on governance, are ignored.

In the next lines, I provide a short analysis on a World Bank report (2005) in order to show how policy oriented research with claims of reflexivity, part of a neoliberal formula of development, follows an instrumental rationality and depoliticises the Roma's conditions of existence.

World Bank (2005) as other neoliberal forms of national and transnational governance (Romanian state, EU, UNDP, OSCE) promote discourses of social integration of the 'poor' and 'vulnerable' Roma in order to solve the so-called economic and social “disturbances” created by a “group problem”, considered to “perturb” the market, the majority and the state welfare. The latter is a serious concern for World Bank, which advocates minimum state social intervention and

state withdrawal from the markets, as part of a neoliberal formula of 'good governance' (World Bank 1998 a, b). These references are the main elements of neoliberal development and likewise in the World Bank report (2005).

The report is mainly based on quantitative and qualitative research and analyses on Roma from Central and Eastern European Roma with focus on Romania, Slovakia and Hungary. The instrumental rationality of the neoliberal project of governance for the Roma population is asserted from the first lines :

Because of higher birth rates, the Roma population's relative size is increasing across the region (...) Policies to address Roma poverty therefore need to be an integral component of each country's economic and social development strategies. (p. xiii)

This statement clearly shows who will benefit from these development projects: economies and member states threatened by 'problems' posed by an ethnic group in continuous demographic expansion. The devised problematic of governance clearly follows a general economic rationality of neoliberal development projects, which subordinate and adjust the social to the economic functionality of the liberal markets (Ferguson 1994; Inglis 1997; Harris 2001; Miraftab 2004). In the following section of the World Bank's report, that precedes the research results, a clear answer to the question of who the Roma are is given.

Who are the Roma? The Roma are Europe's largest and most vulnerable minority. Unlike other groups, they have no historical homeland. (p. xiii).

The projected identity does not come out as a result of a reflexive understanding of the Roma conditions of existence, but as an a priori self-generated category of identification, which legitimises the larger problematization of neo-liberal governance presented at the beginning of the report, which can be summarized in the following statement: *'the poor', 'the excluded', and 'the vulnerable' produce socio-economic disturbances and the main solution, 'social integration', needs to address the economic problems of the market and the state, and social ones 'faced' by a majority.* Therefore, to define 'who the Roma are' is to decide in which way they need to be governed (e.g. subaltern or autonomous groups). Identifying Roma as "the most vulnerable minority" with no "historical homeland" generates a victimization discourse that justifies external intervention that is not negotiated in terms of existent

internal forms of governance (e.g. Caldarars' social and political organization). On the other hand, without the exercise of a reflexive and dialogical exploration, these identification categories act as forms of 'symbolic violence' able to define populations through selected categories of meaning, which fit specific neoliberal interests and not those of the populations for whom one is aiming at empowerment or social integration.

The question of identity is a question of governmentality. Following Foucault's conceptualization, the latter is a way to define a problem of governance. It is a *problematization* (Rose 1999) which sets the frame of governance, which seeks a solution to an already defined problem (van Baar 2011). In the World Bank's (2005) report, identifications as 'vulnerable', 'marginalized', 'poor' constitute the terrain for a depoliticised understanding of Roma conditions of existence. These identifications blur the qualitative difference between Roma groups with distinct historical paths of social and political organization (Caldarars' self-governance and Romanianized Roma subjection to state power/external forms of governance) and living conditions (affluence or poverty). In my thesis I show that the Caldarars' successful model of self-governance, largely ignored by neoliberal programs of development could provide, in this case, a different direction for governance, and challenge and change the existent unproductive problematization of social integration, envisaged for an allegedly homogenous poor Roma population.

The most problematic issue is the twofold definition of Roma as "poorer than other groups, more likely to fall into poverty, and more likely to remain poor" (p. 5) and the great variety of Roma population which "creates significant challenges for researchers and policy makers" (p. 11). For the Romanian case, the World Bank (2005) underlines Roma diversity without specifying the nature of the differences. It is also interesting to notice that a case study briefly presented in the analysis shows the existence of wealthy Caldarar Gypsies.

Primarily, relatively well-off Caldarari Roma populate the Ciopeia village in Hunedoara. (p. 94)

Surprisingly, there is no explanation for their wealth, which is largely explored in my thesis as explained by their detachment from state structural power, which leaves space to adaptations and navigations in the informal economy which emerged in the

post-1989 neopatrimonial context. Depoliticised discourse becomes obvious in the report when the authors make reference to the delicate political alliance between the Roma Party and Social Democrat Party:

While this has granted the Roma Party greater influence over Roma affairs, it has also prompted criticisms about the politicization of Roma appointments in the public administration. (p. 121)

This statement is the only reference to political patronage of Roma politics and local patronage politics in the Romanian state administrative structures and probably intentionally not developed further in its implications for Roma politics, which is an important source of empowerment and self-governance. As I show in my thesis, political patronage and patronage politics, as fields of politics, captured Roma politics. On the other hand, Roma experts appointed by the state became patronage brokers, the subjects of patronage politics, who mainly follow political interests rather than the governmental strategy of 'social integration'.

Nevertheless, similar to their resolution to the problem of the diversity of Roma groups, the report acknowledges the existence of a politicised environment (party interests ruling bureaucratic practice) but ignores the whole dynamics of power relations produced in this context. The authors of the report do not seem aware that the development and the empowerment of the Roma is blocked by local and regional patronage interests and that Roma citizenship rights (e.g. voting, access to social welfare/services) are mediated by local patronage politics. Furthermore, the report discounts the relational and historical contextualizations which make sense of differences between rich and poorer Roma and continues to claim, in the same depoliticised manner that the 'vulnerability and poverty of Roma' makes their 'social integration' a priority.

Statistical data on Roma poverty becomes a strong source of legitimacy and it is used extensively to authenticate the already pre-defined categories of identification and identities of governance: Roma as 'the poor and the vulnerable of Europe'. *Furthermore, the statistical inquiry also serves as a justification for the exclusion of all the other cases of affluence among the Roma that contradict the statistical pattern of poverty.* These evasions, ignoring the complexity and variety of Roma conditions of existence, depoliticise and simplify their socio-economic conditions of existence

and produce, what is called in post-developmental studies, the “effect of closure”: “devoid of reference to questions they cannot address, or that might cast doubt upon the completeness of their diagnoses or the feasibility of their solutions” (Li 2007: 11). Moreover, the diversity among Roma is seen as a barrier to the practice of governance itself, which follows the already defined problematization of ‘social integration’:

The socially heterogeneous nature of Roma society also influences the integration level of various Roma communities, their political participation, and relations among different Roma groups (p. 12).

This stands again as an argument for blurring and even ignoring differences and therefore proceeding in explaining poverty in terms of “low education levels, limited employment opportunities, and unfavourable health status” (p. 53). It is also a depoliticising discourse through which the problem of poverty becomes individualized and decontextualized from larger Romanian post-socialist transformations (e.g. informal economy, neo-patrimonial state and patronage politics) which are major references in the understanding of Roma power relations.

Furthermore, the World Bank’s explanations dismiss Roma’s local knowledge and informal economic activities, used successfully by Caldarars as part of a form of self-governance. Discussing the Roma’s local knowledge would certainly challenge the whole paradigm of governance, which emphasises the lack of state education, self-exclusion and imperative need for social integration. The World Bank’s discursive choices legitimize external forms of governance which come to help the ‘poor’, ‘vulnerable’ populations not able to govern themselves, people in ‘stringent’ need of being governed. If this seems the case of Romanianized Roma communities, who have a long experience of state dependency covering different historical regimes, it is clearly inappropriate for Caldarar communities who have followed a mobile and independent model of existence, detached from the authority of external forms of governance.

The question remains : Are the World Bank and other neoliberal institutions of governance, that pretend to produce research-based reflexive governance for the Roma, ready to accept that Caldarars have their own forms of governance, resistant

to external homogenizing discourses of 'social integration' with implied instrumental economic rationality?

In my last chapter on Pentecostalism as a discourse of power and empowerment I show how state representatives did not consider Roma Pentecostal conversion to be a form of self-governance and empowerment, but a good mechanism of 'social taming' which largely corresponds to state programs of 'social integration'. Additionally, in the World Bank (2005) report Roma culture is opposed to modernisation:

aspects of Roma culture and living conditions have reinforced stereotypes and spurred marginalization. Members of more traditional groups, such as Roma, can benefit from integration if it facilitates individual growth and well being (p. 12.)

Interestingly, the second statement suggests a transfer of governance from community to external authorities (state, international organization of development), which promote 'social integration'. In addition, 'social integration' is equated with modernization and human development, which are opposed to culture and 'tradition'. In my view, the latter are the source of difference and self-governance, which are, in this case, rejected and considered a source of marginalization and self-exclusion.

To sum up, the World Bank (2005) makes a minimal and merely superficial acknowledgement of Roma diversity and social and political contexts in which Roma live and creates a false image of reflexive governance. It generally blurs the political aspects of Roma conditions of existence and ignores forms of self-governance in order to legitimize the problematization of 'social integration' and categories of identification ('poverty', 'exclusion', 'vulnerability') articulated from the outset. From this perspective, 'social integration' is considered to be the process through which the Roma can receive full citizenship rights through a process of collaboration between Roma activists, states and transnational forms of governance.

Van Baar (2011), in his exploration of the issues of Roma transnational governmentality claims that these development and empowerment programs are acts of "repoliticisation" which call for "citizenship participation" and struggle by Roma activists to challenge the problematic of transnational governance constructed around the idea of 'social integration' (p. 18). I generally disagree with this approach. From

my viewpoint, 'social integration' as a process implies from the start a position of subordination (as 'marginalized', 'excluded') of the Roma in relation to a majority which needs to accept and integrate them. Therefore, the problematization of social integration itself is not a base for "citizenship participation" but, to use Bourdieu's (1984) words<sup>11</sup>, it is rather "a reproductive struggle, since those who enter this chase ... are beaten before they start" (Bourdieu 1984: 125, Bourdieu 1985).

Moreover, as I show in my thesis, the Roma Party representatives who may be profiled by the World Bank and other neoliberal forms of governance as Romanian Roma activists do not struggle for Roma citizenship rights, but follow the paths of clientelism and patronage and generally do not challenge the external problematization of governance. This lack of fight and resistance is also confirmed by the main Roma activist leader and sociologist Nicolae Gheorghe who claimed the following:

integration or even partial assimilation, which would lead to an undifferentiated incorporation of the Roma into mainstream society, can be regarded as a worthy ideology by Romani elites. (PER<sup>12</sup> 1997, cited in World Bank 2005: 22).

On the other hand, from the position of marginalized, excluded and vulnerable, the Roma are considered almost incapable of producing their own forms of governance and challenging the imposed subaltern position in society and Europe. They are rather expected to follow external directions imposed by a transnational neoliberal governance, which is rather interested in solving economic and social problems created by a 'group problem'.

Furthermore, World Bank (2005), which promotes the 'social integration' of Roma, uses a model of social reproduction which locates power in a reproductive game of positionalities. They identified the Roma as a 'vulnerable' population and then undertook research in four countries (Slovak Republic, Romania, Hungary,

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<sup>11</sup> In this statement, Bourdieu refers at his conception of power struggles and symbolic power as an expression of reproduction of habitual structures and positions in the social space. However, my reference reflects the process of reproduction of a position of subordination implied in the problematization of governance for Roma as social integration.

<sup>12</sup>PER (Project on Ethnic Relations) 1997. The Roma in Twenty-First Century: A policy Paper. PER, Princenton.

Spain) in order to manufacture explanations for a problem defined from the outset (poverty, marginalization, vulnerability).

Through 'effects of closure' and pretences of reflexivity (researching the governed) neoliberal governmental power "continually seeks to give itself a form of truth" (Rose 1999: 7), to "structure the possible fields of others" (Foucault 2000: 341) and apply general categories of governance and identification ('exclusion', 'poverty', 'marginalization') to the complex Roma conditions of existence.

Therefore, I consider that research on Roma should start from conceptualizations and themes (e.g. power relations), which do not carry the danger of imposing rigid identities ('the poor', 'the vulnerable') or the reification of Roma's marginal position in society. *In this sense, my historical ethnography of power relations deactivates the power of larger discourses of governance, which can act as categories of identification and subordination ('marginalization', 'poverty', 'vulnerability') and deconstructs a projection of a rigid homogeneous identity on a diverse Roma population.*

## **Empowerment and the Study of Power dynamics**

*The examination of local power relations needs to precede any project aimed at empowerment* (Inglis 1997; Miraftab 2004). Aspects of power capilarity (local individual practices and relations) were considered by scholars of post-socialism in Eastern Europe to be crucially important in the understanding of the unintended consequences of post-1989 capitalism (Grzymala-Busse, Luong 2002; Burawoy and Verdery 1999). The transition to the market economy, transformations of the state and political pluralism have produced a general politics of clientelism in which local patrons were linked to central state actors through political favouritism (Burawoy and Verdery 1999, Gadowska 2006, Stoica 2004, Verdery 1996). This context can be better understood through its local level dynamics, which reveals the individuals' or groups' participation in these transformations.

According to these observations, my thesis takes a micro-power approach. It echoes a desideratum expressed by Hearn (2012): "if we want to have an effect on the direction of social change, then we are interested in the nature and scope of



human power” (p. 3). More specifically, in the study of the Roma and other populations subjected to a large degree of governmental power, the relational power dynamics become essential in revealing both sides of the coin: the power of large structural transformations and the power released by the relational dynamic created through individuals’ and groups’ practices. Both forms of power interact and participate in the transformation of their life trajectories and are accountable for social change and transformation of the Roma communities.

In the following section, I offer an overview of different and complementary theoretical and ethnographic views on power in relation to history, neo-Marxist and post-structuralist streams of thought, as they prove relevant to my Ph.D. thesis. I conclude with a presentation of the main theoretical and methodological guidelines for the study of power relations I follow throughout my thesis.

### **3.Theoretical and Ethnographic Considerations for the study of power**

#### **Post-structuralist approaches to power**

For Foucault power works and flows through connections, and circulates “*in the form of a chain*” (p. 98) never localized or possessed by individuals. This lack of a fixed location for power poses challenges to its empirical exploration. However, what Foucault (1980) suggests, is that power should not be studied as a stable referential object with clear-cut hierarchies, but as a relation and dynamic through which individuals are both controlled and empowered. The network-like character of power is not necessarily a trap. The individual can “circulate between its threads” (p. 98) and” has at his disposal a certain power, and for that very reason can also act as the vehicle for transmitting wider power” (p. 72).

Also, Foucault (1980) considers that *power and acts of resistance coexist* and that “the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised” (p. 142). In this sense, he was very much concerned with the practical character of power, which starts from its “infinitesimal mechanisms, which have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics” (p. 99). He argues that local practices, which have their

own history, might differ from the history of the social and political programs coordinated from the centre by the state or big institutional actors. In my thesis, I endorse this localized dynamic of history and power, which can alter and change the enactments of state programs of assimilation, social integration and modernisation.

Furthermore, Foucault's (1984) perspective on power and history has recently become attractive to geographers who were interested in developing his conceptualizations of power. Sharp, Routledge, Philo and Paddison (1999) developed the relational understanding of power, in their geographical writings. They go beyond the neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian conceptions of power to look at '*entanglements of power*', in which resistance and domination shape each other as constitutive of social relations. The metaphor of "entanglements of power" is a critique of Pile and Keith's (1997) understanding and theorisation of resistance as dislocated from the space of domination. Domination and resistance are considered two interdependent phenomena, each acting within and upon the space of the other. However, the struggle or negotiation of meanings is experienced differently by different groups (group). As Fletcher (2001) and other authors (Gledhill 2000, Guttman 1993, Ortner 1995) remarked, there were very few studies on power and resistance examining the divisions and different reactions to power 'within' groups. In this sense, my thesis will take a historical comparative approach to this issue of power and reaction to power for the two Roma groups studied.

### **Neo-Marxist approaches to power**

Steven Lukes (1974), who is a well-known neo-Marxist sociologist for his sociological theorizations on power, drawing on Foucauldian conceptualizations, discusses on domination and consent and their implications for the analysis of power. For Lukes (2002) power is simply defined in terms of parts' unequal relational interests: "A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants". (p.42). Through this definition, Lukes (2002) brings the element of consent into the definition of power, which has been considered for a long time in sociology as conflictual. In Lukes' view, since entity B is influenced in his wants by an entity A, the power relation is no longer conflictual and in long term involves

acquiescence through the internalization of norms and wants. However, in this definition, power remains intentional, a perspective Lukes himself criticises. Power is directed by an entity A, which can be an institution or individual, towards other similar entities. The idea that power can exist outside conflict and can create, constitute subjects of desire is very much Foucauldian but it is still framed in old terms of domination, which is that of intentional power imposed by an entity to another.

Also, for Lukes (1974), while one entity A seems to have the entire control over power, B is just the subject of it. In a Foucauldian understanding, the controller of the power game A gets itself controlled through the relation established with the Other (B). In order to increase his control over the Other, A goes through a process of self- mastery or self-control mainly dictated by the power relation itself. From here, it can be inferred, in a Foucauldian understanding that power and subjection to power are part of the same game, which applies to all entities involved, irrespective of who is entitled or legitimate to dominate the other. This interpretation resonates much better with my understanding of power, which is less focused on individuals' capacities to control the other and more on power relations themselves, which bring transformations for those engaged with them.

Nevertheless, Luke's emphasis on consent improves the understanding of the exercise of power but it is nonetheless entity focused. He considers that power relations can be characterized by 'latent conflict' between two entities rather than overt, observable conflict as it used to be considered in the classic formula of domination. 'Latent conflict' refers to the "contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude" (Lukes 2002: 44). Through this definition, power appears as a struggle between opposite interests, which may not be openly affirmed but may be shaped by the one who exercises power. In these terms, the intentional character of power is not removed but it is rather strengthened in terms of opposite interests, identified, endorsed and affirmed by the parts. That is clearly revealed when Lukes (2002) defines the effective sense of 'exercising power': "A's intervention can be said to make a difference to the result. Let us call this sense of 'exercising power' the *effective* sense" (p.54). Moreover, Lukes (2002) considers that 'exercising power' can become 'control' "in

the case where B's change of course corresponds to A's wishes, that is, where A secures B's compliance" (p.54). The latter definition brings his conceptualization close to the classical understanding of domination as subordination.

In a Foucauldian understanding, there is not clear awareness of opposite interests and entities with capacities to exercise power over the others. As Lukes (1974, 2002) himself discusses, Foucault has mainly explored 'power to' constitute subjects through relations and knowledge and almost excluded 'power over' as domination of some agents over others. In this sense, Luke's theorization can be considered an improved Marxist perspective of power as domination focused on latent conflictual interests, which can be shaped by the main part that exercises power (A). Nevertheless, in his definitional terms power is still intentional, entity based and almost unidirectional oriented (from A to B). In my view, both parts are involved in the constitution of the power relation and both are subjected to the power produced. Furthermore, actors' actions are constituted in a dynamic with the macro historical transformations of what I call in my thesis 'spheres of power struggle'.

In connection to this dynamic approach of power, Wolf (1982) is an important neo-Marxist anthropologist, who used ethnography in the analysis of power relations and linked the micro to macro levels of political and historical analysis in a "systematic attempt to write a history of the present as a history of power" (Ghani 1995: 32). He considered that historical processes can be seen as sets of relations set up around different modes of production and sources of capital fostering "uneven development of regions and social spaces" (p. 33).

Wolf (2001) considers that '*structural power*' is in a way similar to Marx's conception of social relations of production and Foucault's conceptions of 'governance'. Foucault (1991a, 2000) generally defines the latter as the power "to structure the field of possibilities of others" (p. 428). Nevertheless, Wolf (1982, 1990) distanced himself from Foucault (1980) by paying a special attention to political economy and the transformation of capital and relations of production at the local, national, and global scale. Also, his interest in ideology differentiates him from Foucault's (1991) understanding of power discourses within which practices and ideas are entangled and convergent in discursive practices. The latter, as well as the local, concrete relations between individuals and groups constitute my core research

interest in the study of power within and across spheres of contest (politics, state, informal economy, religion) for the two Roma groups.

For both Wolf (1982, 2001) and Foucault (1980), power is a *capability*, which can be located in relations or structures. While I endorse this perspective, I consider that power manifests and works through relations between individuals and groups and has the capacity to transform groups and individuals' lives. In addition, Wolf and Foucault use a similar historical approach to the understanding of power, which is crucial to my study. They understand history as contingency, rather than a teleological, progressive narrative in which one event or action causes the other. A contingency approach to history is concentrated on particular events and relations, which are able to produce, at different levels, transformations in individuals' and groups' histories and life trajectories. Therefore, particular events and discursive practices, located in different spheres of power struggle and manifested locally, can reveal important power relations and have relevance for the transformation of the Roma life trajectories. Therefore, as emphasised earlier, my thesis highlights the space of communication and interaction between macro and micro-power manifestations. In this sense, Bourdieu's (1977, 1985, 1989) theorisation on fields and power struggles at the individual level offers this kind of communicative ground regarding micro–macro connections and manifestations of power.

### **Bourdieu on power struggles and fields**

A well-known sociological view on power relations and struggles is Bourdieu's (1977, 1985, 1989). In Bourdieu's understanding, power relations between individuals are the reflection of an already constituted social structure. Power relations are employed and manifested in *competitive struggles*, which take the "form of class struggle (...) a reproductive struggle, since those who enter this chase are beaten before they start" (Bourdieu 1984: 125). Conversely, in my thesis, power relations appear as mechanisms of transformation and as engines of social reproduction.

For Bourdieu (1989) the social distances between groups and individuals are reflected in the distribution of capital<sup>13</sup> in the social space, while the relations between individuals are objective, expression of “the relations between positions occupied within the distribution of the resources which are or may become active, effective” (p.16). As Connell (1983), Bohman (1999), Butler (1999) and Hearn (2012) argued, Bourdieu’s class-based analytical model of understanding power “leads him to an account of social order and its stable reproduction, with minimal consideration of why things change, of why power sometimes fails and falls apart” (Hearn 2012: 100). Therefore, his reproductionist model poses serious challenges not only to the analysis of power but also to the mechanisms of producing ‘*a change in world view*’(p.23) discussed by Bourdieu (1989), in relation with the concept of *symbolic power* and presented earlier in my chapter.

Furthermore, his understanding of power relations is confined to his conceptualization of the *social field*, which is the place where the so-called *power struggles* take place. The *social field* is described as a “multi-dimensional space of positions such that (...) agents are distributed within it, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of the capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the composition of their capital” (Bourdieu 1985: 724). Economy, politics, culture and art are *social fields of power struggles*, which follow the logic of the capital’s distribution. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1985) claims that the *fields* carry their “own logic and hierarchy” (p. 724) and have, in this sense, relative autonomy in relation to other fields. Unlike Bourdieu, in my thesis I consider that what I call the *spheres of power struggle* (economy, state, politics, religion) are interrelated at both macro and micro-power levels.

The projected stability of power relations, which I consider a problem in Bourdieu’s conceptualization, is produced through the accumulation of resources

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<sup>13</sup>The main forms of capital, in Bourdieu’s understanding, are: ”1. *economic*, in the usual sense of material resources and wealth; 2. *social*, that is, networks and other useful social relations; 3. *cultural*, recognized forms of valued knowledge and expertise; and 4. *symbolic*, markers of honour and prestige” (Hearn 2012: 99; emphases in the original).

which “are not the same thing as power and the exercise of power” (Allen 2004: 30). For Bourdieu, *power relations* are not *struggle per se* but rather stable expressions of the distribution of capital (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic) in the social fields. In this context, power relations follow a pre-existent social order and power struggle does not capture the dynamic of relations between individuals.

Conversely, from my point of view, *power relations and struggles* are not expressions of stable structures of capital, but *mechanisms of transformation and change*. They can be characterized by different dominant forms of relationality (e.g. clientelism) without being subjugated to its main *raison d'etre*. On the other hand, individuals do not necessarily have a fixed socio-economic status and their life trajectories do not necessarily take a business-like route of capital accumulation, as Bourdieu suggests (1984), but they are always transformed through a temporal dynamic of individual relations.

In addition, I consider that Bourdieu’s (1977, 1985, 1989) conceptualizations downplay the temporal dimension of power struggles. His a-temporal approach leads to a static understanding of the social and to an endless social reproduction. Nevertheless, Bourdieu (1984) does not exclude the idea of movement of actors within *social fields*. In *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu mentions two forms of movement:

- a. *Vertical movement* - upwards and downwards - within the *field*, which entails a decrease or “increase in the volume of the type of capital already dominant in the asset structure” (p. 113);
- b. *Transversal movement*, which ensures a reproduction of the position produced in the vertical movement through “a shift into another field and the reconversion of one type of capital into another or of one sub-type into another sub-type” (p. 131).

However, as Vigh (2009) observed, Bourdieu’s *fields* are rather static and exclude two other important forms of movement.

1. *Movement of the environment*, or *fields themselves*, in Bourdieu’s (1984, 1985) terminology (e.g. transformations of state, politics, economy and religion);

2. *Movement of individuals*, their interactions with the continuous transformations of the environment, or what I call here the spheres of power struggle.

These two forms of movement bring the temporal dynamic back in the theoretical framework of power relations and struggles. Relations between individuals and groups are included in a processual understanding of transformation. In my thesis, I consider these two forms of movement/transformation suggested by Vigh (2009):

- a. transformation of spheres of power struggle (state, politics, economy, state education, religion) from socialism to post-socialism;

- b. the interaction of the two groups of Roma with these transformations, manifested in local level relations and discursive practices.

An additional aspect of Bourdieu's theory of capital and fields deserves attention here. His understanding of individuals as almost rational actors, who can develop *strategies*, invest and translate capital into strategic resources, proves problematic. This approach is mainly challenged by the continuous movement and transformation (Vigh 2009) of the social, economic and political environment. Vigh (2009) argues that in countries with high levels of economic and political instability, individuals and groups do not develop *coherent strategies*, but follow '*tentative mappings*', which fit an unsettled, fast-transforming socio-economic-political environment. As he further argues, individuals need to manage the movement of the environment, while they move themselves with practices and projects. In short, they '*socially navigate*' their social worlds set in continuous transformation.

It is worth noting that ethnographic studies on Eastern Europe (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Verdery 1993, 1996, 2002) confirm Vigh's (2009) elaboration on continuous movement of the social, economic and political environment, which cannot be viewed as a stable structure, but rather as a process in which the individuals' practices and relations participate actively in the larger transformations. Burawoy and Verdery (1999) argue that people in post-1989 Eastern European countries including Romania experienced high levels of uncertainty<sup>14</sup> and were, in

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<sup>14</sup> By making references to uncertainties Burawoy and Verdery (1999) mainly refer to high levels of inflation, difficulties in the restitution of private property, deindustrialization and high levels of unemployment, difficult access to labour markets, clientelistic relations etc.



this way, locally involved in domestications and contestations of the law and institutional practice (Verdery 2002).

Burawoy and Verdery (1999) state that what is usually understood as structural change and almost linear process from A to B, becomes a continuous process in which the centre no longer dictates a unique direction, but leaves space for micro-power relations to participate significantly in larger transformations. In my study, the micro-power is one of the explanatory variables in the understanding of the differential transformation of the two Roma groups.

#### **4.Thesis structure**

The Ph.D. thesis is divided into 9 main chapters: methodology and methods, 7 main chapters, conclusion, bibliography, and notes.

**The first main chapter** sets out the historical context of my research and presents the main *transformations in Eastern Europe and Romania that occurred from socialism to post-socialism*, as studied by social scientists. It maps all the relevant larger transformations (e.g. the emergence of the informal economy, clientelism, neopatrimonial state) related to local power relations and discursive practices in the main spheres of power struggle. It argues primarily for a decentralized, de-reifying understanding of power, which is not always located in the state, but in local level relations and practices. The latter participate in the post-socialist transformations and alter the directions of governance.

**The second main chapter** is an analysis of the two Roma groups in the *interactions with the transformations in the economic sphere of power struggles* from socialism to post-socialism. It develops a critical dialogue with Ladanyi and Szelenyi's (2003) model of macro-historical and unidirectional transformation of the Roma socio-economic condition. In the chapter, I follow the two Roma groups' modes of adaptation, alteration and innovation within the economic sphere (the socialist second economy and the post-socialist informal economy). I argue that the Caldarars and Romanianized Roma interactions with the transformations in the economic

sphere can be summarized by two models, which involved unequal access to opportunities: the mobility and the sedentary approach of economic practice.

**The third main chapter** is a *retrospective historical analysis of the Roma forms of leadership*. In the previous chapter on the informal economy, the Caldarar leaders were presented as important actors connecting and disconnecting the community from the state sources of power. In this chapter, I explore the idea of brokerage capacity to create a space for both Roma empowerment and contestations of power. It shows that the Roma leaders, who were co-opted as Roma experts were less able to act in the interests of their community and started to forge connections with important actors within *tight webs of power*. On the other hand, those who remained, 'informal' leaders and do not occupy official positions are able to move smoothly between *loose power webs* and negotiate clientelistic relations in their own interests.

**The fourth main chapter** maps the web of Roma power relations in the sphere of *politics, in connection to post-socialist transformations of the state and politics* (e.g. neopatrimonial state, Roma politics). In this chapter, I show that local-level power relations among Roma were affected by the transition from 'restitution politics' (the restitution of gold associated with the early 1990s PSD politics) to *local patronage politics* materialized through the Roma leaders' support for the patron and his followers and a *central political patronage* (Roma Party politically subordinated to the Social Democrat Party). The resulting *fields of politics* produced a double structure of patronage, which captured the Roma politics as source of power and empowerment for the two Roma communities. While the Roma experts/patronage brokers experienced local patronage as a form of limitation in representing the interests of the community, the Roma informal leaders/power brokers used the context in their own interests. In this way, the Roma communities were deprived of political support and representation.

**The fifth main chapter** continues, in a present manner, the inquiry into the Roma relations with the state, which is mainly explored retrospectively in Chapter three on Roma leadership. The present chapter explores the two Roma communities'

subjection to local patronage politics through an analysis of individuals' everyday encounters with the local state within the clientelistic dynamics. I argue that transformations in *Roma leadership* in the local development of patronage politics produced for both Roma communities a relative individualization of encounters with the local state and patron. In the case of the Romanianized Roma, the leaders who became *patronage brokers*, less able to advocate on behalf of their community, subjected Roma to *direct clientelistic relations with the local patron*. With regard to the Caldarars, the *bulibasi*, who became *power brokers*, have pursued personal clientelistic interests and thus reduced their involvement in the Caldarars' interactions with the local state.

**The sixth main chapter** follows the strategy of the previous one and develops, in a present but also a historical prospective approach, a view of everyday local politics, explored retrospectively in the Chapter four. The chapter analyses the dynamics of clientelism in the two Roma communities. A special section is devoted to the 2009 presidential elections in Costesti, a prospective event, able to reveal and transform local power relations. By exploring patterns of voting behaviour, I argue that patronage brokers, through their clientelistic actions, reproduce patronage politics and neopatrimonial power. However, for the Caldarars, the contests between multiple power brokers give space for the democratization of voting behaviour and bring challenges to the local patronage politics.

**The seventh chapter** moves from the analysis of power relations towards the *discursive practices of power in the sphere of religion*. It explores the dialectic *power-empowerment in religious discursive practices*. The Caldarars' conversion to Pentecostalism produces both empowerment and subjection to power. In this sense, I show that the Pentecostal religious practice, locally and independently organized, challenges forms of external authority and produces genuine *forms of self-governance and empowerment from within*. Pentecostal Caldarars no longer submit to their 'traditional' leaders – *bulibasi* - and situate 'authority' in their everyday life, in close connection to their relations with God ( the *new bulibasa*), their normative self-informed by the religious doctrine. Without excluding external influences (e.g.

administrators of the church), the Pentecostal discursive practices change patterns of voting, which are no longer influenced by *bulibasi*, but relocated to the private sphere of their relations with God.

**The eight chapter** is *the concluding chapter* which closes the circle of discussion started in introduction and reveals two models of interaction with historical transformations within and across different spheres of power struggles (state, politics, economy and religion). Caldarars through a *mobile approach* in economic practices, use of practical knowledge and new models of self-governance (e.g. Pentecostal religious practice) succeeded to adapt to a fast transforming post-socialist environment. On the other hand, Romanianized Roma, with a *sedentary approach* navigated the field of limited possibilities within the local dynamics of power relations. My thesis argues that neoliberal discourses of social integration for Roma use identificatory categories sourced from statistics to *depoliticise* and *decontextualize* a qualitative complex reality. They discount and reproduce *two forms of subordination of the Roma*, reflexively explored in my thesis. First, there is a general disregard for local clientelistic dynamics and the double structure of patronage, which captures the Roma politics and disempowers the Roma. Secondly, they overlook qualitative differences between Roma groups who are largely subsumed under the category of 'poor' and 'vulnerable' people of Europe. Therefore, my thesis suggests that, in order to produce social change and the empowerment of the Roma, both academic and policy oriented research should pay attention both to the local level dynamics of power relations, discursive practices and qualitative differences between Roma groups in their history of power relations. In this sense, the Caldarars' mobile approach to relations and economic activities, and their new religious discursive practices challenge categories of *symbolic violence* ('poor', 'marginalized', 'vulnerable') and suggest the development of alternative mentalities of governance, willing to identify and underpin *Roma models of self-governance* and therefore produce *genuine empowerment*.

# Chapter 1. Methodology and Method

## 1.1 Methodological and theoretical references for the study of power relations

Generally, the methodological approach used in my thesis is an adjusted framework for the study of power, inspired by Wolf's (1990, 1999, 2001) and Foucault's (1980) historical-relational perspectives on power and discursive practices.

Foucault (1980) considers that "power is co-extensive with the social body" (p. 142) and that power relations cannot be disconnected from other relational manifestations enacted in different spheres of social life. In this context, individuals' economic practices, interactions with the state, political actions, religious practices are all connected through the webs of power. In my thesis, I generally follow a Foucauldian relational perspective on power, which goes into the complex analysis of its capilarities of local power practices and manifestations enacted by individuals, groups and institutions.

By looking at individuals and local groups' practices in interaction with larger transformations of state, economy, politics, I consider that my main methodological focus is on the dynamic micro-power (individual /group relations and practices) vs. macro- power (spheres of power struggles) with an ethnographic focus on micro-power. *I define micro-power as the relations between individuals and groups enacted within and across different spheres of power struggle, including state, politics, economy and religion.* In this context, power relations and discursive practices are mediums of transformation, which take the form of struggles. *More concretely, my analytical operationalization of power relations and discursive practices includes the following sets of conceptual dimensions:*

**A. The content and operations of power relations and discursive practices** which refer to what post-structuralist geographers called *entanglements of power* (Routledge, Philo, Paddison 1999) within which

subjection to power, resistance and empowerment coexist in any power relation and discursive practice :

1. *Subjection to power* refers at adoption of values and models of practice (e.g. clientelism), which lead to subordination and dependence on external actors. These forms of power are frequently generated by the state's discursive practices of governance (identification, education, social integration), but also by new religious discourses of power (Pentecostalism). Both claim to produce empowerment.
2. *Contestation of different forms of power* comes from individual discursive practices (e.g. the Pentecostal religious doctrine vs. religious reflexivity). Dialogues with the religious self are forms of contestation and rejection of the Roma leadership.
3. *Empowerment* is a mixture of elements of individual discursive practices (e.g. religious reflexivity, dialogues with God) and large discourses of power (e.g. Pentecostalism doctrine) which leads to self-governance.

#### **B. Implications of power relations and discursive practices.**

They have the capacity to generate long-term constraints or opportunities for action, human and economic development for the parties involved.

1. *Opportunities* give access to entrepreneurial activities and connectivity to larger webs of power (e.g. forms of self-governance are favourable to entrepreneurial activities, which are symbolically supported by religious practice).
2. *Constraints* come as limited possibilities of action and economic development confining individuals to local or particular sets of relations.

In my thesis, I look at the *capacity of the temporal dynamic of individual and group power relations and discursive practices to produce transformations* in the life trajectories of the two Roma groups. From this point of view, it constitutes an historical analysis of power relations and discursive practices. It follows seven methodological and theoretical references:

1. As Hearn (2012) argued, a dichotomy between structures and agency is worth avoiding, while power should be considered a social process (p. 16).

Following this argument, as well as Foucault's (1980) relational perspective, my study goes beyond the duality of structure–agency, and locates power in relations, which are treated here as social processes in their temporal transformation from socialism to post-socialism.

2. The study is concentrated on both power relations and discursive practices within and across different spheres of power struggle. The chapters on informal economy, state encounters, leadership and politics are mainly focused on events and relations between individuals at different administrative levels. The last chapter on religion analyses the dynamic between state discourses of power (social integration) and the Roma religious discursive practices.

3. The spheres of power struggles are inter-related (e.g. state-politics-informal economy, or politics-religion). The Roma micro-power relations and discursive practices are explored in the intersectionality of these spheres of power struggle. I follow the historical transformation from socialism to post-socialism and the micro-dynamics of power relations in each sphere of power struggles. Looking at local level power struggles within and across different spheres resembles what Foucault (1980) proposed as an '*ascending analysis of power*' (p. 99).

4. Inspired by Wolf (1990), Schneider (1995) suggested that an analysis of power that links micro- to macro-levels should pay attention to *brokers*. In my thesis, I identify and inquire into the brokerage practices, which connect different levels of power and make the power dispersed and effective in its capilarities. The brokers' actions and involvement in events constitute a map of the power webs, which expands beyond the local level of practice.

5. Inspired by Vigh (1999), I concentrate my analysis on *two movements/transformations*. First, it is the transformations of what I call spheres of power struggle, including state, politics, economy, and religion, from socialism to post-socialism. Second, it is the individual/group movement and interaction with the macro-transformations. In this regard, I mainly concentrated on the transformations of state and economy: from a centralized/repressive to a neopatrimonial state and from a centralized

economy with a small second economy sector to decentralized deregulated markets and the development of significant informal activity. These larger transformations created both constraints and opportunities for the two Roma groups, which interacted differently with the post-socialist transformations.

6. Following the Foucauldian and Wolfian perspectives on power, I approach *history as contingency*. The historical analysis of micro-power is mainly concentrated on events and relations involving individuals and groups. Power relations have a transformative capacity for the historical trajectories of the two Roma groups studied.

7. Ultimately, power relations are power struggles, processes in continuous transformation. As Hearn (2012) advises, power should not be essentialized, but rather “used to characterize tendencies in the relationships between social entities, and should not be construed either solely as observable events, or as some substances or quality found in the powerful” (p. 16). In this sense, my methodological construct that includes (a) power relations expressed in local level events and individual vs. groups practices and (b) individual/group discursive practices of power, avoids any form of essentialization of power. In sum, my thesis captures the dynamic of power as social process. The temporal dynamic of power struggles within and across spheres of contest ultimately creates the transformative tendencies of what I call in my thesis power relations.

## **1.2 Method: Political-Historical Ethnography and Event Analysis**

As emphasised, my attention here is concentrated on power as a process and relational dynamic that reveals itself through its manifestations in individual and group relations and discursive practices. I argue that ethnography is the most suitable method for the exploration of power relations at individual and group level in their historical transformations, which cannot be captured through surveys or isolated, decontextualized interviews.



Due to multiple influences coming from a wide range of philosophical and theoretical streams (phenomenological, hermeneutics, structuralism, feminism, constructionism, post-structuralism), a core definition of ethnography is generally avoided (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Nevertheless, ethnography can be considered the research approach and method used by social scientists to carry out a reflexive immersion in a group, or several groups of people, in a location, or several locations, through participant observation and interviews aimed at the study of practices, norms, and relations. As argued (Joseph, Mahler and Auyero 2007), “ethnography is uniquely equipped to look microscopically at the foundation of political institutions and their attendant set of practices” (p. 2). In my research I used political ethnography to unravel the mechanisms of what Foucault (1980) called micro-power and capilarities of power relations. In my thesis, politics has a specific meaning, which is related to voting behaviour, local distribution of resources, and political parties, discussed in two chapters on politics. Power largely refers to struggles and negotiations of meaning and access to socio-economic opportunities. Political ethnography refers largely to power struggles and is useful for understanding the dynamics of practices and discourses of power in their ‘peripheral’ and relational enactments (Tilly 2007), but also in their connections to higher scales (regional and state actors, state discourses of modernization etc.).

Moreover, a consistent political ethnography includes the historical dimension of the power relations under consideration. Kalb and Tak (2005) remarked that history, as approached by sociologists and anthropologists, has been understood as periods of time, “as static temporal blocks of meaning,” (p. 12) that serve to explain social phenomena. Moreover, micro-historical analysis has often been treated in an a-temporal manner. In my thesis, I use a historical-ethnographic approach, which concentrates, on the processuality of power relations and discursive practices in different spheres of struggle. However, there are different ways of approaching history. Horowitz and Haney (2006) identified four models of historical analysis in ethnographic work: history as context, history as process, history as comparison and history as explanation. A historical comparison approach takes as its data the social, political and economic changes occurring at fixed temporal references (socialism and post-socialism, for example) and excludes the exploration of the transition from one

temporal reference to another. In this way, the process of transformation becomes the 'black box' of the study'. On the other hand, historical explanation adopts a deterministic approach and evolutionary teleological thinking to explain present social conditions through previous historical actions, structures and discourses.

In my thesis, I use the other two approaches presented by Horowitz and Haney (2006): *history as process* and *history as context*. History as context is used mainly in my first chapter on historical transformations from socialism to post-socialism, which provides a general overview of the main processes and changes which occurred in the Romanian economy and society (e.g. expansion of informal economy), law (restitution of property and minority rights), the development of clientelistic networks (patronage and patrimonial politics), changes in the elites' composition (e.g. state representatives as political entrepreneurs). *History as a process* is nonetheless the main approach in my thesis. By process I understand the transformation of power in its temporal (socialism to post-socialism) and relational extensions (relations between individuals diversified and expanded through social, economic, and religious practices).

Historical-processual ethnographic research "addresses theoretical issues that are not limited to period, place or group" (Handelman 2005: 30). Rather than starting from larger events and structures, my research approaches issues of power ethnographically by looking at the people's practices and relations as they are performed and transformed. Similarly, Sider (2005) looked at the lived history of various indigenous groups in North America. He suggested that two historical scales - macro and micro - can be linked within ethnography through the micro-historical research which connects "contexts of decision-making at high levels of authority, such as the World Bank or government departments, to local concerns, mobilizations, and outcomes" (Kalb, Tak 2005: 19). My thesis follows this model and explores local Roma practices and historical transformations within Roma communities in order to challenge transnational neoliberal problematizations of governance (neoliberal governmentality Foucault 1991a) promoted by the World Bank, the UNDP, the OSCE and the EU.

This methodological engagement is called '*extended case method*' and it was developed by Max Gluckman (1961, 1968), the main exponent of the Manchester

school of political anthropology. It is able to capture the “translocal in the local” (Glaesar 2005: 30; Burawoy 1998) and individual case studies are approached in their historical expansion, articulation and general impact on a population or phenomenon. Gluckman (1958, 1961, 1968) also has the merit of emphasising the understanding of the social as a process in the everyday events that can reveal discontinuities at larger levels of practice and decision. This ethnographic approach to history has been called ‘*prospective micro-history*’. In Gluckman’s terms, the *prospective* character is given by the capacity of current *social events* (e.g. presidential elections experienced locally) to change structures and life-courses. Nevertheless, the ‘*retrospective*’ *historical approach* in ethnography remains important mainly for enabling the understanding of individual past experiences as negotiated relations with local level actors, which have the capacity to challenge the large authoritarian programs of the state.

My ethnographic study is informed by a Gluckmanian perspective on local histories as both *retrospective* and *prospective*. I explore the ways micro-histories of the Roma individuals and groups expressed in specific events and relations are linked to larger transformations and the ways in which the local level relational and discursive practices changed their life trajectories.

### **1.3 Ethnographic approaches in Romani studies**

Research already done on Romanies has come to constitute the field of ‘Romani studies’. Significant research in Romani studies has been carried out by means of ethnography (Sutherland 1986; Okely 1992; Williams 2003; van de Port 1998; Gay y Blasco 1999; Stewart 1997).

One of the key monographs on Eastern European Gypsies is Stewart’s *The Time of the Gypsies* (1997), based on an 18-month fieldwork in a Hungarian small town in the socialist 1980s. It adopts a new approach to Romanies, just as much as it constitutes a continuation of the previous culturalist approaches on American (Sutherland 1986) and British Gypsies (Okely 1992). The novelty is given by the constant suggestion that the Gypsies’ destinies and lives have to be seen as a narrated story of the larger societies in which they live. In addition, the study challenges ideas

of Gypsy marginality and suggests an analytical shift in viewing the Roma as central to their own lives. It constitutes one of the first historical ethnographies of the Roma. Nevertheless, history is mainly treated as context and general frame for the individuals' actions and practices. Stewart's (1997) ethnography has a less Gluckmanian processual perspective and focuses mainly on the Roma cultural practices, rather than on specific processes in which their individual practices, interactions, trajectories, are entangled.

Nevertheless, Stewart's (1997) analysis of socialist and post-socialist Roma proves the advantages of ethnographic studies, which give subjects their own voice in accounts attempting to describe their life trajectories. Methodologically, this also counted as an important monograph in Romani studies, in so far as all studies which preceded Stewart's – Acton (1974), Okely (1992), Sutherland (1986), or even Stewart's contemporaries (van de Port 1998, for example) – were less successful in this ethnographic desiderata.

Nevertheless, Stewart's book continues a certain 'tradition' in Romani studies that could heuristically be characterized as 'culturalist'. The author places much emphasis on symbols and the semiotic power of 'texts' the Gypsies engage with, in their performances of identity (songs, dialogues in market deals, meanings of sexuality, purity and pollution, death etc.). Similarly, Okely's detailed treatment of death rituals has been replicated by an entire volume by Williams (2003), who wrote about the rituals of the 'dead and the living' amongst the French Gypsies. Gypsies' economic life, including their representations of wage labour and horse-dealing, found importance in Stewart's (1997) monograph. Similarly, Okely's closer look at Gypsy women and gender relations was an important concern for Gay y Blasco (1999) in her volume about Gitanos in Madrid. However, Stewart's ethnography sketches a sometimes rich texture of social practice which includes the interplay between the Gypsies and state policies, local or central authorities, peasants, worker-townsmen etc. The degree of conceptualisation is generally incipient. For instance, the theme of power and resistance among Gypsies during socialism are mere suggestions, rather than issues theoretically developed and dealt with, in the ethnographic project.

It seems to me that the field of Romani studies has expanded over decades through the multiplication of ethnographic sites of inquiry and empirical instantiations of Roma lives. Adaptation (Sutherland 1986) and ‘modernity’ became influential frameworks in which the authors sought to understand the relation between the Roma and the state (see Acton 1974, Bancroft 2005). Less concern was shown towards the possibilities of conceptual exploration of the interaction between Gypsies and political and socio-economic transformations. Therefore, in my thesis I follow an historical-processual ethnographic perspective in order to understand the transformation of power relations and discursive practices in interaction with larger transformations of state and economy, in groups of Roma who experience utterly different conditions of living.

## **1.4 The field site**

### **Previous fieldwork experience and access**

My Ph.D. field research was a continuation of the field inquiry I made in 2007 for my MA thesis written for Central European University. My first visit to Costesti<sup>15</sup>, the field site of my research, was in 2005 when I participated in a qualitative study on Roma health issues, co-funded by the Roma NGO Romani CRISS<sup>16</sup>. After the 2005 and 2007 field trips in Costesti, I went back to the village in October 2009 to start my long-term Ph.D. fieldwork, which lasted approximately 7 months. I considered important to continue with the same case study and explore further ethnographically the historical trajectories of the two Roma groups.

I lived in Costesti during the autumn-winter of 2009 and the spring-summer of 2010. While based in Costesti, I made short research visits to nearby villages including Liveni and Moroieni, where I conducted interviews with leaders and

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<sup>15</sup> For ethical and confidential reasons the name of the locality was changed.

<sup>16</sup> Report: Fighting against tuberculosis in Roma communities in Romania (co-author), commissioned to Romani CRISS, 2005, Bucharest.

families from different Caldarar groups. In the next section, I concentrate on a general description of Costesti and the two Roma groups studied.

### **The geography of the commune**

Costesti is a commune in Eastern Romania. It is composed of two villages - Costesti and Buteni with an equal number of inhabitants. According to the 2002 census, Costesti had a population of about 10,000 people, out of which roughly 2,000 were recorded as Gypsies: Romanianized Roma and Caldarars, almost 1,000 persons in each 'community'.

The mayor and deputy mayor described Costesti as one of the richest villages in the county. It has good road and rail access to two important towns in the region as well as access to facilities such as gas, running water, electricity and the internet. There are: 4 primary and secondary schools, 2 health clinics, a hospital (threatened with closure due to lack of local funding), a police station, two orthodox churches and a Caldarars' Pentecostal church, a 'house' for cultural events, a hostel, two large supermarkets, an open-air market, two main pubs and many other small cheaper pubs where Romanianized Roma, Caldarars and local peasants go for drinks. In the centre of the commune there are several important institutions all located on the main road which links the locality to the two main towns in the county:

1. The local council - a one-storey building with a large parking area outside.
2. On the same side as the local council there is the main Orthodox Church, built in 1943, a stylish old building with a large park surrounding it.
3. One of the four schools of the village, attended primarily by Romanianized Roma, faces the local council.
4. On the same side as the school there is the Hortensia Papadat Bengescu (an inter-war Romanian novelist) memorial house/museum .
5. Close to the council, on the same side, there is the main police station in a very small building, a former peasant house.



**Figure 3.** Costesti local council. Photo: local council website, 2012



**Figure 4** Costesti Orthodox Church. Photo: local council website, 2012





**Figure 5** Hortensia Papadat Bengescu museum. Photo: local council website, 2012



**Figure 6** The village's cultural centre, one km south from the centre. Photo: local council website, 2012

One kilometre north from the centre, in the area of the hostel, there are a petrol station and two large stores selling construction material. These stores and other smaller ones started to appear in the mid-1990s, when Caldarars began to build their



large houses. Across the road from the petrol station and the hostel, there are two supermarkets and a pizzeria with a large terrace visited by lorry drivers and rich Caldarars.



**Figure 7** Construction material store. Photo: local council website, 2012



**Figure 8** Pizzeria bar facing the hostel. Photo: local council website, 2012

The districts where the Roma live are located in different parts of the village. The Romanianized Roma district is located in the valley that lies between the Barlad river and the main road, just behind the hostel and petrol station. It is a crowded area of small dwellings with un-asphalted small alleys. Houses are generally in a poor condition, made of baked clay and with improvised roofs. Yet, some of them look newer and better, resembling the peasant ones. Asking Romanianized Roma living in the area one can find out that the better-looking houses were built in the last few years, after the 2005 heavy floods, when the government provided funds to help the victims and recover their belongings.



**Figure 9** Romanianized Roma district seen from the river side. Photo taken by the author, 2009.





**Figure 10** Romanianized Roma district background. Photo taken by the author, 2009.

In the background: the Orthodox Church (left), local council (building with the red roof on the right) facing the school (grey building) mostly attended by the Romanianized Roma.

The Caldarars' district is 300 metres away from the hostel in the part of the village opposite to the river. Their district is located on a large asphalted road going to the East, perpendicular to the main road. Before the 1990s, the Caldarars used to live on the outskirts of the village, in a sort of hamlet close to the forest, with almost no access to piped water facilities and electricity.



**Figure 11** The old Caldarars' district. Photo taken by the author, 2009

In the background (right) there are some new Caldarars' houses located on a large asphalted road.

Their relatively new district used to be a different village, belonging to the commune and inhabited mainly by peasants until the early 1990s. However, in the mid-1990s, many Caldarar families who had been successful in informal commercial businesses<sup>17</sup> succeeded in buying peasants' houses and began building their own multi-storey, large residences, usually called by the Romanianized Roma and peasants 'Gypsy palaces'<sup>18</sup>. For both locals and outsiders, the Caldarars' streets, full

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<sup>17</sup>In the mid-1990s, in full process of deindustrialization, the Caldarars started to buy and refurbish old technology and materials still owned by state plants and resell everything to small private firms all over the country.

<sup>18</sup> In Romania, both Romanians and other groups of Roma, including the Romanianized Roma, use the word 'palace' to suggest the specific architectural style of the Caldarars' multi-storey houses. The Caldarars' houses were portrayed by the three Italian authors (architects and photographers) of the coffee table book *"Gypsy architecture: Houses of the Roma in Eastern Europe"* as "striking, violent and vulgar" with "Indian-style" roofs, which "represent the family, its standing, its power and its wealth" and "the financial power of the family" (Calz, Corno, Gianferro 2007: 9-12).

of 'palaces' on both sides, are impressive. They are well-known by people living in the region, journalists and even foreign tourists attracted by the 'bizarre' and conspicuous architecture. However, not all Caldarars used the 'palace' model in construction of their houses. Some of those who live on the first half of the street, closer to the main road have smaller houses, usually crowded around smaller courtyards. The Caldarar families with smaller houses and more crowded gardens are usually portrayed by the locals as poorer Gypsies. Walking along the street one notices that the aspect of the houses changes: from smaller, modest residences to more and more conspicuous 'palaces'. The biggest 'palaces' populate the upper part of the street. Their owners were the first Caldarars who settled in the peasant area.

The richest Caldarar families moved in first, in the mid-1990s when some peasant owners were attracted by the good prices offered by Gypsies. Also, following the example of the richer families, poorer Caldarars still living, in the late 1990s, in their old district, with almost no access to facilities, associated as groups and bought the unsold Romanian houses, which were situated closer to the main road. These movements significantly changed the power geography and the appearance of the village.



**Figure 12** Caldara man on the first half of the street, close to the main road. Photo taken by the author, 2009.

In the background two smaller peasants' houses (on the right, the white and yellow buildings) followed by poorer Caldara's houses (on the right, the buildings with red and grey roofs).





**Figure 13** Caldarars' houses on the first half of the street, closer to the main road. Photo taken by the author, 2009.



**Figure 13** The Caldarars's upper district - where the richest Gypsies live. Photo taken by the author, 2009.

Today, in the new Caldararas' district there are three important institutions: 1. an orthodox church mainly attended by the few Romanian families who still live in the area, a primary school attended mainly by Caldarar children, the Caldararas' Pentecostal church. While the Orthodox Church is located on the main street that crosses the district, the primary school and the Pentecostal church are on a peripheral alleyway running parallel to the main street. The large area where the Pentecostal church is built was previously owned by a peasant family who sold the land to the Caldarar Pentecostal community.



**Figure 14** Caldarar woman with her child in front of the primary school attended mainly by Caldararas. Photo taken by the author, 2009.

The general aspects of the two Roma districts are quite different. Infrastructure and landscape differ as well. While in the Romanianized Roma's crowded, un-asphalted area, the traffic in the small alleyways consists of old carts pulled by horses, the road



in the Caldarars' district is populated by speedy expensive cars (e.g. Mercedes, Audi Q6, Audi Q7).

## **History, economy and people**

The historical references to Costesti draw extensively upon an unpublished monograph written by a local history teacher, and upon documents he provided after an interview conducted at his house in April 2007. As stated in the monograph, the first reference to the place was made on the 15th of July 1448. The presence of the Romanianized Roma in Costesti was acknowledged in the 15th century, when they were slaves on the local boyars' lands. From 1856 onwards, when Gypsy slavery was abolished<sup>19</sup>, Costesti became a large regional market town inhabited by different ethnic populations (Gypsies, Jews, Greeks, Tatars, and Armenians) involved in commercial activities (store keeping, workshops). Romanianized Roma, now released from slavery, began to work for the local Jews and other entrepreneurs. While women worked as housekeepers in Jewish houses, men worked as day-labourers in Jewish or Greek workshops (as furriers or knitters), in restaurants, or as brick-makers for Romanian peasant households. Some Romanianized Roma families were fiddlers at local parties and weddings. After the WWII, they gave up brick-making and during socialism they worked in the socialist state economy as seasonal labourers in regional state farms, as well as members of the Costesti collective farm. Few were employed as unskilled labourers at the steelwork plant of Goteni.

Beginning in the 1960s, the socialist state began to enforce a program of sedentarisation for nomadic Gypsies. All nomadic Gypsies with no proof of residence were considered 'illegal', fined and not allowed to continue travelling. Since the early 1960s, nomadic Caldarar Gypsies started to come to Costesti. They were not a unified, compact group of newcomers. Some came from Transylvania, others from Banat, while others came from the today's Republic of Moldova. After settling in Costesti, the Caldarars received land from the local council to build houses. However, while settled, most of the Caldarar families continued to travel seasonally and practice their 'traditional' activities until 1989 and even after. Since

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<sup>19</sup>In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Gypsy slavery was abolished in all principalities, which nowadays form the modern Romanian state: Moldova, Wallachia and Transylvania.

the 1990s, some Caldarar families started to become successfully involved in semi-informal businesses. They used to purchase old materials and assets from large industrial state plants that were in the process of dismantling old machinery and privatization and sell them to small new commercial companies.

On the other hand, the Romanianized Gypsies were laid-off from the socialist state farms and factories and began to work informally as day-labourers in agriculture for peasant households, as well as working as construction workers for the Caldarar houses. State and local council benefits became their main sources of income. Unlike the Caldarars, the Romanianized Gypsies speak only Romanian, wear casual clothes, hardly differentiated from the local Romanian peasants. Most of them claim they feel 'almost Romanians'. During my fieldwork, the Romanianized Roma discussed their identity in terms similar to those of the Romanian peasants' socio-economic practices (subsistence economy) and in contrast to the Caldarars' lifestyles. They generally emphasised several characteristics, which, from their point of view, bring them closer to a 'Romanian identity': a. during socialism they were settled and employed in state farms and factories, b. they only speak Romanian, and have no knowledge of Romani, c. compared to Caldarars, they spent at least 4 years in local schools and do not marry their children at a young age (16-18 years old is a common marriage age for the Romanianized Roma).

On the other hand, the Caldarars claim to be 'genuine' Gypsies and despise the Romanianized Roma who, from their point of view, are 'poor' and 'dirty', and therefore not 'real' Gypsies.

As a participant observer, I noticed the differences in the social landscape of the two Roma groups. Walking down the street where Caldarars live, one meets colourfully-dressed Gypsy women wearing long, wide skirts and headscarves, sitting with children and husbands wearing suits on benches outside their opulent houses. In the Romanianized Roma area, the image is slightly different: poorly dressed people gather on the narrow alleys to drink, smoke and chat and they often wait for peasants and Caldarars to come to their district to offer work for the next day or week.



**Figure 15** Romanianized Roma chatting on a narrow alley in their district. Photo taken by the author, 2010.

Other differences and similarities between these people of the village are reflected in production and consumption. All the local peasants own small pieces of agricultural land and livestock and are involved in subsistence agriculture. Neither the Romanianized Roma, nor the Caldarars own these means of production. While the first offer small services to the others in exchange for a little cash, the Caldarars are involved in handicraft production, trading, making cauldrons and engaging in businesses with old technology.

In terms of leaders, there are some general differences between the Romanianized Roma and Caldarars. The Romanianized Roma have never had a specific leadership 'formula'. Nowadays they have both a formal and an informal leader, well connected to the state structures of governance. The formal Roma leader (Roma expert) at the local council represents both Roma communities. He is a Romanianized Roma appointed by the Roma Party and employed by the government to deal with Roma issues in Costesti.

On the other hand, the Caldarars have a long 'tradition' of leadership. Since they were nomads, they used to organize in small travelling groups represented by leaders called *bulibasa*, empowered to negotiate interactions with local authorities. The term *bulibasa* is a Romani word similar to *Rom baro* – *Rom* (man), *baro* (big) - translated as 'big man' or 'big boss'<sup>20</sup>. However, the term and its corresponding institution altered during socialism and both are much contested today by Caldarar leaders and common Gypsies alike. For both Gypsy communities, informal and formal leaders play an important role in connecting the Roma both to local authorities and patronage actors (mayor, deputy mayor, local patron/administrator). The next section is a brief description of the main research instruments used in my historical-processual ethnographic study.



**Figure 16** Peasant with his child driving a cart in the Caldarars' district in Liveni, Photo taken by the author 2010.

In the background: Liveni Caldarar houses, a peasant driving his motorcycle and a Caldarar woman outside her house.

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<sup>20</sup> See Lee, R. (2005) *Learn Romani. Das-duma Rromanes*. Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.





**Figure 17** Peasant from Liveni smoking outside his small house situated in between two impressive Caldadar houses, Photo taken by the author 2010.



**Figure 19** Liveni Caldadar house interior, unfinished construction . Photo taken by the author, 2010.

In the picture a Caldadar woman and a boy at the main door.

## 1.5 Data collection and analysis

The main research instruments used were semi-structured interviews, oral histories, and participant observation recorded in rich field notes. The collected data comprises 40 recorded interviews, some in the form of oral history, and 100,000-words of field notes transcribed electronically.

The people interviewed were Romanianized Roma and Caldarars, and other local actors<sup>21</sup> relevant for understanding practices and relations in each sphere of power struggle (state, politics, economy, education, religion). Selection of the respondents was based on the snowball sampling method. In the following section, I give details of my respondents and instruments.

- a. Interviews with five Roma leaders: two Romanianized Roma leaders, (one informal and one formal) and three Caldarar *bulibasi*.
- b. Interviews with four Romanianized Roma.
- c. Interviews with sixteen Caldarar Gypsies, interviewed in family and individual situations.
- d. Interviews with three former mayors of Costesti.
- e. Interviews with three local councillors representing political parties from the 2009-2010 local opposition: the National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Liberal Democrat Party (PDL).
- f. Interviews with two Romanianized Roma acting as school and health service mediators for both Roma communities.
- g. Interviews with two administrators of the Caldarars' Pentecostal church.
- h. Interviews with three significant actors within the village: a PDL councillor and school teacher, the former collective farm manager, a former head of the Costesti police station.

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<sup>21</sup>It is worth mentioning that the number of people I had informal conversations with is significantly higher than the number of the recorded interviews taken. I appreciate I had informal conversations with roughly 100 people including Roma, local peasants and bureaucrats, which are all present in my fieldnotes.

- i. Interviews with two teachers, coordinators of the 'Second chance to education' program mainly attended by adult Caldarars with no primary schooling.
- j. Interviews with two local peasants about their experience and interactions with the Roma in the village.

The data were collected over a period of at least 7 months in 2009-2010. Additional observational field notes<sup>22</sup> were written down at the end of each fieldwork day.

### **Participant observation sites**

My observation sessions were distributed equally amongst the two Roma groups, which allowed a comparative perspective on relations and practices. The main sites of observation were the Gypsies' residences, sites of work<sup>23</sup> and local institutions (local council, schools, and churches). Important observations were made at following local institutions:

- a. I regularly visited two offices at the local council: 1. the *Social Work Office*, where three clerical officers work with the council's Roma expert to produce and organize the necessary paperwork for social benefits (e.g. housing, heating, child benefits); 2. the *Land Registry Office*, where two council workers (a land surveyor and his secretary) produce land and house property paperwork and establish levels of property taxation for villagers. The Land Registry Office's paperwork is also needed for identification purposes. Both offices are visited daily by a large numbers of Caldarars and Romanianized Roma looking for social benefits. For several months, while visiting these offices, I observed interactions, negotiations, and conflicts between the Roma and the local state representatives. These aspects reflected significant power struggles in the sphere of the local state encounters, discussed in the chapter on the Roma and the state.

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<sup>22</sup>All informal talks, interactions and meetings were described in my fieldnotes.

<sup>23</sup>The Caldarars and peasant households were sites of labour for Romanianized Roma.

b. Another important field site for observations was the Caldarars' Pentecostal church in Costesti. For three months, I attended its services on a weekly basis and observed the modes of prayer, the themes of the sermons, interactions, and negotiations of meanings and practices. I also attended church services at a Romanian Pentecostal church, in a neighbouring village, where I observed, by comparison, different preaching styles. The observations made during the church services are important for grasping the negotiated meanings of self-authority and Roma leadership, which are enacted across spheres of religion and politics. All these aspects are discussed in the chapter on religion and empowerment.

c. Participation in two meetings on Roma issues: a. one local council meeting which took place at the local council before the first round of presidential elections in November 2009. The participants were: local councillors, the mayor, deputy mayor and one Roma PSD (Social Democrat Party) councillor and b. a meeting of the regional joint working group (JWG), made up of informal and formal Romanialized Roma and representatives of local and regional public institutions' representatives (mayors, lawyers, police officers, school and health mediators). The group was constituted as part of the national governmental strategy for the social inclusion of Roma.

As previously stated, both the interviews and observations are part of my historical and political ethnography, which has two forms of historical content: *retrospective and prospective*.

### **Retrospective history**

The retrospective historical approach reveals the Roma interaction with historical transformations from socialism to post-socialism in different spheres of power struggle. My interviews often took the form of *oral histories* through which specific important events and experiences were revealed. Local events such as the settlement in the village and the relations produced through the Roma-socialist state encounters proved crucial to understanding transformations of the two Roma groups. Oral histories reflect relational continuities and discontinuities. For example, they were helpful in the exploration of the ways in which the collaboration between Caldarar



leaders and the socialist authorities transformed the Caldarar organization and leadership. In addition, the great significance of local power relations is best understood through the individual experiences the Roma went through from socialism to post-socialism.

## Prospective history

For the *prospective historical approach* I used *interviews* and *participant observation* concentrated on one important local event – 2009 presidential elections - which constitute the focus of one chapter –Everyday politics.

The 2009 presidential elections in Costesti revealed the dynamics of clientelism, patronage politics, political brokerage and Roma voting and political options. During the pre-election run up, I attended the Social Democrat Party’s meetings and one local council meeting. On both rounds of voting, I was present at the poll stations for informal conversations with Roma voters and leaders. Their narratives showed not only conflicts and cooperation with local patronage actors, but also connections between local level politics and national-level political discourses.

**Table 1** The research instruments and data sources summary

<b>Retrospective history</b>	<b>Prospective history/Event analysis</b>	<b>Present</b>
<i>Oral histories</i> with Romanianized Roma and Caldarars, including leaders	<i>Participant observation</i> November 2009 presidential elections	<i>Participant observation:</i> Local council – public interactions Pentecostal church service Local and regional meetings on Roma issues Work sites of the two Roma groups
<i>Unpublished Village Monograph</i>		<i>Recorded Interviews</i> with Romanianized Roma and Caldarars about socio-economic and religious practices, voting behaviour, interaction with state authorities, leadership

## **Analysing data: realism versus constructivism**

There are different ways of writing ethnography which can be positioned on a continuum between 1) 'realist' ethnography and 'literary therapy' ethnography (Marcus 1986: 262) and 2) 'social' ethnography versus 'cultural' ethnography (Gluckman 1965; Geertz 1973). Wolf (1990) and Burawoy (1979), exponents of the Marxist realist ethnography, consider that relations, individual practices and events are facts which can be documented by the researchers. In a distinguished lecture, Eric Wolf (1990) declared that he endorses a 'realist' position in the study of power: "I subscribe to a realist position. I think that the world is real, that these realities affect what humans do and that what humans do affects the world, and that we can come to understand the whys and wherefores of these relationships"(p.587).

Nevertheless, Wolf (1990) does not essentialize his realist position and considers that cultural productions are historically contingent, while researchers should be in a continuous "quest for explanation as approximation of truth rather than truth itself" (p. 587). In this sense, I consider Wolf's perspective on ethnography appropriate. The sense of social practices, relations and events should not be lost in over interpretative literary acts and novel like descriptions, a view supported by Clifford and Marcus (1986) in their *Writing Culture*. I generally endorse Wolf's (1990) critique of the post-modernist 'writing culture' approach in ethnography: "Writing culture may require literary skills and genre, but a search for explanation requires more. I think we must move beyond Geertz's "experience-near" understandings to analytical concepts that allow us to set what we know about X against what we know about Y, in pursuit of explanation" (p.587).

Moreover, both Wolf (1990) and Burawoy (2009) inspired by Gluckman (1958) argue for an ethnography of social processes, focused on social relations, practices and events, rather than on free floating individualized meanings or cultural symbols and cultural texts, in a Geertzian understanding. My historical ethnography, without being subordinated to an imagined overarching story of the people or the fieldwork location, follows a Gluckmanian perspective to reveal discontinuities in relations and discursive practices. It compiles fragments of multiple stories of the

past and present revealed by events and individual narratives and moves itself on a continuum between social realist and reflexive culturalist perspective.

## **1.6. Ethical and reflexive considerations on my ethnography**

### **Practical considerations and emic perspective on fieldwork**

The methods I used in the field involved certain practical and ethical challenges related to the opportunities and barriers posed by the fieldwork itself. First, I needed the informed consent for every method I used. Participant observation and informal conversations were constantly used in my fieldwork as part of my everyday immersion in the field.

Also, my participation in pre-election meetings, council meetings, office work, school classes, and church services required the participants' permission and careful management of my intrusion into people's lives and narratives. All the methods used required empathy, "involvement and enmeshment, rather than objectivity and distance" (Lofland, Lofland 1995: 17). Contrary to the classical "separation between the observer (autonomy, rationality) and the observed (object, dupe of social forces)" (Burawoy 1991: 291), I was actively involved in the locals' lives and many times, I became their 'object' of their exploration. The details presented in this section show not only my awareness of the emic perspective, but also the informants' views about who the researcher is and what she does. During my fieldwork, the informants had various questions and interpretations about my work. In their attempt to find an identity for me, both the Romanianized Roma and the Caldarars were curious to find out details about my private life: "Where do you live? Are you married? Why you do not have children? How much do you earn from what you do?"

All these questions could be construed as intrusive, but I always considered them legitimate as they explained: "You ask us so many questions; we also want to know more about you". I think my openness and relaxed approach greatly helped to manage their direct questions, which were persistent at the beginning, but diminished as friendship and closeness developed. Often, the Caldarars and Romanianized Gypsies claimed to local council bureaucrats: "*She is very friendly with us, she is one*

*of us*". Nevertheless, in the first days of my second session of fieldwork, my new landlord introduced me to his friends, police officers: *'She studies Gypsies'*. After this, one police officer looked a bit disappointed and replied: *'I am sorry that you came. Why do you need to study Gypsies? We have enough of them'*. There were similar statements coming from local council workers, schoolteachers, and shopkeepers who complained that the Gypsies were involved in scandals and created many problems. I sought to overcome these issues by talking about my historical holistic frame of my study, focused on relations between all villagers including the two Roma communities.

On the other hand, the negative statements about the Roma were not substantiated by the everyday practices I observed. Everywhere in the village, I saw Roma and peasants sitting close to each other, joining each other in pubs and terraces, chatting and making plans for the next day of work. Many peasants were happy to tell me that they became godfathers for Caldarars and Romanianized Roma's children and that they love to exchange gifts with their Roma relatives.

My presence was more than welcomed in the village. Everyone got to know me very well and I was frequently invited to dinner or lunch by both peasants and Roma. The Romanianized Roma were the happiest to see me in their district as they knew that I wanted to chat with them about everyday problems in the poorest district of the village, rarely visited by other locals. Besides that, both the Romanianized Roma and the Caldarars were excited and happy to have pictures of themselves. At a rough count, I took almost 500 pictures of families, grandparents, children, friends and relatives inside or outside their houses and gardens. I considered photography a good strategy of immersion in the field, especially in the Caldarars' district, which was portrayed by the locals, including Romanianized Roma, as difficult to get to: *"You can't go there. They'll reject you, don't go!"* Following these warnings, I could have asked a Roma leader for help but I decided to go alone and not to associate my identity with any local official in the village.

## **Ethical issues in data collection**

The richest Caldarar families are known in the area as local dealers in old technology, bought from enterprises, which dismantle factories, re-sold by Caldarars to smaller firms around the country. Some who succeeded into big businesses and set up firms needed to use bank accounts for large payments. Although they use the banking system, they do not pay taxes and VAT to the state for the transactions they make. Consequently, financial control institutions and the police often raid their settlements to force them pay their taxes.

Their impressive houses have attracted significant sensational media attention and sensation. The Caldarars told me that they had been portrayed in the media as illegal businesspersons who made their fortunes from cheating the state. Since I first visited them in 2005, and then in 2007 and 2009, many of the rich Caldarar families were cautious about talking openly to me, and were also very reluctant to allow me to take pictures of their families and houses. However, they became more relaxed, when I assured them that I was not a journalist and I was not going to publish any newspaper articles and criminalize them in my writing. I told them that my intention was to write a Ph.D. thesis/book about the history of their everyday lives. Many rich Caldarar families, including *bulibasi*, became friendly and invited me to visit their houses for barbecues, dinner, drinks. Some of them were happy to have pictures of their houses, family and children. Nevertheless, the Caldarars used to avoid detailed discussions about their informal businesses and during my fieldwork, I did not raise specific questions about their economic activities. However, a problematic situation did arise with regard to my visit to the local financial office. In the last weeks of my fieldwork – June 2010 - I visited the director of the local financial office and asked his permission for an interview. He told me to expect his call in a few days. In planning to interview him, I wanted to explore electoral strategies of former candidates for the mayor's position. Usually, electoral strategies are associated with clientelistic practices of exchange (local services or money in exchange of political support). Both the mayor and the administrator of the village performed clientelistic exchanges in order to attract Roma voters, who represent 10 percent of the population of the village.

Within a number of days, I received no answers to my calls. In the meantime, I found out that all the rich Caldarar families had learned about my visit to the official. Some of them including one of the *bulibasi* complained to me directly: “*Why did you go there? What did you want to find out? That man is our friend. You will find nothing. Do not go there again; you will not be well received here again*”. After these interventions I realized that I had touched on a sensitive topic and told them that, it was not my intention to raise questions about their businesses and that I would not visit or have an interview with the director. By respecting my respondents’ will I consider that I took an ethically informed decision. Their disappointment vanished in less than a week and I was able to continue my work in a friendly atmosphere.

This experience showed that the ethnographer inevitably acts within a dynamic of power relations (Ong 1995; Coffey 1999), which makes the field study of power struggles a complex process and that ethnography is “a collaborative enterprise of participant and observer” (Burawoy 1991: 291). People in the village used to inform each other about my everyday activity and were very interested to give me the necessary support in my snowball sampling. As in any small locality, people knew each other very well and had their own likes and dislikes for specific people. From this viewpoint, I treated all personal opinions, negative or positive, in a confidential manner and I did not disclose my conversations to the other participants. As Reinharz (1997) noticed about her research on the Israelian kibbutz, it is an advantage to know who is in conflict with whom, who talks to whom, and in the end “to be able to get along with everyone” (p. 9). Furthermore, my actions were explored and discussed in advance with multiple local actors, who assured me that they were devoid of possible negative implications for my respondents. In my Ph.D. thesis, in order to ensure confidentiality, all the names of my interviewees and other respondents have been changed.

## **Ethical reflections on researcher's positionality in the study of power relations**

On the other hand, doing research with the Romanianized Roma, who live off minimum resources, revealed an aspect of the unequal power balance. It was an unequal power relation between me as a researcher looking to find information about their lives without having too much to offer in exchange and them as my respondents who were more interested in receiving direct material help instead of questions. Since my first visit in 2005, I was aware of the difficulties of these poor Gypsies and I was happy to observe that after the 2005 floods the government improved their housing conditions. I found them more relaxed and interested to chat about their lives and family histories. For my part, I did not use any form of deception. I made no material promises and I clearly stated from the beginning that our relationships will inform research on a comparative history of the two Roma groups. Nevertheless, compared to other sociological methods in which the researcher does not come into contact with his respondents (survey, archival research etc.) *ethnographic fieldwork comes closer to people's needs and problems and offers psychological support to those who experience poor conditions of living, who might be ignored by local authorities or despised by their neighbours.*

Moreover, participant observation indirectly involves participant intervention (Fine 1993) and requires a more active role, when needed. Thinking of the ethnographer's roles during fieldwork, I was inspired by Scheper-Hughes' (1995) suggestions for a moral research involvement. In her view, the ethnographer has to be more than an observer. She needs to be "a responsive, reflexive, and morally committed being, one who will take sides and make judgements" (p.419): a *witness*, *companheira*, *comrade*. In my case, such roles of *companheira* or *comrade* were adopted when 'Romanianized' Gypsies faced difficulties in understanding how to apply for social benefits or how to fill in different forms. Many other conversations concentrated on their everyday problems such as children's education at school, health, intimate fertility/contraception issues and interactions with local authorities. In talking with them about all these things, I consider I generally helped both the

Romanianized Roma and the Caldarars with information, psychological support and advice, when needed or requested.

However, being a *comrade* or *companheira* was not always easy, as many times it interfered with the local Roma leaders' actions. Therefore, I did not consider helpful to become a permanent 'political representative' or, in Scheper-Hughes' terms, a *negative worker*, a role usually played by the informal leaders who are supposed to act against formal powers to support their community. Attempting to do so would have been read by both the state bureaucrats and local leaders as an act of domination (Friedman 1995; Harris 1995; Nader 1995; Noblit and Flores, Murillo 2004; Madison 2005), likely to create conflicts and harm the community studied. From this viewpoint, I sometimes needed to distance myself from the political issues (patronage, clientelism, brokerage) related to their everyday lives. For instance, when various leaders and Romanianized Roma felt that I intervened too much, I switched my attention to the Caldarars' community, showing in this way that it is not my interest to represent one or the other community. Studying two Roma groups offered the advantage of generating breaks in my intrusions into their lives.



## **Chapter 2: Romanian Historical Transformations and their Local Manifestations**

The chapter provides an outline of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Romanian history and discusses the historical transformation from socialism to post-socialism in detail. In the context of my thesis, the chapter examines the element of power located in the movement or transformation, from socialism to post-socialism, of what I call 'spheres of power struggle' (politics, the state, the economy, religion), which is challenged by individuals' engagements with these transformations. The principal focus of this chapter is on the state, politics and the economy, while religion, due to its specificity, is mainly discussed here in its relation to the other spheres, and explored separately in the last main chapter of my thesis.

This chapter also sets the historical context of the thesis and establishes the main tools for the analysis of historical transformations. It pays special attention to economic and political processes, more specifically, surveillance and the local domestication of state control, as well as the post-socialist emergence of the informal economy, patronage and clientelism.

The chapter is largely based on empirical case studies from various social sciences, but also on my previous personal experiences obtained during field research. It shows that larger transformations of the state, politics and the economy were altered, negotiated, and sometimes, constituted by local level practices. Local level practices and relations generated a dynamic of power relations, as well as alternative pathways of transformation in the lives of individuals and groups. The next section outlines key developments in the Romanian history from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, suggesting ways of looking at large historical transformations and local communities and groups, including the Roma.

## 2.1. Historical outline, 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century



**Figure 18** Map of Romanian principalities late 18th century-early 19th century

Source: Foaie Nationala.ro, Revista libera de lupta culturala si spirituala.

[National Paper.ro, Free magazine for cultural and spiritual struggle.]

In the Middle Ages, when the Romanian nation state was not yet formed, the territory was split between three principalities: Wallachia, Moldavia (including what now constitutes the Republic of Moldova and the Southern regions of current Ukraine) and Transylvania. Unlike the other two provinces, Transylvania had been, under the Magyar occupation, a part of the Kingdom of Hungary, until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Transylvania was an independent province, and after that it was annexed by the Hapsburg Empire (Varkonyi 2001, Djuvara 2002).

Wallachia, bordering the Ottoman Empire, was under its suzerainty during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Moldavia was defended by Voivod Stephen the Great against the Ottomans until the 16<sup>th</sup> century when it also became a suzerainty of the same empire (Schoolfield 2004). In contrast with the rest of the Balkan Peninsula, both maintained

autonomy in relation to the Ottoman Empire. In 1600, the Wallachian Voivod Michael the Brave conquered and united under his rule all the three principalities for the first time and for a short period of one year. It is important to mention that there has been evidence of Roma slavery in both Wallachia and Moldavia since the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Marushiakova and Popov 2009) and Wallachia and Moldavia had a complex system of Roma slavery by 15<sup>th</sup> century (Achim 2004).

According to Kogalniceanu (cited in Marushiakova and Popov 2009), a well-known Romanian intellectual active in the 1848 revolution, in Wallachia and Moldavia “there were three distinct categories of slaves according to whom they belonged to - slaves of the Prince, of the monasteries, and of the boyars” (Marushiakova and Popov 2009: 5). Some of the Roma belonging to first category worked on the rulers’ estates, while the others were nomad Gypsies, allowed to roam and practice different professions<sup>24</sup> on the condition that they paid annual taxes to the crown. Among the Roma slaves who belonged to monasteries and boyars, a small part were nomads paying taxes to their owners, while the rest “worked the land of monasteries (monasteries were large landowners), and some were rented out” (p. 5). In the same category, there were slaves recognised as craftsmen and domestic servants. In Transylvania, the situation of the Roma showed some differences. While some Gypsies living close to regions bordering Moldavia or Wallachia were slaves, other Roma had the status of ‘royal serfs’ (Achim 2004). The latter were free to roam, with the obligation to pay annual taxes to the crown, “but they were never citizens with full rights” (Voicu, Tufis 2008: 12), neither in the Hungarian Kingdom, nor in the Hapsburg empire.

In 1699, Transylvania became a part of the Habsburgs’ Austrian Empire. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph devised drastic programs of assimilation for the Roma (Achim 2004). Gypsies were expected to become peasants. They were no longer allowed to travel, wear traditional clothes, and possess horses and carriages. They were forced to engage in agriculture and their

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<sup>24</sup>According to Kogalniceanu (1837) cited in Marushiakova, Popov (2009: 6), Gypsies of the prince's courts were recognized as ‘state’ or ‘crown’ Gypsies further divided into four categories: Rudars (or miner-Gypsies), Aurars (gold prospectors), Ursars (bear trainers and public entertainers), Lingurars (spindle makers), and Laiesi (itinerant Gypsies).

children were sent to school or church, and sometimes raised by non-Roma foster families. These rules were applied differently by local authorities and were only enforced during the rules of these two monarchs (Voicu, Tufis 2008). The 1848 Revolutions aimed at producing changes in both Walachia and Transylvania: the independence of both in relation to the Ottoman Empire, free trade with the rest of Europe, and the unleashing of national feelings in Transylvania. Without fulfilling all these aims, the movements raised the consciousness of a common language and territory among the local rulers and population. They also prepared the ideological terrain for the abolition of slavery and the reforms made under Cuza's regime.

In 1859, Moldavia and Walachia, in their attempt to withdraw from their Ottoman suzerainty, and with no support from external powers, united under Cuza's rule (Bobango 1979). Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the first reformist prince of the new union, and Prime Minister Mihail Kogalniceanu launched democratic reforms in the social, economic and political domains: agriculture (land and agricultural reforms), state (universal suffrage, a new constitution, tax and revenues), education (compulsory primary education), army etc. The land reform entitled peasants to own land and partially liberated them from their servitude to the boyars. However, with no technology and without alternative means of subsistence, the peasants were not able to cultivate the land properly and were unable to raise their social and economic condition (Dobrogeanu-Gherea 1910).

The liberation of the Roma, which advanced with the abolition of the slavery, had begun even before Cuza's rule, in the 1830's, when many boyars, under the influence of European enlightenment ideas started to release their Gypsy slaves (Achim 2004). Among others, the intellectuals Mihail Kogalniceanu and Cezar Bolliac initiated campaigns to support the abolition of slavery (Achim 2004). Principalities progressively issued laws to free the slaves. The process of slavery abolition was completed in 1855, in Moldavia, where Prince Grigore Alexandru Ghica issued a law, later adopted by the government, which transformed the Roma slaves into tax payers. Similarly, in 1856, the National Assembly in Wallachia adopted the same law for the Roma (Achim 2004; Djuvara 2002). The year 1856 is thus recognised as the symbolic moment for the abolition of Roma slavery in Wallachia and Moldavia.

After abolishing slavery, the government of the two principalities adopted social engineering programs for assimilating the Roma: Romani language was forbidden, Roma families were allocated houses alongside the other Romanians, and children were forced into compulsory education. In addition, the government preferred to refer to the Gypsies as ‘the emancipated’, instead of ‘tigani’ (Gypsies) (Achim 2004; Djuvara 2002).

The abolition of slavery and serfdom in Transylvania came later, through a set of emancipation laws in 1861. However, after abolition, many Gypsies continued either to work on the boyars’ land or to join groups of nomadic Roma and their professions (Achim 2004). On the other hand, all Roma who were released were required to pay taxes to the state, but many were unable to pay (Achim 2004; Voicu, Tufis 2008). Considering these aspects, Achim (2004) argued that the abolition of slavery worsened the economic condition of the Roma in the three principalities. I would add that the source of their impoverishment was not the end of slavery, but the lack of reforms for the Roma. Compared with the peasants, the Gypsies did not receive land and they were offered no alternative resources for survival. These developments echo the abolition of slavery for black people in America. After release, lacking living resources, black people continued to live and work for their former masters (Du Bois 1903).

In Romania, Cuza’s reformist regime was short-lived. In 1866, a radical liberal coalition supported by the conservative party, which did not agree with the new reforms, forced Alexandru Ioan Cuza to abdicate. In his place, the government proposed that a foreign prince, Carol de Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, rule Romania, which at that time comprised only Wallachia and Moldavia. In 1877-8, as a result of the Ottoman-Russian war, Romania became independent from the Ottoman Empire. Later, in 1881, the Romanian state was transformed into a kingdom, under the rule of King Carol I (Kellogg 1995).

The other principality – Transylvania- fell under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867. It was incorporated into Hungary, whose government was distinct from the Austrian one (White 2000). During this period, Transylvania underwent a process of Magyarisation, with Hungarian becoming the official

language and all the important state institutions being held by Hungarians (Bideleux, Jeffries 1998).

After the First World War, when the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires collapsed, Transylvania, Bucovina and Bessarabia (former territories of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires) joined the rest of the Romanian territories in 1918, and united into the Kingdom of Romania, which formed Greater Romania until 1940 (Scurtu, Stanescu- Stanciu, Scurtu 2002).

Between the two wars, the Roma were “the country’s sixth largest ethnic group in terms of number, after the Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians and Russians.” (Achim 2004: 147-8). Many Roma lost their source of living as their professions were challenged by industrialization. Some Roma families living in villages were small-holders. During the national agrarian reforms, between 1918 and 1920, the government granted small plots of land to some Roma families who lived in the rural areas and took part in the war (Achim 2004). However, the Roma, lacking technology and resources could not afford to cultivate the land, which was either rented or sold to peasants. Moreover, as Achim (2004) documents, many other Roma, including nomadic groups, who were not settled residents did not receive any land. The Second World War resulted in significant losses for both the Romanian state and the Roma population. During the war, the Romanian state was forced to cede Bessarabia and northern Bukovina (Deak 2001). After this substantial loss of territory, King Carol II abdicated and the government fell under the rule of the Iron Guard, a far right nationalist party led by Marshal Antonescu. In order to regain the lost territories, Antonescu joined the war in 1941 allying himself with Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union (Scurtu, Stanescu-Stanciu, Scurtu 2002).

Under Antonescu the Jews and the Roma were oppressed in a way reminiscent of Hitler’s Germany, but to a lower degree. Some of them were killed and many others<sup>25</sup> deported to concentration camps in Transnistria, a territory awarded by Nazi Germany to Romania (Bachman 1991). In an attempt to publicly justify the deportation, the fascist government claimed that the Roma families had been deported because they were ‘nomads’ who disturbed public order (Achim

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<sup>25</sup>According to the Roma Party during WWII, approximately 35 000 Roma families were deported to Transnistria. Info available at the Roma Party website: <http://www.partidaromilor.ro/>.

2004, Radu 2006). In Costesti, my fieldwork location, many Caldarar families and some Romanianised Roma were deported to Transnistria. As many Caldarars told me, the government was also interested to seize their gold during the deportation. Members of those Roma families who survived the deportations received Holocaust reparations in cash from Germany, in the 1990's.

On 23 August 1944, as Nazi Germany started to withdraw its troops, the Romanian political regime changed once more. King Mihai I of Romania, son of King Carol II, came to power and arrested Marshal Antonescu. Under King Mihai's rule Romania joined the Allies in the war against Germany (Scurtu, Stanescu-Stanciu, Scurtu 2002). At the end of WWII, as a result of the Paris Peace Treaty, Romania regained Transylvania but did not get back Bessarabia, Bukovina and the South of Dobrogea (Bachman 1991).

After the war, Romania fell within the USSR zone of economic and military influence and Russian troops were stationed on Romanian territory until 1958 (Granville 2008). From 1945 till 1952 the country was ruled by a Soviet Union imposed government led by a Communist Party member, Petru Groza. During his regime, in 1947, the Communist Party forced King Mihai to abdicate and leave the country (Roper 2000). After 1952 Romania became a People's Republic ruled by the Romanian Workers' Communist Party and its First Secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (Granville 2008). After Gheorghiu-Dej's death, in 1965, Nicolae Ceausescu became the First Party Secretary and later on the President of the Socialist Republic of Romania (Sebetsyen 2009). He continued his predecessor's politics of pursuing independence from the Soviet Union but also of suppressing dissidents. State violence was also directed against other groups of citizens, considered by communist activists<sup>26</sup> to be reactionary elements, hostile to the party (Ionitoiu 2000). Ceausescu's regime was one of the most repressive communist regimes in Eastern

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<sup>26</sup> Under Ceausescu freedom of speech was limited and all criticism of the party and its leader were forbidden. Party activists occupied positions of authority and many other people, who were encouraged to become members of the apparatus, were informers of the state intelligence services. Citizens who were critical of the party were in danger of being reported and prosecuted.

Europe (Sebetsyen 2009). Under his 25-year rule, almost 2 million people<sup>27</sup> were imprisoned or killed for their ideological and political convictions.

During the same period, ethnic groups, including the Roma, were not recognised as minorities and the party pursued an intensive nationalist political agenda to assimilate the population within a common socialist proletarian identity (Verdery 1991). During the 1960s the socialist state forced nomad Gypsies to settle and enforced violent measures to seize their gold.

In the 1980s, the regime became increasingly draconian and lost all popular legitimacy when Ceausescu began to pursue an ‘independent foreign policy’ in relation to Western countries, and aimed at paying off all Romania's international debts at the cost of shortages and people’s starvation (Cioroianu 2007). The escalated pressures and tensions brought about revolts, which started in Timisoara on 16 December 1989 and spread throughout the country, culminating in the Romanian Revolution that resulted in a large number of deaths. The Communist government was overthrown and Ceausescu was tried, convicted and executed on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December 1989.

A new political grouping called the National Salvation Front headed by Ion Iliescu ruled the country until the first elections. In 1992 Ion Iliescu was elected President of Romania. During his term, the state started the process of property restitution. Parts of the land cultivated by collective farms were returned to the peasants, while gold was given back to the Roma, especially the former nomad groups. Iliescu’s reparations were welcomed by the Gypsies and the first post-1989 president is still an iconic politician for many Roma today.

Iliescu held the presidency until 1996, when Emil Constantinescu, the main representative of the Democratic Convention (CDR), headed by so-called ‘historical’ political parties such as the conservative National Peasant Christian and Democratic

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<sup>27</sup> See ‘Recensământul Populației concentrare din România în anii 1945-1989’. Raport pentru “Centrul Internațional de Studii asupra Comunismului” [Population Census of those imprisoned in Romania between 1945-1989- Report for the “International Centre for the Study of Communism”]. Sighet, 2004.

‘Raportul Comisiei Prezidentiale pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România’. Raport pentru “Comisia Prezidentială pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste”[The report of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania], 15 December 2006.



Party (PNTCD) and the National Liberal Party (PNL) won the election with new promises of democracy and the Westernisation of the country. However, the harsh measures such as the privatization of the economy, imposed on the new government coalition by international sponsors including the IMF, triggered a dramatic impoverishment of the population which resulted in the CDR's failure to win the 2000 election. In this context of a significant decline in living standards, Ion Iliescu and the Social Democratic Party were re-elected in 2000 and held power until 2004, when the PDL (Liberal Democrat Party) candidate, Traian Basescu (the current president – now in his 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive term)- won the elections. During Traian Basescu's first term of office, Romania entered NATO, in 2004, and the EU, in 2007.

Both socialism and post-socialist capitalism engaged in forms of violence against the population, undertaken either by the Communist Party or produced by an uncertain transition towards a market economy. Nevertheless, scholars have shown that violence expressed either by laws and coercion, or by the lack of reforms and state protection was challenged, altered, transformed and locally domesticated by people and authorities who actively participated in the transformation of their lives. (Burawoy, Verdery 1999; Hann 1987; Hann 2002; Verdery 1996)

To sum up, this section concentrated principally on major political transformations directed from the centre. Nevertheless, it showed that important social historical transformations such as the 1848 Revolutions and the abolition of Roma slavery, which were strongly connected to each other, started from local practices by individual boyars, which were influenced by exposure to Western Enlightenment ideas. In long run, these practices generated central reforms, through a series of decisions, and laws. Two points can be made here.

1. *Local practices are frequently the source of change and cannot be disentangled from ideas, values, and discourses in the understanding of larger transformations.* This insight becomes crucially important when analysing the transformation from socialism to post-socialism through the lens of local level power relations and discursive practices. *Historical transformations are often performed and enacted from below through local initiatives and relations, influenced in their turn by discourses and ideas.* Throughout my thesis the entanglements and mutual

involvements of practices and ideas are called discursive practices and are analysed in detail in the last main chapter.

*2. The historical outline shows that the transformations of the Roma lifestyle have to be done in terms of their dynamics and interactions with larger historical transformations.* Nevertheless, the state, by distributing land, abolishing slavery, making education compulsory, employing large numbers of Gypsies in socialist industry etc., did not necessarily improve their living conditions and did not decisively contribute to their transformation. As Achim (2004) argues, after the abolition of slavery, different Roma groups had different trajectories. While some migrated, joining nomadic groups, others continued to work for their former masters. Some Roma groups preserved their mobility while others remained sedentary. *This second observation indicates that the transformation of Roma communities can be better understood through the study of local communities, their relations and their discursive practices.*

*These reflections buttress the analytical frame of my historical ethnography focused on two movements/transformations, which interact and depend on each other: transformation of spheres of power (e.g. the state, politics, the economy, education, and religion) and transformation of local individual relations and discursive practices.* In the next two sections of this chapter, the movement from socialism to post-socialism is discussed in relation to individual and local practices.

## **2.2. The socialist state and second economy in Romania**

Individual experiences are always connected to larger political and economic transformations. Investigating power relations in the Romanian context cannot exclude everyday understandings of socialism as an economic and political system<sup>28</sup>, which influenced individual lives for almost 50 years.

Political, social and economic aspects were intertwined in such a way that the whole socialist system involved centralised decisions, control and surveillance, as well as individual innovation, creativity, and resistance. Central decisions were taken

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<sup>28</sup> In this chapter and throughout my thesis I use the term “socialism” to refer to the whole system - state and economy. I use “communism” to refer to the ideology of the ruling party (Verdery 1996, 2002; Hann 2002).

by the Romanian Communist Party, which enforced two large programs: the dissolution and collectivization of private property, and the industrialization and centralization of institutions and services. For the socialist planners industrialization was the main instrument of economic development and collective farms provided the agricultural platform for industrial production (Cole 1985; Ionescu 1964). Since the early 1960s, peasants were forced to work the land in cooperative farms (CAPs), conceived as associations based on collective property and the equal participation of members in decision making processes. Those who worked in such farms used to receive small amounts of agricultural products and money and were entitled to cultivate limited plots of land in order to cover their subsistence needs (Brezinski, Petrescu 1986; Kideckel 1993; Voiculescu 2008). However, the entitlement was tied to their active participation as part of the workforce in the demanding<sup>29</sup> tasks of the cooperative farm. While the elderly accepted this form of unfair exchange based on the CAPs, the young went into industrial work for formal employment and proper salaries. In rural areas, these limiting relationships established by the socialist state entrenched a peasant subsistence economy (Voiculescu 2008) mixed with industrial work (Sandu 1984).

Beside the proletarianisation of a large percentage of the population involved in agriculture, industrialisation involved many other complex transformations: the movement of people from rural to urban areas, the development of public services and infrastructure, and the emergence of new social lifestyles. Yet, through its bureaucratic structures, the Communist Party implemented an ideology meant to legitimate state power, and generate disadvantages for those not having “healthy”, working class origins, which included such disadvantages as having no access to higher education, few state benefits, limited access to good job positions and exclusion from party membership (Cole 1985; Ionescu 1964).

This reorganization was part of the Communist Party’s paternalistic social engineering program. Verdery (1996) notes that during socialism, Romania had a paternalist state that claimed to take care of everyone, whose programs covered all those who proved compliant. Through the centralization and planification of the

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<sup>29</sup>Many of the statements related to the CAP work are based on my direct observations as a child growing up in the countryside, close to my grandmother, during socialism.

economy and of industrial production, the socialist state attempted to eliminate individual initiative and minimize involvement in private arrangements for the supply of goods.

Nevertheless, the lack of economic rationality and the autarchic model of the socialist economy entailed serious weaknesses: “chronic shortages of goods, labour and investment funds, rather than markets as in capitalism” (Cole 1985: 248).

As Verdery (1996) argues, the redistribution of resources and rewards, created to legitimize the communist ideology, was a powerful state apparatus of control over individuals and families. Shortages of goods seriously affected the population, especially in the 1980s, when Ceausescu dramatically increased exports (agricultural products, technical and electric equipment, clothes etc.) to pay back the international debts (Verdery 1993). As a reaction to the regime, people started to get more involved in the 'second' (informal) economy by manipulating state resources, such as stealing products from the workplace and collective farms in order to use them in their households or sell them on the informal (black) markets. This second economy was the tolerated offspring of the state economy's inability to deal with individuals' consumption needs and, as scholars argued, the two economies cannot be dissociated in the understanding of socialism (Burawoy, Verdery 1999; Hann 1987, 2002).

The interdependence between the state and second economy becomes extremely important when we look at individual practices and relations during socialism. An illustration of this comes from my previous research (Radu 2007; Voiculescu 2003, 2004) which shows that Roma, like any other Romanian citizens, were often involved in activities outside the socialist state's sphere of control. The Caldarars, who were small tinkers and cauldron-makers, used to supply their private activities with copper stolen from large plants. The success of their business was dependent most of the time on the good connections they regularly made with Romanian workers or factory administrators, able to steal and sell them the necessary materials. The shortages of goods produced by an inefficient centralised economic system generated informal practices and collaborations. *In short, socialism was not only a planned and highly regulated state and economy, but also a diversity of everyday practices and relations, which transformed the people's lives, work, and*

*contexts of living*. Yet, the capacities to respond by innovation and by alternative social practices were different amongst different social groups. An argument made throughout my thesis is that the two Roma groups I refer to had different ways of handling the challenges posed by both socialist and post-socialist economies and state apparatuses of repression. With reference to my field site – Costesti village - the state's paternalism had a significant impact on the Romanianised Roma, who were deeply involved in the socialist formal economy, but had less impact on the nomadic Caldarars who showed resistance to and also adaptation to forced settlement programs, formal employment, and state politics in general. In Verdery's terms (1996), the state was the father of the nation and society was an extended family for which the state provided rules, goods, and services. Nevertheless, the paternal care was not genuine, as the state's sons and daughters often repudiated it.

### **2.3 Control, surveillance and local domestications of socialism**

Besides care and support programs, the paternalist model of governing the population entailed strategies of control and surveillance based on both coercive practical methods and on discursive strategies. These proved to be critically important in the perpetuation of both the communist ideology and the socialist economy. In Romania, as in other East European communist countries, the main state control apparatus was embodied in the secret police service - the *Securitate* – which aimed at producing files and profiles of people, who were suspected of betrayal or of undermining the Communist Party and its ideology (Verdery 1996). Networks of informers and collaborators, which provided information about dissidents and the internal organization of various groups (e.g. ethnic groups of Hungarians and Gypsies), supported the state mechanisms of surveillance. Local leaders of various groups were not only working in the service of their communities, but they were also collaborators of the *Securitate* providing the constant and updated data needed for their control. These people used to receive various rewards in exchange: better jobs, party positions, better supplies of consumer goods and household equipment hardly available in the regular shops, and would sometimes receive personal and family

protection. This was the case of many Roma leaders who became collaborators of the *Securitate* and disclosed information about the Caldarars' gold possessions and their informal activities.

This spying infrastructure led to a decline in social relations and trust among people belonging to the same group or locality. While enhancing the power of the few over the many, the *Securitate's* use of networks of collaborators disempowered large communities, who became more and more dependent upon their leaders, party activists and the *police state*. Most of the people were aware that in this game they lost control over their lives and possessions. For instance, the Caldarar Gypsies were frequently harassed by the police and forced to divulge information about their own or their relatives' savings and belongings. Although they knew that the main provider of information was their leader (*bulibasa*) they were never sure exactly who his collaborators were, people who were often members of their own community.

As Verdery (1991, 1993) documented, the Communist Party used an additional control strategy grounded in the ideology of the nationalist state, aimed at homogenising the society by forcing adherence to the same socialist values. Aiming at erasing differences between ethnic groups and social classes, it promoted a homogenous proletarian model through nationalist discourses and socio-economic policy. Yet, these goals were never achieved. Differences have always existed between groups. Different economic practices and modes of existence performed by different Roma groups and different conceptions of self-identification (e.g. Romanianised Roma, Caldarars) are a good illustration of the failure of the socialist state's ideological program. Even though they were subjects of forced settlement, the nomad Gypsies (Caldarars) continued to travel seasonally, pursue informal activities, and to resist assimilation. Also, the Romanianised Roma, with no land or commercial abilities, but with a 'sedentary' lifestyle, accessed both seasonal labour opportunities and the state's provision of work and social benefits.

The apparatuses of the socialist state developed different forms of repression and control. However, the centre was always dependent on the peripheral units in terms of enforcement, ideology diffusion, and the redistribution of production (Emerson 1962; Gross 1989, cited in Verdery 1991). As many authors argued (Hann 1987; Kideckel 1982; Sampson 1984) centralization, which aimed to gain more

control over the local administrative units, produced the opposite result. Local populations and authorities domesticated and altered the central state rules. *The delegation of responsibilities from the centre to periphery generated tensions between various political and administrative levels of organization* (Campeanu 1986; Ionescu 1964) *and, in turn, often resulted in local consensus against the communist ideological programs of the state.*

As Verdery (1996) acknowledges, the socialist apparatus aimed at creating a 'new, socialist man' through the development of an aggressive nationalist ideology and an 'economy of shortage'. People had to spend more time looking for specific products and services (food and clothes supplies, heating fuel etc.). To get easier access to resources, many developed informal social connections both outside and inside the socialist bureaucracy (Cole 1985). *These individual initiatives led, on one hand, to the development of the second economy and, on the other hand, to an informal socio-economic stratification within a presumed egalitarian system.* Party membership and hierarchy often brought with it the power of redirecting goods and services towards certain groups and individuals. In their struggles to obtain scarce resources<sup>30</sup>, locals would court party representatives and authorities who were involved in distribution. Local party activists, leaders and nomenclatura (technical-industrial/agricultural personnel, teachers, physicians, intermediate medical personnel), who held privileged positions granted by the Communist Party, facilitated connections to the central apparatuses of the state (Campeanu 1988; Ionescu 1964). They channelled information from central to peripheral administrative units (local councils) and constituted important connections in the allocation of positions and resources.

These developments were established and negotiated at the local level. For instance, Gypsy leaders were concerned to expand and extend their connections to mayors and regional party representatives, who were able to provide them with the necessary goods and services, including protection. Individual accommodations can be considered forms of social innovation, domestication and transformation of the planned rigidities of the socialist regime. As Cole (1985) suggests, actions by the

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<sup>30</sup>My assumptions are partly based on my current and previous research findings in various Romanian rural locations but also from my experience of living under socialism.

socialist bureaucracy were entangled with individual and family practices. Therefore, the Romanian variety of socialism was highly coercive and repressive in its strategies, but rather weak in managing the complicated local relationship dynamics that prompted further transformations.

*My thesis takes these suggestions and arguments one step further and considers this entanglement between socialist forms of organization and local accommodations to central policies, to be a source of developing dynamic power relations between Roma groups and local state representatives and nomenclatura.*

## **2.4 Romania after socialism: major changes or continuity?**

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, many Eastern European states experienced not only political changes, but also complex socio-economic transformations, which affected their citizens' lives, their practices and projects.

For some political scientists the demise of socialism has brought “the end of history” (Fukuyama 1993) and “the triumph of liberalism, of capitalism, of the Western democracies over the vain hopes of Marxism” (Latour 1993: 9). This model of understanding change in Eastern Europe emphasised ruptures and discontinuities and portrayed the socialist structures in total opposition to the post-socialist ones<sup>31</sup>. While sociologists and anthropologists (Burawoy and Verdery 1999, Hann 2002, Verdery 1996) generally agreed that the fall of communism produced a transition from a totalitarian regime to a democratic one, they were critical of the effects and rationality of the imported liberal reforms which involved privatisation, marketisation, law reforms etc. Numerous ethnographic studies which investigated everyday practices showed continuity between socialism and post-socialism in its “both regressive and progressive” transformations (Burawoy, Verdery 1999). The economic reconfiguration of the social led to a complex mixture of “backward” informal markets based on barter and illegal trade and formal institutions developed to support the rule of law, free markets, and private property (Burawoy, Verdery 1999; Verdery 1996).

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<sup>31</sup>See, for illustration, Berdahl, Bunzl, and Lampland (2000), Burawoy and Verdery (1999), Hann (2002), Verdery (1996), West and Raman (2009a, 2009b) who criticise this model.



Some authors (Platz 2000; West, Raman 2009) claimed that liberalisation in Eastern European countries had an effect of 'demodernisation'. Similarly, Verdery (1996) characterized the attempt of Romanian society to move towards capitalism as a failure and a return to a 'feudal' economy. Yet, post-socialist economic and social organisation were not necessarily states of backwardness as some researchers of Eastern European societies argued (Burawoy 1999; Hann 2002; Verdery 1996). These transformations were rather expressions of an endless transition in which the large processes of economic liberalisation were interacting with social and economic practices of local institutions and populations from small villages as well as from big cities (Berdahl, Bunzl, Lampland 2000). The very term 'post-socialism' designates a complex process and continuity between two apparently opposed political and economic orders.

Romania, like other Eastern European countries, experienced complex processes of de-industrialization and the de-collectivization of property. Decentralization of economic production left a space for massive innovation and engagement in the informal economy that re-linked spheres of production, distribution, and consumption in new ways (Burawoy, Verdery 1999).

Large unproductive factories were dismantled and sold by the state to international investors, often for small financial gains and with little protection for the workers (Verdery 1996). The privatization of industry often involved corruption and clientelist relations between the government, plant directors, and investors. State representatives and plant directors were interested in gaining personal financial benefits by selling the former socialist industrial companies, their machinery and assets. For example, in 2001, Derex Goteni<sup>32</sup>, the largest South-East European steel plant underwent a privatisation in which the government and the then prime minister, Adrian Nastase, were suspected of corruption<sup>33</sup>. Before privatisation, large parts of

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<sup>32</sup>Derex Goteni steel plant is an important reference in my ethnography carried out in the village of Costesti. Since socialist times, both Romanians and Romanianized Roma used to be employees of the steel plant.

<sup>33</sup>'Plangere penala impotriva Cabinetului Nastase privind privatizarea Sidex'[Derex privatization criminal complaint against Nastase's cabinet], Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> August 2009, Available at: [www.ziare.com](http://www.ziare.com).; 'Parlamentarii cer desecretizarea dosarului Sidex' [Members of Parliament request Derex dossier revealing], Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Available at : [www.ziare.com](http://www.ziare.com).

Derex were dismantled and its technology was sold to private traders. As both Caldarars and other villagers in Costesti told me, directors of Derex Goteni used to sell materials to dealers and traders. For each transaction, the director would receive an amount of money from traders who were happy to buy cheap and resell dear. During the 1990s, some Caldarar Gypsies who were used to engaging in trade and who had had sufficient financial resources under socialism bought old pipes from Derex to resell to small firms. This proved to be an important source of enrichment for the Caldarars who filled the gap between old forms of industrial production and the new channels of consumption.

This shows that the privatization of industry created opportunities for Caldarars to exploit abilities and knowledge they had used under socialism and illustrates the continuity between the socialist mode of organisation and new forms of capitalism, which, as many authors have stated, are strongly connected and interdependent<sup>34</sup>.

The privatisation of property was a powerful symbol of the liberalization of the state and the market economy. Yet, as the above illustration suggests, it revealed socialist legacies, as well as growing, fast-transforming informality: “change is rapid and characterized not by the development of formal institutions alone but by the recombination of the formal and the informal” (Grzymala-Busse and Loung 2002: 535). The Caldarars were active players in this game of informality and their interactions with the informal economy are developed in the chapter on the informal economy.

Besides this, it is important to note that in the development of new markets, state regulation was an important aspect that produced various effects in the post-1989 context of growing informality. In Romania, as Verdery (1996) argues, the liberal restructuring produced both “de-statising” and “re-statising” effects. Privatisation and liberalisation processes needed the state’s involvement and

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<sup>34</sup> Many authors explored this interdependency. Among those, one can see Berdahl, Bunzl, and Lampland (2000), Benacek (1994), Burawoy and Verdery (1999), Eyal, Szelenyi, and Townsley (1998), Hann (2002), Harloe (1996), Kolankiewicz (1995), Stark (1990), Sick (1994), Szelenyi, Szelenyi and Kovach 1995, Verdery (1996); West and Raman (2009a, b).

oversight, as the “emerging markets were inadequate to solve the problems of decreased production and living standards, endemic corruption, labour unrest, and so on” (p. 213). The central state frequently intervened in the legal and bureaucratic practices (Abrams 1988) of various local representatives.

*On the other hand, law enforcement was often altered by a process of contextualization (Verdery 1996) and the local political level became crucially important as it brought important unintended consequences (Burawoy, Verdery 1999; Grzymala-Busse, Luong 2002) for the macro-social projects of transformation.* In this sense, similar to the privatisation of industry, the de-collectivisation of land property entailed a series of interactions between law and practice, individual claims and local state (Verdery 1996). As Verdery argues, the requirement of efficiency demanded that the state manifest a stronger presence in the privatisation process. For instance, many landowners who encountered local difficulties in receiving their properties back were compelled to make appeals to the central state institutions in order to solve their legal problems.

*Paradoxically, the privatisation and liberalisation pursued by the state produced both “re-statisation” and the perpetuation of the post-socialist disorder, which, in its turn, created both constraints and opportunities for individual innovation and adaptation to uncertainty.*

As Verdery (1996) documents for Romania, households and individuals coped with the changes and shortages of money by engaging in more than one occupation and by availing themselves of state transfers and interventions. *These observations reveal some similarities between socialist and post-socialist economies and continuities between the two.* In socialism, the state, which held an excessive control over the economy produced shortages of goods and consequently pushed people into the second economy (exchange of goods, petty trade). In post-socialism, the state, using the rhetoric of liberalisation, withdrew from its own creation and left individuals and groups to deal with a new sector of informal economy generated through de-industrialisation and de-collectivization (restitution of property). Without state reforms, de-industrialisation produced high levels of unemployment among the former proletarians. In addition, the restitution of land to peasants resulted in land

fragmentation and rural impoverishment<sup>35</sup>. In this sense, it has been argued that the post-socialist state itself was reconstituted using “informal structures and practices utilised by political elites, factory managers, and ordinary citizens alike, which have survived the collapse of communism” (Grzymala-Busse, Loung 2002: 535; Stark, Bruszt 1998). *While I agree that there are continuities between socialism and post-socialism, I go beyond a historical deterministic explanation and I consider that different reactions by Roma groups to post-socialist transformations were produced by a complex dynamic of power relations and discursive practices.* The power struggles were more intense after 1989 when the state withdrew both its support and its control over the economy and society.

*In my thesis I consider that these rapid, multiple post-socialist transformations, which are connected to socialist legacies, but not so much to the actual control exercised by the state, take the form of power struggles and are called in my thesis spheres of power struggle (e.g. the state, politics, the informal economy, and religion) in which individuals participate through their relations and practices in the transformation of their own lives. Individuals and groups were driven to experience post-socialist transition as a struggle for connections, resources, adaptation and innovation. All these gave rise to a local dynamics of power struggles. The local level power relations and discursive practices participated actively in the transformation of the groups and individuals' conditions of existence. They produced constraints or opportunities in the economic conditions of existence for local populations including the two Roma groups I discuss in my thesis.*

In the ethnographic study presented in my thesis, the post-socialist experience of the transformation in the economic sphere is illustrative. After 1989, most of the Gypsies who worked in state farms and factories under socialism were laid off (Stewart 1997, 2002) and engaged in informal economic activities such as day labour in agriculture and construction for peasant or Caldarar neighbours. These practices and relations, which serve to reveal interactions between larger transformations and

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<sup>35</sup>Peasants, lacking advanced technology, were not able to cultivate their land. They were compelled to hire technology or rent out parts of their plots to large farmers and associations for relative small amounts of money and were able to exercise only indirect control over the exploitation of their land (Voiculescu 2008). See also Mihailescu (1996), Sljukic (2002), Swain (2000).

individuals' practices, generated limited possibilities for adaptation for Romanianized Roma at the local level, which are discussed in the next Chapter. In my thesis they are the capillaries of power of the whole dynamic portrayed above.

*Scholars of Eastern European studies mentioned in this chapter also emphasised the importance of local practices and relations in post-socialist transformations but they tended to overlook their interaction with the multiple overlapping spheres where power struggles take place (religion, the economy, the state, politics) in the continuous movement from socialism to post-socialism. More importantly, they failed to notice the capacity of these local practices and relations to differentially enact, for one group or another, constraints or opportunities for economic improvement. My historical ethnography on the Roma concentrates on these two main aspects in order to explore differences in the patterns of interactions with the transformations and the different life trajectories of Caldarars and Romanianized Roma.*

In the next section I discuss the intersection between the informal economy, politics and the state, as emergent spheres of power struggle with which individuals and groups actively interacted during the post-socialist transition. They constitute the main themes of interest which will be extensively developed throughout the thesis.

## **2.5. Intersectionalities between the state, politics and the informal economy: clientelism and enrichment in Romania**

*In this section I show that the emergence of reconfigured new spheres of power struggle (e.g. the informal economy, politics, the post-socialist state) or the re-emergence of suppressed spheres of struggle (e.g. religion), which were nonetheless not disconnected from the former spheres of struggle (e.g. the socialist second economy) are interrelated in their local manifestations (relations and discursive practices).*

*In other words, power relations are not confined to one sphere or another, but influence one another and interact with different discursive practices which are discussed later in this chapter. The form of intersectionality between spheres which*

emerged under post-socialism is that between the informal economy, the state and politics, expressed locally in the form of patronage politics and individual clientelistic relations. This post-socialist emergence was mainly triggered by large scale processes such as de-industrialisation, state withdrawal and privatisation of the economy.

As was shown in the previous section, Romanian de-industrialisation set in motion a whole world of connections, small businesses and intermediaries. Intermediaries connected the state plants' directors interested in selling assets/products to private companies interested in buying cheap products for their economic activity. These transactions were publicly translated into a discourse about the Mafia, which emerged in the 1990s in reference to the rampant corruption and informality (Verdery 1996). The 'Mafia' as a discourse was not only an expression of the declining trust that the population had in the chaotic privatisation of the economy, but also an indication of their anxiety about not getting fair access to the market's opportunities and resources. It was a reaction to 'clientelistic relations', 'local bosses'<sup>36</sup> (Humphrey 2002b) and what Verdery (1996) called a state of 'statelessness', "in which it is completely unclear who owns what, who is exploiting whom" (p. 218).

In theory, *clientelism* connects people vertically to unequal resources and influence, „the higher status person having access to goods and services of a higher market value than the lower status person who can generally offer only political support or labor” (Hilgers 2011:570). It is a dyadic personal relation „between two parties who develop trust in each other's commitment” (p.573) by exchanging a series of goods and services. In order to maintain the relation, both parts are informally obliged to reciprocate in time. However, the client has less to offer in comparison with his higher in rank partner, who is able to channel funding to the whole community the client belongs.

Besides self-interest, either obligation or loyalties dominate the relationship (Eisenstadt and Lemarchand 1981; Gadowska 2006; Grødeland 2006). It is a simple

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<sup>36</sup>Scholars of Eastern European studies (Verdery 1996; Humphrey 2002b; Hann 2002) use different terms to designate the concept 'local patron': 'local boss' or 'local baron'. In the rest of my thesis I use the term 'local patron'.

power relation, which takes the form of domination between an influent actor (e.g. mayor, local administrator, and prefect) who sometimes is established as a local patron in relation with his clients. The partner higher in rank offers protection and support to people with low access to financial resources, connections and information. In exchange, the influent actor receives support for his/her position, in elections or in any other situations where her/his leadership role is questioned or challenged<sup>37</sup>. However, this relation of subordination is often contested by clients and has its own dynamic, which is discussed extensively in my chapters on everyday politics and local-level politics.

Part of the same family of concepts, clientelism and patronage were many times considered interchangeable (Hilgers 2011). Nevertheless, Hilgers (2011) argues that *patronage* is different from *clientelism* and mainly refers to “the distribution of public sector jobs by a candidate or party to loyal supporters who have helped to generate votes” (p.575). Moreover, this feature of patronage, which she considers is not specific to clientelism, establishes a *local patronage of a political party run by main local leaders*, who become, in this equation, able to control the local public resources and the local distribution of positions. *Patronage* includes all those members who actively support a main parliamentary political party, including the patron, followers (e.g. local bureaucrats) and patronage brokers. Moreover, *clientelistic dyadic relations* can exist and develop outside of an established local patronage team, which follows the main interests of a political party. They can take shape between local bureaucrats and citizen, public administration representatives and citizen, but also between local patrons and upper level party members or local patrons and voters.

*Brokers* are usually those middlemen who “have organizational and leadership skills but lack access to distributable resources and therefore use their abilities to act as middlemen between clients and higher levels of power” (Scott 1977, cited in Hilgers 2011: 580). They are also those who convince people to vote for one party or another, supporting the local patron or upper-level party members.

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<sup>37</sup>The literature on clientelism and patronage is developed in chapters on local level politics and everyday politics.

Between all these actors mentioned above, clientelistic relations are established, at individual level. The patron is in clientelistic relation with his political party superiors, but also with followers, voters (clients) and brokers. At their turn, brokers (e.g. Roma leaders) and followers (e.g. local bureaucrats) are in a clientelistic relation with voters (e.g. Roma clients).

In Romania, local patrons have long been called 'local barons'. The ascription is given to people with strong political connections and significant obligations, often representing parliamentary political parties, while at the same time holding local or regional administrative positions (mayor, prefect, local or county councillor etc.). Those who are already established as patrons are portrayed by media and popular discourses as people who deal in the 'traffic of influence', who have access to public funds and who abuse their political/administrative positions to gain large amounts of money, business contracts, protection, or to fund electoral campaigns. In 2011, Romanian journalists identified 65 'local barons' corresponding to five political parties, all members of the present parliament: the Social Democrat Party (37), the Liberal Democrat Party (17), the Liberal National Party (8), the Conservative Party (2) and the Romanian Hungarian Democratic Union (1)<sup>38</sup>. The 'local barons' are very well connected to businessmen across the country. The latter can ask for administrative favours and offer their generous financial and political support.

Patronage make a good case for demonstrating that politics, state and the informal economy act together in the development of post-socialist economic informal networks. Usually, the ruling political party or coalition sets the agenda of interests and power relations and facilitates their enactment by establishing strong connections between the low and high levels of politics. The channelling of resources from the centre to regional and local administrative structures of power is done through the local patrons. As Gadowska (2006) argues for Poland, the *redistribution of positions at the local level is conducted on political principles (main political*

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<sup>38</sup> "Cine conduce Romania! Harta baronilor locali din Romania. Baronii vechi si noi" [Who is ruling Romania. The map of local barons in Romania. Old and new barons], 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011, Available at : [www.econtext.ro](http://www.econtext.ro)



*party's directions) and that is the main expression of the way patronage politics works.* The same happens in Romania. A change in the government entails a change in the managerial structure of local institutions (schools, tax offices, healthcare institutions etc.). Political favouritism ensures that leading positions are occupied by people who do not necessarily have the skills to run institutions, but who are able to return the gifts by supporting the ruling party and local patrons' interests "even if it would be contradictory to the interest of the office" (p. 11). Nevertheless, as long as the 'local barons' or patrons keep their relations and subordinate their actions to the central state representatives, their actions cannot be considered to be, in Verdery's terms, part of a process of the 'privatization of power'. Verdery's explanation suggests that these transformations entail a switch in control from the central state structures to local bosses, a "parcelisation of sovereignty", as Humphrey (2002b) argues in the case of post-soviet Russia. *Conversely, in this section and in the chapter on everyday politics I argue that patronage is an expression of a dynamic of power relations between local clients, patrons, followers and central state actors.*

From another viewpoint, the discussion on social and political systems based on patronage politics, characterized by intersectionalities between politics, informal economy and state practice comes closer to the critical analysis of *power elites* made by Mills (1958, 1959), with reference to American society. Mills was mainly interested to uncover the control dimension of the decision making processes in American society, which, in his view, expresses the very idea of power. The development of the main types of bureaucracy (corporate, political, military) lead to the emergence of a new elite in the control of the social, economic and political life with „access to the means of decision and of power by which history can now be made" (Mills 1958:31). Power has been centralized in the hands of a few top leaders, able to exercise control over the rest of society, which progressively lost models of self-organization and political power. This development dissolved the demarcations between military, political and economic spheres, which became interdependent and represented by leaders with shared interests, able to interchange their positions in the leading structure of the main realms of the societal decision making. As Mills (1958, 1959) shows for the case of American society, leaders of corporate sector became either prominent in politics or main supporters of political elites.

These observations on intersectionalities between different realms of leadership and institutional power and the analytical conceptualization of power centralization in the form of 'power elites' are valid for a comparison with the Romanian post-socialist economic and political context. It is important to notice that the common feature of the two systems is the intersectionality between different realms of action and decision making (e.g. informal economy, politics, everyday state practices vs. military, formal economy, formal politics) which source power for those exploiting the overlapping(s) and getting control over the distribution of resources and positions (e.g. regional, local patrons vs. power elites). Nevertheless, as showed above, in the Romanian post-socialist state, the power is neither completely centralized in the form of *power elites* nor localized in the form of chiefdoms, able to act independently from the political centre. There is no doubt that, at the centre, there are some prominent political and economic leaders, who have more access to power than local patrons/barons have. However, the first do not necessarily dictate the actions of the latter, which are most of the time deeply localized in clientelistic relations with local, regional economic, political and state actors. Without losing the relation with the central political parties, which give the main direction of governance and distribution of resources and positions, local and regional patrons, who are most of the time state representatives, have a good degree of local autonomy and control. They are nodes of power in a complex irregular web of power relations and in a clientelistic relation with upper level representatives of the parliamentary politics.

Interestingly, Mills (1958) makes a parallel between the Western society's gradual centralization of power and the Soviet society's authoritarian model of centralized authority. In this case the parallel is even more relevant as far as socialist societies, as it was the case of Romania, were under the rule of one single party, Communist Party, setting the economic, social and political agenda and controlling the distribution of positions and resources. The Party used to entitle the leaders of main bureaucracies, the Communist activists and officials, to get control over the decision making in their sectors. Therefore, it can be implied that in Romania and Eastern Europe, in general, the Communist Party brought a centralization of power and consolidation of a sort of *power elite* called nomenclatura.

Nevertheless, as I already suggested, in the Romanian post-socialist context, power is more decentralized and there are more local leaders to get access to the benefits of these intersectionalities and control of decision making. In this context, it would be difficult to speak of a *power elite* and more useful to speak about a *neopatrimonial system*<sup>39</sup>, in which the power of decision making is fragmented, divided between local/regional patrons and their followers, under general directions given by the central politics.

Furthermore, the East-European post-1989 capitalisms can be seen in analogy with Southern Italy and Sicily (Harloe 1996; Putnam 1993; Verdery 1996). Capitalism developed in similar ground: local informal businesses somewhat detached from the administrative centre, informal connections, and market speculations (Schneider, Schneider 1976). However, the Italian pattern does not entirely fit the post-socialist Romanian context. As Gadowska (2006) shows, local patrons are not primarily businessmen, but state and political representatives with a strong connection with the centre of power. They do make use of their positions to control resources and give preferential support to the development of local businesses and infrastructure. For example, Grødeland (2006) documents a case in which the mayor of Botosani, a Northern Romanian town, used his political connections to redistribute resources from the government to the locality under his administration. From this point of view, ‘local barons’ or patrons were critically important for the uneven regional economic development in Romania. In Costesti, the location of my field research, the actual administrative manager, Sorin Comsa, a Social Democrat Party (PSD) member, occupied various positions: from teacher to school director to vice-mayor, and then a councillor with the Ministry of the Interior in the government offices in Bucharest. Following this route and using his political influence and connections to redistribute government funding and support local infrastructure, he succeeded in becoming the local patron of ‘his community’. Many of his “clients” are Romanianized Roma who give him their votes in exchange for administrative favours or small amounts of money. He is also involved in various civic, cultural and community development projects in the village. Through his

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<sup>39</sup> The neopatrimonial system is defined and discussed in chapter on local level politics.

various positions and actions, the local patron has been part of multiple spheres of power struggle: state, politics, and civic-social. The source of ‘ his power’<sup>40</sup> derives not only from a clientelistic relation with higher state officials and party representatives of which he is a client himself, but also from the close relations he developed as a neighbour<sup>41</sup>, teacher and vice-mayor with the Romanianized Roma. The latter habitually give allegiance and respect to their former teacher, neighbour and supporter in their everyday difficulties. On the other hand, Comsa is both a local patron for the Romanianized Roma and a client of higher state representatives and PSD party members to which he shows complete allegiance during elections. *All these relations are productive of power and show a dynamic much more complex than that depicted by the classical understanding of clientelism as a relation of domination.* The local patron’s actions are embroiled in this double dynamic of power with the Roma, local communities and leaders, on one hand, and upper-level officials and party members , which take the form of clientelistic relations and give consistency of what I call patronage politics.

*In my thesis I explore the power manifestations as a complex temporal dynamic of both horizontal and hierarchical (clientelist) relations which produce continuous transformations in the lives of two Roma groups. My analysis focuses on power as a set of processes, struggles for authority or control, which can involve both empowerment and subjection to power of the actors involved. This dynamic of power struggles can be a source of changes in the material and socio-economic conditions of the two Roma groups studied. The changes are explored comparatively in the next lines.*

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<sup>40</sup>I am using reverted commas to emphasise that even if the terminology of power indicates individual possession, power is produced and negotiated through individual relations and discursive practices and it is the expression of a dynamic sustained by a multitude of individuals.

<sup>41</sup>Comsa was born in the village and lived very close to the Romanianized Roma district. He was in daily interaction with their families.

## **Explaining changes in the material conditions of Roma groups in Romania**

Although all Gypsies were full actors in the socialist second economy, not all of them secured important gains and continuity after 1989. There are various theses which aim at explaining these divisions and the emergence of the post-socialist entrepreneurs. One of them is the ‘capitalism from below’ developed by Szelenyi (1988) in the Hungarian context. Szelenyi (1988) considered that small commercial farming and the second economy in socialist Hungary were sources of embourgeoisement that continued after 1989. In his terms, post-socialist entrepreneurs are socialist entrepreneurs who made use of their economic capital, skills and expertise to set up formal or informal businesses, gaining affluence, prestige and power (Sik 1994).

His main argument is that it was the variation in abilities and competences which made the difference between the successful businesses and failures. In simple terms, according to this thesis, the Caldarrars, as cauldron manufacturers and traders, were socialist entrepreneurs able to make significant profits and develop informal businesses in the uncertain transition that followed 1989. The Romanianised Gypsies, as informal labourers without sufficient skills and material resources, had less access to opportunities to improve their material conditions in the post-socialist environment. In this sense, the latter seem to fit a different thesis - the “refuge from poverty” model, which asserts that self-employment is a choice made by those who lack alternatives in an uncertain economy (Hanley 2000; Laky 1996). The self-employed are considered to work at the margins of the economy and “unlikely to innovate, expand, and diversify their activities” (Stoica 2004: 245). Nevertheless, for Caldarrars self-employment is a source of affluence and creative development of informal businesses, in which important external actors are involved (company directors, state and governmental representatives). *To sum up, both explanations of enrichment seem stuck in a deterministic explanation which claims that the new post-socialist economy and the peoples’ engagement derive from the former institutions and structures and ignores power dynamics and individual and group interactions with the transformations* (Harloe 1996; Stark 1991; Stark, Bruszt 1998).

On the other hand, while these theses are meant to provide explanations for what happened in the Central Europe (Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary), they are not fully appropriate to understanding the emergence of the new rich in Romania. The *nouveaux riches* became highly visible in post-1989 Romania through their opulence and conspicuous consumption (Stoica 2004): expensive cars, big houses, designer clothes etc. Similarly, some Caldarar families in Costesti became incredibly affluent through their involvement in the informal economy. To support their economic conditions and strengthen their relations with important economic actors, they chose as godparents non-Roma who had important political positions, or who managed important companies and institutions. An interesting illustration that emphasises the degree and strength of connections between political actors and Gypsy businessmen is the personal relationship between the brother of the current president Traian Basescu and the interloper figure Bercea Mondial, a rich Gypsy man, well known within the country. He has been investigated in no less than 119 cases of tax evasion, bribery, money laundering, fraud, illegal VAT refunds and false paperwork. He has been put under preventive arrest several times but he has never been prosecuted.

In January 2010, the president's brother, Mircea Basescu, became the godfather of Bercea Mondial's granddaughter. One year later (February 2011), the Gypsy leader was implicated in an attempted murder and was arrested. In this context, journalists accused Mircea Basescu of paying 300,000 Euro to secure Bercea's release from prison<sup>42</sup>. Many other influential people, from within the judiciary and the political system, have become godparents for his children and nephews. The journalists' explanation for this was accurately summarized in Bercea's statement: "I was not arrested by the whole country, but my friends arrested me. They are stupid"<sup>43</sup>. In this statement the Gypsy leader claimed extended

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<sup>42</sup>Mircea Basescu accused of having been bribed with 300,000 Euros by Bercea Mondial' Bucharest Herald, April 27, 2011. Available at: [www.bucharestherald.ro](http://www.bucharestherald.ro); 'Mircea Bănescu, despre implicarea în cazul lui Bercea Mondial: În niciun caz!' [Mircea Basescu, about his involvement in Bercea Mondial case: No way!], Mediafax.ro, March, 24, 2011, Available at : [www.mediafax.ro](http://www.mediafax.ro).

<sup>43</sup>Slatina: Interlopul Bercea Mondial: „Nu m-a arestat toată țara, m-au «arestat» ai mei. Niște proști!” [Slatina: Interlope Bercea Mondial. I was not arrested by the whole country, my friends arrested me. They are stupid!]. Adevarul de seara , February 21, 2011, Available at: [www.adevarul.ro](http://www.adevarul.ro).

clientelist connections to higher-level actors (politicians, government officials and lawyers), who have supported him financially or collaborated with him in informal actions. The clientelist relationship through which individual actors exchanged informal favours made them indebted to each other and ensured that they exercised reciprocal control of the information and goods they exchanged. Friendship provided the source of the commitment and trust between the actors, which neutralised the possibility of violence involved in such exchanges (informal or illicit transactions outside the public gaze, which if discovered can be detrimental to both parties involved in the exchange) which would otherwise result if the deal was broken. Where such a commitment is broken, both parties lose. Therefore, the statement shows that the actors see the source of their power as lying in the nature of the hidden exchange: high officials assist the Gypsy leader's businesses, which financially supports their positions.

The statement 'they are stupid' implies that those high officials who informed on him were not aware that the exchange was going to be divulged and therefore would harm themselves and make them lose the source of power which was located in the informal exchange. *The analysis of this statement shows that power involved in a dyadic clientelistic relation sourced by a complex relational dynamic.*

As already mentioned, at a lower scale and with no 'criminal' activity involved, clientelism is used by the richest Caldarars in their informal businesses<sup>44</sup>. Nevertheless, many Caldarar families in Costesti are still involved in small-scale informal economic practices such as cauldron-making and roof-painting. These mobile activities, which do not involve clientelist connections, produce conditions of living which are much better than those of the local peasants and Romanianized Roma. On the other hand, the Romanianized Roma, who experienced the same transformations (the development of the clientelism, patronage and the informal economy in Romania) did not succeed in getting rich. On the contrary, they became dependent on their local patron's favours and remained more or less subordinate to the local dynamic of patronage and clientelism, extensively discussed in the chapters on state encounters and everyday politics.

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<sup>44</sup> Informality of Caldarars' businesses refers to the nonpayment of state taxes or VAT for the transactions they make.

*Therefore, I consider that an explanation for the differences in material conditions of the two Roma groups goes beyond models which focus exclusively on clientelism and local patronage or the reproduction of resources and positions. Throughout the thesis, I show that different approaches (mobile or sedentary) to relations, economic practice and interaction with the transformations from the second economy to the post-socialist informal economy, underpinned changes in the material conditions of the two Roma groups.*

*On the other hand, without confining power to clientelism and patronage, power relations include clientelist relations which are understood as the expression of the intersectionalities between state, politics and the informal economy. Yet, in all the spheres of power struggle analysed in my thesis, other different relations relevant to the transformation of the socio-economic trajectories of the two Roma groups can be observed. For example, in the sphere of the informal economy discussed in the second chapter, relations between the village groups (Caldarars, Romanianized Roma, and peasants) and the relation with the state in its shift from socialism to post-socialism contain both elements of empowerment and subjection to power. Power and empowerment are entangled in individual and group practices and produce either constraints or opportunities for action and economic improvement for Romanianised Roma and Caldarars. In addition, clientelism and other relations between Roma and actors such as patrons and brokers are challenged by discursive practices in the sphere of religion. Pentecostal discursive practices in Costesti change the Caldarars' locus of authority, their relations with the state and their leaders.*

Pentecostalism emerged as a new sphere of power struggle after 1989 and manifested itself in everyday Caldarars discursive practices. It influenced and interacted with relations manifested in other spheres (e.g. the state, the informal economy).

Similar to religion, state education is a discursive practice, which comprises both aspects of 'empowerment' for the Roma and elements of subjection to state power. Forms of educational control are often challenged by the Caldarars' practical knowledge, underpinning their self-governance and manifested in their successful informal economic practices. *All these relations and discursive practices involve*



*subjection, contestations of different forms of power (e.g. state, leaders, local patron), and/or empowerment.*

Therefore, as defined in the introduction, *power is the product of both inter-individual relations within and across groups, and discursive practices. These are entangled in their manifestations in different spheres of power struggle (the economy, the state, politics, religion), influence each other, and act together in the transformation of the two Roma groups.* Roma discursive practices in the sphere of religion are analysed in interaction with state discourses and local meanings of leadership in the last chapter.

## **2.6 Concluding summary**

This chapter indicates that history has to be studied as a continuous process of interactions between central state decisions and local individual practices and relations. In their turn, the latter are influenced by discourses and ideas and often constitute particular sources of change for the whole society (see, for example, the abolition of slavery in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, or the second economy in socialism). The local-level relations and practices have their own dynamic and power of transformation of groups and individuals.

In the chapter, I also suggested that Roma lives and histories need to be firmly understood in terms of their connections and interactions with larger transformations, and are produced by the ways in which different Roma groups reacted to central state decisions and interventions. These observations ground my analytical approach to the study of local-level dynamics for the understanding of transformations of the two Roma groups: Caldarars and Romanianised Roma.

The last two sections of this chapter reveal continuities between socialism and post-socialism within which the individuals' and groups' trajectories were continuously transformed by the movement of spheres of power struggles (the state, politics, the economy, religion) and local individual relations and practices. I suggested that the transformations of the two Roma groups were produced by the interactions of individuals and groups with the transformations of the state (paternalist repression into patronage politics) , the economy (second economy into

informal economy), but also with new religious formations. These interactions were manifested in different relations and discursive practices: relations between Romanian peasants and the Roma, relations of the Roma with state actors, relations between the Roma and local and religious leaders. Discursive practices, in their turn, challenge other power relations with the state, leaders and local patrons.

These relations and discursive practices are expressed in local level power struggles between individuals and groups, and are manifested in different spheres of power struggles in their continuity (e.g. from the second economy to the informal economy) and intersectionality (e.g. politics, the state, informal economy and religion) from socialism to post-socialism.

To sum up, my interest is to explore double dynamic of power suggested by Foucault's (1980) and enclosed in the content of individual and group relations and discursive practices: empowerment versus contestation and subjection to power. I am interested to evaluate the degree to which one can dominate or replace the other. I inquire into the capacity of Roma relations and discursive practices to enact restrictions or opportunities for the economic improvement of their conditions of existence. Therefore, my thesis analyses the nature of power involved in Roma individual/group relations and discursive practices manifested in different spheres of power struggle (the economy, the state, politics, religion) in their temporal dynamic and interaction from socialism to post-socialism.

## **Chapter 3. On the Move within Movement: Roma Interaction with the Socio-Economic Transformations from Socialism to Post-socialism**

### **Costesti local economy from socialism to post-socialism**

The socialist local economy in Costesti followed the model of the lowland villages which underwent the collectivization of land imposed in the 1950s and 1960s. Costesti had a cooperative farm where peasants worked collectively and shared the produce. There were also two state farms (one for livestock and an agricultural farm incorporating a vineyard) and a so-called handicraft cooperative (*Cooperativa de consum*), which used to be the main employer for the villagers. In order to obtain both cash and agricultural produce, many Romanianized Gypsies worked for both collective and state farms. The cooperative farmers and seasonal workers were entitled to a plot of land for family use. Some Romanianized Gypsies who worked on the collective farm benefited from this entitlement.

From the conversations I had with many Gypsies, including Ioader Candel, a former state farm team leader and currently an informal Romanianized Roma leader, most of the Romanianized Roma worked in the neighbouring state farms during the warm seasons. Roma who worked in the state farms told me how they used to receive good payment compared to the cooperative work and large amounts of goods at the end of the season. The disadvantages were mainly related to family life, which was not easy to manage during seasonal work. Children were either left in the care of grandparents or joined their parents at the farms missing several months from school. Many Romanianized Roma were, as they said, “brought up in farms”. Seasonal work was not sufficient to provide resources for the whole year, allowing for only daily expenses and food consumption over the cold season when the Roma were largely unemployed. During socialism, unemployment was prohibited and the employment status of the Romanianized Roma during the winter was ambiguous, often subject to negotiation with the local police and the state farms’ engineers, who would send evidence of their work on the state farm to Costesti local council.

During the winter, Romanianized Roma used to help local peasants with household work. In exchange for labour, they received either money or goods, and

sometimes informal loans with flexible terms of repayment. Today Romanianized Roma still provide services during the winter for the whole village: delivering firewood from the forest to the locals, including the Caldarars. All these activities ensured their survival, rather than bringing about an improvement in their socio-economic condition. Most of them told me that the money gained from the farms was sufficient for food and clothes, but insufficient to invest in their houses which generally are in bad shape, made of wattle and daub.

During the 1960s, people from Costesti sought employment in the cities, in the new state enterprises such as the huge steel plant Derex in Goteni. Many peasants and several Romanianized Roma in Costesti were permanent employees at Derex. Situated close to a big city, the locals would commute daily for industrial work and work their small plots of land during the weekends. However, while peasants obtained employment in qualified positions, the Romanianized Roma were the lower grade or unskilled personnel of the factory.

In the 1960s, Caldarars started to settle in the village. Caldarars sometimes informally employed the Romanianized Gypsies in construction work for their houses built on the village outskirts. From the Caldarars' accounts, their houses in the old district were made of brick and had an attractive appearance, but were much smaller than the ones they have today. The enforced settlement imposed by the socialist state changed their socio-economic structure. Until the 1960s, the Caldarars were organized in small mobile groups, with one *bulibasa* representing the group in interactions with local authorities, in negotiations over camping and making deals as cauldron makers.

Although settled by the state, the Caldarars were in a way attracted by Costesti as it is served by a railway station. Since then, their social life has split into two socio-economic forms: a mobile and a settled condition. In other words, the Caldarars were never quite settled. During the warm season, they travelled over the country in small groups based on close kinship relations. The other socio-economic form of existence occurred in the winter, when they were settled. From 1960s onwards, staying in their village or camping in one place over the winter brought them under the direct control of a main *bulibasa* (Iancu in Costesti and Traian in Liveni), who would collaborate with state Security services.

Therefore, while the Romanianized Roma and local peasants confined their activities to the socialist state economy, the Caldarars based their existence on mobile 'traditional' practices, defined by the socialist state as part of the second economy. The relations between Caldarars, Romanianized Roma and peasants in Costesti were limited by their involvement in different areas of the socialist economy. During the 1960s, although Caldarars possessed gold, both Romanianized Roma and peasants stigmatized and avoided them, and characterized them as 'poor'.

The economic landscape deteriorated after 1989 when collective farms and cooperatives were dissolved and large state enterprises in nearby towns and cities were partly dismantled and privatized. The local population faced high unemployment and a retreat to the household economy and agriculture. The dismantling of the socialist state farms and plants left most of the Romanianized Roma unemployed and with no regular source of income. They started to look for day and seasonal labour in the village and nearby localities.

In the early 1990s, peasants received their land back from the state. With inadequate technology, resources and labour they either rented out the land or cultivated it with the help of locals including the Romanianized Roma. The early 1990s was also the time when some Caldarar families became rich as they became involved in trading outdated technology and materials, purchased cheaply from Derex Goteni and sold to small firms all over the country. Using labour force, offered by Romanianized Roma and peasants, they were the first group who moved from the old district and started building their "palaces". The rest of the Caldarars continued their mobile economic practices as cauldron makers and roof painters. The financial returns were usually invested in land and houses. Romanianized Roma, Caldarars and peasants looking for means of survival or wealth, met in the local post-socialist informal economy, where they interacted and developed specific relations. After the 1990s the reconfiguration and perceptions of local stratification changed. The Caldarars are considered to be the richest by the Romanianized Roma and the peasants. The Romanianized Roma are considered to be the poorest by Caldarars and the peasants. The peasants, owning land but with insufficient resources to cultivate it, are considered by the locals to occupy the middle position in this local hierarchy.

## Questions and theoretical framework

These socio-economic differences between the two Roma groups rest upon changes in local perception and changes in the material conditions. However, an external observer would easily notice the poor housing conditions of the Romanianized Roma and the Caldarars' opulent palaces. Relations and practices they developed during the socialist economy underlie their interactions with the post-socialist transformation and suggest the two Roma's economic conditions changed in different ways. Starting from these observations, this chapter aims to answer the following questions:

*How can the socio-economic transformations of the two Roma groups be explained?*

*How did the interaction with the economic transformations from socialism to post socialism affect their living conditions and self-perceptions?*

*Do the socialist-post socialist variations in socio-economic relations between groups produce different opportunities and constraints for the two Roma groups? What are those constraints and opportunities?*

To account for the post-socialist poverty of the Hungarian Roma, Ladanyi and Szelenyi (2003) provided a historical model of explanation based on structural dependencies, levels of integration and exclusion produced by different economic and political systems in different historical periods. Based on local archives and population censuses, they conducted a historical analysis of the Roma social condition in terms of segregation and assimilation in a Hungarian village over the last 150 years. They argue that the Roma underwent a cyclical transformation through different waves of assimilation and segregation, which affected their status in the social structure. The authors consider, that while in the 18<sup>th</sup> century under Maria Theresa's regime, the Roma serfs were almost assimilated into Hungarians, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century they had become relatively integrated in the lower strata of local society. The authors claim that during the inter-war period, the absence of specific supportive policies cemented their position as an under-caste, while after the war, the socialist policies of assimilation brought them once more to the position of lower class. In post-socialism, the lack of coherent policies of integration and the dramatic

changes increased their levels of exclusion and segregation and brought them to the position of underclass. .

In their analysis, Ladanyi and Szelenyi (2003) treat macro-historical processes and state policies as the main forces that exert structural influences and produce entrenched positions which allow almost no exit for the Roma. The Roma are seen as passive recipients of state policies and their movement in social space is limited and determined by exclusionary, segregationist, and assimilationist historical processes. In my study, historical processes are seen not only as structural domains, but also as the realms of everyday practices and relations, which provide the parameters for the dynamics of change of both the Roma lives and socio-economic spheres which they simultaneously navigate and transform. In order to come to an understanding of the differences between the present socio-economic organization of the two Roma groups I look at the history of their economic practices starting with the socialist sedentarization of the 1960s, when the Caladarars settled in Costesti.

The post-1989 Roma economic practices are specific to the transformations, which occurred in post-socialist Romania and Eastern Europe. The state's withdrawal from the economy (Wallace, Latcheva 2006; Round, Kosterina 2005) left a large proportion of the population unemployed, looking for survival in the informal economic sector ( e.g. petty trade, exchange of goods, domestic work etc.). These changes intensified informal patterns of relations, interactions and reciprocity. As most scholars of Eastern Europe<sup>45</sup> argued, these relations emerged in socialism in the sphere of the second economy<sup>46</sup> and continued to develop further in post-socialism as economies of informal exchange, reciprocal support and coping strategies (Caldwell 2004; Dunn 2004; Ledeneva 1998; Pattico 2008; Stenning et al 2010; Wallace 1995).

Various terms were used to indicate the use of informal economy: “cash in-hand”, “undeclared”, “shadow”, “informal“, “black” and “underground” economy (Williams 2009). Some authors (Grabiner 2000; Thomas 1992; Williams and Windebank 1998) identified informal work as the production and commerce of licit

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<sup>45</sup>See Gabor (1979), Stark (1986), Szelenyi (1988), Williams (2009).

<sup>46</sup> See the Chapter ‘Historical Transformations’, section ‘The socialist state and second economy’.

goods<sup>47</sup>, which are not declared to the state and therefore not taxed, a definition which accurately fits Romanianized Roma' informal work and the Caldarars' informal businesses.

Research has shown that informal economy in CEE countries was practised not only for survival, but also for enrichment (Wallace, Latcheva 2006). In the early 1990s, the lack of clear laws and regulations fostered opportunities for informal entrepreneurship<sup>48</sup> which were partly developed and formalized later (Neef and Stanculescu 2002, Okolski 2001, Piirainen 1997). As many authors argued, in post-socialist countries a clear-cut boundary between formal and informal economic practice could not always be established (Williams 2009). Employers used a mixture of formal and informal work practices ('informal wage arrangements') in official employment<sup>49</sup>, while employees were often involved in both formal and informal activities<sup>50</sup>. However, in Romania, the state actors did not consider these qualitative observations and, as Chelcea and Mateescu (2005) argued, the informal economy was heavily criminalized in the 1990s, and 'the informal' was seen as 'illegal'. In this sense, the authors suggested that ethnography is the most appropriate methodological approach to deconstruct the criminalized image of the informal economy.

Drawing further on Granovetter's (1985) argument that economic practices are socially embedded (Swedberg 1991, 2008), authors of post-socialist studies noticed that these informal economic activities are embedded in webs of social relations. Taking this suggestion further, I consider that a comprehensive understanding of Roma informal economic practices and their adaptations to economic transformation requires a careful exploration of the dynamics of social relations, occurring at individual and group level, from socialism to post-socialism.

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<sup>47</sup>'Licit goods' is a reference to all goods which are allowed to be sold on the free markets. Example of illicit goods would be drugs, guns etc.

<sup>48</sup>From my experience, in the early 1990s, when the state had no clear taxation system, people used to sell everywhere on the streets and opened shops, paying no taxes.

<sup>49</sup> See Gibson- Graham (2006), Samers (2005), Smith and Stenning (2006), Williams (2009, 2010).

<sup>50</sup>Lee (2006), Neef (2002), Round and Williams (2008), Round, Williams and Rodgers (2008), Sedlenieks (2003), Woolfson (2007).



In the following section, I examine the socialist period where the two Roma groups stood in different relations to the state and were involved in different forms of economic activity. The accounts I use in the following sections come from Romanianized Roma and Caldarars, but also from two people who held key positions in the socialist socio-economic life of the village: Senica Pamandi, former director of the local collective farm and handicrafts cooperative, and Bratita, a school teacher and former mayor and manager of the village cultural centre during socialism. Some of the Caldarars were Senica's employees and friends. His narrative focused on the interactions and collaborations between Caldarars and state institutions. Bratita used to teach Romanianized Roma children in school and supervise their parents as performers (fiddlers) at educational and cultural events organized according to directives received from the centre. He is also the author of the unpublished village monograph, which includes references to the history of Roma settlements. At present Bratita is currently a member of the local council and a PDL representative.

### **Sedentarization: the Caldarars' mobile economy, the socialist second economy and state repression**

According to Bratita and other locals, in the 1960s, different mobile groups of Caldarars started to settle in Costesti. Many Caldarars emphasised, on one hand, the benefits brought by sedentarization and, on the other, the oppression practised by the socialist state. Mateiescu Xandru and his son, George, who come from a relatively rich family of Caldarars, offered me further accounts about the way their community had to adapt to state repression and to inefficient programs of integration. Xandru's father was a 'traditional' Gypsy leader - *bulibasa* – for one of the nomadic groups which later settled in Costesti.

Xandru: We have been here since the 1960s. We came from Pufesti (...) My father went to the local council with evidence from Bucharest that we were allowed to get land to build houses. After collectivisation, we received land to build our houses and we did not live in our tents any more. We still travelled a lot but we were happy to get houses and land. (Mateiescu Xandru, son of a former *bulibasa*)

C: Why did you decide to settle?

G: They did not let us wander any more. 'Militia' [the former police, under socialism] used to come and check our IDs to check our residence and work permits. If we had none we needed to leave the village [where they settled temporarily] in 24 hours. Then the *bulibasa* decided to give gold for us to receive land for construction. My grandfather went to Bucharest and gave gold and they all received the 'governmental' decision to settle in Costesti. When the local council saw the document, they distributed land to Gypsies. The whole land was in a single family name. My grandfather, the *bulibasa*, had a house there but no papers for that, neither did I. No one had. (Mateiescu George, Mateiescu Xandru's son).

Xandru and George's statements complement each other. Citing an improvement in their family's housing conditions, Xandru, the son of former *bulibasa* emphasises the advantages of sedentarization. On the other hand, George's narrative reveals that the Caldarars' desire to settle evolved from the constraints imposed by the socialist state on their travelling. The Caldarars became interested in settling as their travel was limited by the evidence of a permanent residence status. However, these arrangements imposed from the political centre created space for debates and quarrels between the local population, Caldarars and the local administration. The Caldarars' decisions to either settle or travel were caught in between the central state decisions of sedentarization, enforced by regional police, and the local authorities and populations, which often refused them permission to settle<sup>51</sup>. As stated by George and other interviewees, the Caldarars had to negotiate and bribe their settlement in the village. Bratita, the school teacher, and other locals claimed that during the 1960s and 1970s, the mayors of Costesti received gold from the Caldarar groups who were interested in settling in the village:

B: Toru Costin and Perinas Mitrea, mayors at that time, were paid by the Gypsies, but these were unofficial decisions (...) The Gypsies gave 24 K gold and 20,000 lei [by comparison, the value of a car was 70,000 back then] to be allowed to settle here in the village." (Bratita, the history school teacher)

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<sup>51</sup> Local people including the Romanianized Roma were against the Caldarars' settlement in the village. The Caldarars, called "nomads", were considered 'dirty' and 'uncivilized'. Perinas, a former local mayor of that time, considered that it was a major problem to follow the central state's directives to sedentarize the Roma in the village.

However, as George Mateiescu stated, after the refusal by the local authorities of permission for his group to settle, his grandfather, the *bulibasa*, suggested that he adopted a different strategy. His grandfather went directly to the central government and bought their right to settle in the village with gold. Other decisions created further discontent among the locals. The land received by Caldarars was part of the collective farm. Senica Pamandi remembers his dissatisfaction with the local administration's decision to settle them on the farm's land:

S: I was the CAP [collective farm] director. After 1963, the Caldarars wanted to erect buildings on our vineyards. I brought the issue to the county level where I said: These people are settling on our territory. [County level official]: Comrade Pamandi, they are citizens of the Socialist Republic of Romania, they have all the rights of a citizen, I was told. (Senica Pamandi, former cooperative farm director).

Pamandi's conversation with the regional party activist reveals once more the disconnection between central and regional directives and attitudes by local authorities, who were not interested in enforcing the directives. The locals did not want them and the local administration found governing the Caldarars a difficult and demanding task. The recently settled nomads were almost unidentifiable<sup>52</sup>, people with no IDs or birth certificates. The local priests and teachers were supposed to implement the state programs of integration and convince them to get identification papers and go to school. Those involved in these state programs suggested that the requirements involved in ensuring the Caldarars' integration were difficult and time consuming tasks. It was also very difficult for the local council and state companies to collect taxes and bill payments from them. Yet, the Caldarars themselves had to accept sedentarization and all the consequences to get permission to continue to travel.

Caldarars continued to travel all over the country during the warm season. The railway station facilitated travelling and transport of their tools and materials. Another advantage was the proximity of the steel plant from which, through informal

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<sup>52</sup>All Caldarars are called Mateiescu, by family name, and that constituted the most problematic issue in their identification.

arrangements, they purchased working material. Mateiescu Minu and Mateiescu Mirea are two Caldarars in their 40s who come from moderately affluent families and still practice their 'traditional' occupations. They have both experienced the restrictions imposed by the socialist state on their travelling practices and possession of gold. Under socialism, they travelled to Transylvania to make cauldrons for peasants producing alcohol<sup>53</sup>. They were organized in small groups under the leadership of a *bulibasa*, who was authorised to mediate between local authorities (police and local councils) and the Caldarars looking for permission to camp and local authorization for their economic activity. Cauldron-making for alcohol was forbidden and so was access to the material needed for its manufacture, and was usually not available on the open market. Therefore the group's *bulibasa* had to negotiate informally with local police and councils. The arrangements with the local authorities were usually agreed, but the regional police would make periodic controls to seize copper, cauldrons and gold from Caldarars.

M: They confiscated our copper and we ran in the forest. We got beaten.

C: Was it regional or local police?

M: It was the regional police.

C: Did the mayor know that you were making cauldrons?

M: He knew and supported us and after we finished he had an enquiry into who had done what. We used to hide the cauldrons on the river banks and in bushes. We got copper from the state plants.

C: Who were the providers?

M: Romanians – [steel plant] workers, managers, but if we were caught that would have meant arrest. Copper was like gold -valuable and not much available. Regional police once caught us with cauldrons in Teius [a Transylvanian town] and my family (father, mother, and child) were beaten. They asked me for the copper receipts and I didn't have any. They seized 350 kilos of my copper. In Campia Turzii [Transylvanian town] they seized my truck, full of cauldrons. What was it like during Ceausescu's time? So much poverty but we were all hard working (...) (Minu Mateiescu , Caldarar).

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<sup>53</sup>In Transylvanian villages, in the hilly areas where the collectivization of land was not possible, peasants used to produce plums and apples in large quantities, usually used in small private alcohol production. Local farmers wanted to purchase the Caldarars' boilers. However the Gypsies doing this risked being arrested by the police.

Minu's last statement is relevant as it shows that both local authorities and Caldarars supported each other in the socialist second economy. As already mentioned, the Caldarars cultivated good relations with peasants from Transylvania<sup>54</sup> who needed their manufactured products. To secure a living in the restrictive socialist economy, the Caldarars and Transylvanian peasants depended on each other. As many Caldarars explained, exchanges were based on trust and reciprocity. The Caldarars received not only money, but also goods and gifts from peasants, who sometimes became godfathers to their children.

These relations between mobile Caldarar groups and local populations formed part of the second economy and generated both 'systems of survival' (Voiculescu 2004b) and welfare accumulation. However, local authorities were not always able to defend them against the socialist state. Regional police and *Securitate* monitored the Caldarars' activities and collaborated with *bulibasa* Iancu, a Caldarar leader who did not travel too much but who was authorised by the state to exercise control over the Caldarar mobile groups resident in Costesti.

C: Was Bulibasa Iancu from Costesti helpful in negotiating with the authorities?

M: Bulibasa Iancu was a 'communist'.

C: Then, was the other, travelling *bulibasa* helpful?

M: Yes, he helped us to make cauldrons and he worked only with the local police. When they came from Cluj, they seized a truck full of boilers. But here, in Costesti, Iancu didn't always tell us when the police were coming and, in the middle of the night, we would have to run to the forest [to seek refuge]. However, when there were problems at county level the big *bulibasa* Iancu would try to deal with it and he would go with us to the regional police and sort things out.

C: What did you have to do to be supported by Istrate?

M: I had to give gold, at least 3 gold coins every time. If I had said no, I would have gone to jail. *Bulibasa* Iancu used to tell us how much gold we need to give and the police were there to beat us to make us hand over the gold.

C: Did Iancu have to give any gold?

M: He did not have to. He was our boss. It was so hard during Ceausescu's time. Some say it was better." (Minu Mateiescu , Caldarar).

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<sup>54</sup>Due to its hills and mountains, Transylvania is not suitable for agriculture. In many areas peasants involved in fruit production (plums and apples) used to make alcohol for informal markets.

The informal arrangements with the central state representatives were performed by *bulibasa* Iancu, who was supposed to deal with the everyday problems of the settled community and urgent issues raised by the travelling groups. He was also the principal collaborator and source of information for Militia and the Securitate, and also a gold collector. He offered information on the Gypsies' gold possessions and participated, in this way, in the institutionalized gold seizure practices of the socialist state. Minu's narrative and many other accounts coming from Caldarars show also a paradox in the state's activities, which involved restricting their trade in copper and steel products, but also involved the seizing of their gold, which was ultimately the product of these trading activities. In this context, on the one hand, Iancu was a Securitate collaborator maintaining the state's interests and dealing with its paradoxes. On the other hand, he supported the Caldarars against violent actions by the state. In his narrative, Minu, like many other Caldarars, showed his dissatisfaction with Iancu's forms of control, which were not used by *bulibasi* for mobile groups. As many Caldarars characterized him, Iancu was no longer a genuine community representative, but a communist 'boss' to whom they had to listen and subordinate their economic activities

The mobile groups' leaders, the 'traditional' *bulibasi*<sup>55</sup>, who were subordinated to Iancu, were the real supporters of the Caldarars. As many Caldarars told me, these *bulibasi* never acted with duplicity<sup>56</sup>, but mediated relations with the local state in the interest of their community. They were the only ones who had the papers required for the activities of the entire teams. Minu Mateiescu claims that many Caldarars were poor and unable to pay individually for the work permits. In addition, many had no property papers for the land received from the local councils to build houses. Those proofs of residence were necessary in order to claim individual work permits. Without properties and papers, the Caldarars fell outside the official fabric, while at the same time they were vulnerable in their relations with

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<sup>55</sup>Before 1960s there was not a clear hierarchy among *bulibasi*. They were leaders of the small mobile groups. After sedentarization, *bulibasa* Iancu stopped traveling himself and, with support from outside, took the leadership of all Caldarar mobile and settled groups resident in Costesti.

<sup>56</sup>Duplicity refers here to the *bulibasi* of the settled groups (e.g. Iancu in Costesti, Traian in Liveni) who, during socialism, gave their support to both Roma communities and police and other authorities.

trans-local authorities who used to raid their settlements and camp sites. In general, they resisted identification, while the local authorities at their residence in Costesti were either unwilling or unable to bring them into the official structure.

Bratita and Senica Pamandi's accounts show the Caldarars' forms of resistance to identification and their independent approach to economic activities.

B: The mayor wanted to open a small bucket shop for them but they did not want to. The Caldarars said 'we want to practice our profession independently'. The county-level police frequently raided in order to seize their gold and collect taxes. Many used to run to the forest and hide their gold in their carts. (Bratita, school teacher, PDL councillor, Costesti mayor in 1991).

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C: Were they registered?

S: I do not think so, as they have never been army conscripts. The army was a danger for them (...) they used police intervention to make them pay taxes, bills (...) With these people you cannot impose your will: you must understand that. You won't get anywhere. . No one was able to discuss with them in a peaceful way" (Senica Pamandi, former cooperative farm director)

Bratita and Pamandi's statements show that the Caldarars were hardly approachable and identifiable. They also show that the hoped for Caldarars' accommodations with the local authorities were overridden by the regional state administration and police with the collaboration of their main leader, *bulibasa* Iancu. However, in Costesti, as everywhere else, relations between local actors, institutional representatives and Caldarars were based on reciprocal exchanges aimed at meeting the economic demands of the autarchic socialist economic system.

*Bulibasa* Iancu and his family used to work and sell their products to the cooperative farms in the Costesti area. Similarly, in the nearby villages, the Caldarar leaders of settled communities signed contracts with state farms which needed their products for alcohol production. Senica Pamandi, at that time a cooperative farm manager in Costesti had the idea of using the Caldarars' labour force in the local craft cooperative. As he told me in an interview, he was expected to raise local agricultural productivity and generate higher outputs for the centralized socialist economy. Without advanced technology and machinery and without substantial

financial input, this expectation was hardly achievable. Moreover, the local agricultural output was purchased by the state at very cheap prices. In this context, he thought that the Caldarars' skills could be translated successfully into financial capital and used to generate the high productivity requested from the centre. Senica Pamandi organized a special handicrafts department for *bulibasa* Iancu and his settled group, who used to manufacture cauldrons and sell them to neighbouring cooperative farms. Their profits were shared with the Costesti cooperative, which licensed their activities<sup>57</sup>. *Bulibasa* Iancu and his group were also pleased with the collaboration as they were able to perform 'legally' their 'traditional' practices. In this way, the socialist state's demands were met locally through the Caldarars' activity, which was usually considered backward and inefficient in comparison with industrial production. The inefficiency of the socialist economy was counteracted in this case by local cooperation between local authorities and Caldarars.

Two types of relations were established: 1) between Transylvanian peasants and Caldarars and 2) between the *bulibasa's* group and Costesti authorities. They do show that, at local level, the Roma, peasants and local authorities either ignored or domesticated central state directives. *These relations which evolved as a reaction to a restrictive and autarchic socialist economy, brought opportunities either for economic survival and wealth accumulation for the groups involved. The Caldarars were able to continue their profession for reasonable returns. The peasants conducted their small alcohol businesses and the Costesti cooperative was able to meet the production directives.*

*The state control over the Caldarars' economic practices was highly repressive but it did not bring about the subordination of their ways of life and economic activity to a sedentary ideology. They continued to travel seasonally in small groups across the country and to maintain a relative independence in relation to state institutions and structures. The 1960s settlement restricted their movement in territorial space but did not restrict their subjective understanding of mobility and economic practices. A series of relations, which started to develop with peasants and local authorities,*

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<sup>57</sup>The Costesti farm used to buy the copper and according to the signed contracts Iancu and his group used to make and sell cauldrons to neighbouring farms.



*enabled them to achieve some continuity in their mobile economic activities and ways of life.*

### **Romanianized Roma at the margins of the socialist state economy**

As compared to Caldarars, the Romanianized Roma were sedentary subjects who fell within the ambit of the socialist state. In the 1960s, none of them owned land as they started to work for the Costesti and neighbouring state farms. While some were employed as low-skilled workers in Derex Goteni and other state factories, others were unskilled labourers in state and collective farms. As unemployment was criminalized by the state, the local police used to inform the regional authorities about the unemployed and asked them to keep them under surveillance. Romanianized Roma temporarily employed as seasonal labourers or freelancers (such as fiddlers) had to show periodically proof of their employment/work. Their employment status was not always confirmed by the state farms and the Romanianized Roma were sometimes fined or asked to do community work. For the Roma fiddlers and Caldarars, as for all the other people with liberal professions, the situation was different. They were required to hold work permits provided by the local councils of their place of residence, to whom they paid annual taxes. However, all fiddlers I talked to and who held permits under-reported their incomes in order to pay lower taxes.

Some Romanianized Roma fiddler families accessed considerable cash incomes. The Sotu family, the richest among the Romanianized Roma, are now involved in local and regional politics and leadership. Adrian Sotu comes from this family and his condition is more modest than his siblings'. His father was a fiddler, and his mother an informal trader. He is an informal labourer for local peasants' and Caldarars' households. He is not satisfied with the temporary work and low payment he gets in Costesti.

A: At Tariceni [pub] we made a lot of money as fiddlers. During Ceausescu's regime my mother traded cigarettes, chocolate - she was a trader. I was 9 years old and my father played music with other people

from our family. Later, when I was 12 I got a contract of my own and played myself. We had permits for our profession.

C: Were there many fiddlers at that time?

A: No! My father and Sotu family. My father played for a lot of cash. Although we were not allowed to bribe the police, my father gave gifts to policemen (...) With the money, he bought two houses on a large area of land . (...)

C: Have you ever worked for the state farms?

A: Yes, since I was 14. Many people say life was much better then. At the farm, it was crowded, dirty, but we had work and a salary (...) (Adrian Sotu, Romanianized Roma)

Adrian's story shows how working in the socialist second economy permitted some Romanianized Roma families to negotiate their relationship with state representatives and generally moderated their subjection to state forms of social and economic organization. These activities were sometimes mixed with agricultural work in state farms. Adrian's portrayal of agricultural work in the socialist state farms is constructed in comparison to current informal labour he performs locally for peasants or Caldarars, which is temporary and uncertain. Although demanding and performed in insalubrious conditions, regular work and salary in state farms produced a minimum of stability for the Romanianized Roma. Nevertheless, wealth did not come from seasonal agricultural work, but from an independent activity – fiddling. The latter depended on clientele and the performer's skills, fame and their ability to broaden trans-local connections.

Most Romanianized Roma relied however on work offered by the socialist centralized economy. Their socio-economic practices were connected to the fixity of state arrangements and institutions. This created a relative dependency on the state. When asked to compare their socialist and post-socialist experiences, the Romanianized Roma emphasised more the advantages of the socialist economy (jobs provided and decent salaries), and less its forms of repression, which were more enforced against Caldarars.

The Roma fiddlers are an example of an independent approach in relation to the socialist state economy, which comes closer to the Caldarars' approach. Except for the *bulibasa* and his family who collaborated closely with the authorities, most of the Caldarars struggled to live and act outside state structures. On the other hand, the fiddlers, already identifiable and governable subjects of the state, negotiated the

state's rules from within its structures and thus occupied the best socio-economic positions among the Romanianized Roma. This domestication of the state's institutional practices took place from within its own structures, and from inside the fragile boundaries of control that maintained the second economy. Peasants considered that fiddlers were among the richest people in the village.

### **The Caldarars' social navigation within the post socialist economic uncertainty**

After 1989, the state proceeded to the restitution of private property seized during socialism. After 1991 peasants started to reclaim their land and the Caldarars, their gold. Through Government-initiated programs in collaboration with the National Bank of Romania, Caldarars were able to claim their gold by using their confiscation certificates, which registered the amounts to be compensated. The gold restitution has been a long process mediated by *bulibasi*. Not all the Caldarars in Costesti received the full amount confiscated, and some confessed that they donated a part to *bulibasa* Iancu who helped them make the applications. The restitution started during the Social Democrat governance and was associated by Caldarars with the party leader Ion Iliescu. For these reasons the Caldarars have been long-time supporters of the Social Democrat Party<sup>58</sup>.

Along with the restitution, the state started dismantling/privatizing large inefficient plants like Derex. These processes created opportunities for various middlemen to facilitate trading between large factories and small firms seeking to utilise the reclaimed technology. Many Caldarar families sold some of their gold and mediated such transactions around the country. Both the local peasants and the Caldarars claimed that these businesses were the main source of the Caldarars' enrichment.

B: They [Caldarars] made a fortune from Derex and dealt with former managers and other state officials, including the mayor of Goteni. After 1989, they went there with cash, bought materials and sold them somewhere else, until the new owner, came. Until then, the Romanian

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<sup>58</sup> The details on politicisation of restitution are given in Chapter on local level politics.

managers made big businesses with the Gypsies from Costesti, Toclea and Liveni. They asked for huge bank credits and never paid them back. At that time there were roughly 100 unregistered firms. When they came here in 1960s, they [Caldarars] just made cauldrons - it was their job.” (Bratita, school teacher, PDL councillor, village mayor in 1991)

As shown in Bratita’s statement and confirmed by many other informal conversations, peasants, local council bureaucrats and Romanianized Roma all seem to emphasise the ‘illegal’ aspect of the Caldarars’ practice, which, from their point of view, produced fast and illegitimate enrichment. However, these narratives ignore the Caldarars’ trading skills and their mobile entrepreneurial approach. The narratives seem to be part of a larger discourse about transitional informal economy in Romania and its ‘post-1989 nouveaux riches’<sup>59</sup>. Many Romanians who struggled with poverty in the first years after 1989 considered themselves ‘cheated’. Transition was characterized by a regulatory void, marked by state corruption and complicity in shady state factories’ privatization <sup>60</sup>. In this context, state representatives and politicians were “interested in ‘grabbing’ state resources in their own interest” (Wallace, Latcheva 2006: 83; Sik 2004).

Nevertheless insofar as no clear laws and taxation systems existed in order to regulate transactions, many informal activities cannot be considered ‘illegal’, but rather ‘a-legal’ or unregulated activities (Wallace and Latcheva 2006)<sup>61</sup>. From this viewpoint, the Caldarars’ businesses were not ‘illegal’, but informal ways of exploiting legal and economic gaps. The ‘transition’ from cauldron makers to intermediaries between companies is intriguing. What seemed to be a ‘traditional’, rudimentary occupation was actually the performance of their trader’s abilities and connections to an expanded network of relationships. Travelling around the country during socialism brought them into contact not only with local populations, but also

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<sup>59</sup>Details about ‘nouveaux riches’ phenomenon in Romania is discussed in Chapter one - Historical transformations.

<sup>60</sup>See Benacek (1994), Eyal, Szelenyi, Townsley (1998), Szelenyi, Szelenyi, Kovach (1995).

<sup>61</sup> In early 90s in Romania, there was no clear taxation system and laws to organize commercial activities. Therefore, Caldarars did not have to pay taxes for their economic transactions and establish firms for money transfers. In mid and late 90s this double taxation was enforced by the state (tax for commercial company, money transfer-VAT ) and Caldarars’ businesses were categorized by the state as ‘illegal’ or part of ‘black economy’.

with state company managers from whom they bought copper informally, and other materials they needed for their work. In relation to their constant territorial mobility and 'independence' from the state, the Caldarars acquired a common flexible vision with regard to the informal economy sphere. Gold was an important start-up resource, although not all Caldarars who possessed it were able to invest in this kind of business. Therefore, their participation in socialist second economy, their adaptable approach when interacting with post-socialist transformation, the available gold resources and their connections with high level officials, combined and enabled them to pursue their highly lucrative businesses.

As many locals claim, Caldarar families, who succeeded in doing big business with Derex, were well connected to state factory managers and "covered" by high officials who were involved in privatization. Some of these families were *bulibasa* Iancu's relatives, who continued to play an important leadership role in post-socialism by facilitating informal businesses and connections. In the business, both factory managers and Caldarars were interested in circumventing state rules and exploiting its benefits. The cash involved was not always documented, but negotiated between the parties according to their personal interest. Compared to other groups involved in the post-socialist informal economy, who were less active and mobile in socialism, the Caldarars had from the outset the advantage of their mobile trading practices. As former nomads and seasonal travellers, they were always ready to travel far from home in order to make the best deals.

In addition, the Caldarars were preferred as they were prepared to risk large amounts of cash and had an open, informal approach to everyone in the business:

If you wanted to go to Constanta, Gypsies were the only ones with access because they had money to give to everyone. There were very few Romanians able to do this sort of business (local peasant).

Marius, a Caldarar from a leading family, explained that their transactions were the most sought after. Used pipes from Derex were sold for competitive prices to small construction firms, repairing gas or running water networks. Marius, a Caldarar man, had many storage areas, filled with used industrial materials, in different locations in Romania. He told me he is pleased that businesses still work with his family, even if

a substantial downturn affected all those involved. I asked him if he ever made any business with other Caldarars. Laughing, he told me that “we do business with ‘Romanians’ only”. This is to show that relations between rich Caldarars in the informal economy sector are very competitive, rather than collaborative, and that they compete to get in contact with ‘Romanian’ business partners or high-rank administrative or political figures. The informal collaborations between state representatives and Caldarars via various companies in good business relations with the state were made possible by the new ‘clientelistic’ relations which emerged in 1990s and generally dominated politics and economy.

However, some Caldarar families never succeeded in getting into this sort of business, while others were not able to keep on with it, and faced progressively substantial declines in their cash flows. The less successful Caldarars changed direction and combined their former occupations with simpler forms of informal economic activity. Mateiescu Ion comes from a medium-wealth Caldarar family who started a business dealing in old pipes in the 1990s, and after experienced decline in the early 2000s returned to copper manufacturing and trading and other activities such as roof-painting.

C: What is your occupation now?

I: We make cauldrons like our fathers did, and paint roofs and do anything else possible.

C: Where do you usually go for work?

I: Ardeal [Transylvania] - there are people with money there.

C: Do you sell pipes?

I: Sometimes I do, when I can.

C: When was the last time you did business with pipes and how much did you sell ?

I: Last year, and I sold 3 big trailers full of pipes and sold them wherever I found someone interested. Sometimes it works, other times it does not.

But, I mainly make cauldrons and paint roofs. (Mateiescu Ion, Caldarar man).

Mixed occupations started to prevail among Caldarars in the last years. In informal conversations, the Gypsies showed that they expect this business to end at some point, and that they will need to look for other opportunities. Former state-owned large factories were privatized and the new owners were no longer interested in selling old materials, as the former managers were. In this context, the Caldarars’

good economic position had to be maintained through other connections on the market. It is not only financial resources that made them persevere in strengthening their socio-economic and symbolic status, but something else which differentiates them from the Romanianized Roma who regard the state as a source of both welfare and pauperization. The explanation emerged in many informal conversations with Caldarar families, who have *never been middlemen involved in pipe businesses*, and especially from an interview I had with a young man coming from a middle income Caldarar family who travels seasonally and practices 'simple', 'traditional' occupations.

N: I bring money from Ardeal [Transylvania]. Here I could starve, I have no job here. But in Ardeal I make cauldrons. This year I left the village for 7 months, May until November (...) If you come here in the summer you will not find anyone in our district. We all leave. We [his family] have our rented house there and have been staying there for 6 years now.

C: How long will you keep on doing it for?

N: I also wonder how long it is going to last. But, you know how it is if you see all the Gypsies [the Caldarars] leaving the village (...) I would manage here as well, but not as comfortably as I do there.

C: How much money did you make last year?

N: Last year we, as a family, brought home almost 1 billion (old lei) (around 22,000 Euro) (Nicu Mateiescu, Caldarar Gypsy).

Nicu and his family travel seasonally to make and sell their cauldrons to support the construction of their children's houses. The Caldarars use to marry their children at early ages (5, 6 to 12 years old), as they claim that waiting too long would make it harder for parents to find partners for them later. Many families struggle to make sufficient money to build large beautiful houses for their boys. The cash they claim to get in a six month period is almost five times the average annual salary<sup>62</sup> an urban Romanian citizen can expect to earn (in 2012 the medium monthly salary was 1.575 RON approximately 359 Euro). It is not certain whether my respondent judged his earnings correctly, but all the Caldarars who travel to Transylvania to make cauldrons or paint roofs reported high earnings, usually invested in building and decoration of new houses.

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<sup>62</sup>Salariul mediu net a ajuns la 1.575 RON in noiembrie 2012. [Medium Salary reached 1.575 RON in November 2012], 12 January 2013, Available at :<http://www.finantistii.ro/stiri/salariul+mediu>.

The houses of the Caldarars who are not involved in the pipe business are in good condition and are larger than the peasants' houses. Their living condition and facilities are superior to those of the Romanianized Roma. Interestingly, peasants and local council employees claim that these families are 'the poorest' among Caldarars. From my observations, this statement seems to be associated with the supposedly illegitimate enrichment of some other Caldarar families. On the other hand, the 'poorer' Caldarars, as well as the Romanianized Roma portray the richest Caldarars as 'arrogant'. Also, the 'richest' Caldarars despise those they consider poor, especially the Romanianized Gypsies, but also other families, both Caldarars and peasants. Rich Caldarars consider poverty a sign of 'inferiority' and a stigma in someone's life and for these reasons they do not greet or talk to Romanianized Roma and 'poorer' Caldarars<sup>63</sup>.

Although relatively well-off and active, Nicu's family could not involve itself in the pipe business: "*This occupation was invented by someone - we do not know where it came from. My father tried that but it did not work*". There is also an interesting contradiction between two statements he makes: '*Here I could starve, I have no job here*' and '*I would manage here as well*'. While the first is a pragmatic vision on local resources and work opportunities, the latter is an optimistic vision on life management.

An optimistic outlook is rare among the locals, including the Romanianized Roma, peasants, and local bureaucrats, but is often expressed by almost all Caldarars. In Costesti, as elsewhere in Romania, people show a pessimistic, or reserved, approach to the 'management' of their lives, most of the time connected to their mistrust of state institutions, low quality of services and low -salaried jobs available on the market. The Caldarars, who always cultivated a sort of self-reliance and worked/lived most of the time outside the state structures and formal markets, do not depend on formal organization and therefore do not experience this disappointment directly. They use their flexible forms of socio-economic practice to produce wealth.

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<sup>63</sup> Peasants, local bureaucrats, and Romanianized Roma told me that Caldarars refuse to buy objects touched by people they consider 'poor', especially Romanianized Roma and 'poorer' Caldarars. Many shopkeepers and vendors informed me that they often have problems in selling to the Caldarars products, considered to be "touched by the 'poor'".



Nicu's narrative, also common among other Caldarar families, explains his optimistic vision on life management. It also suggests how these Caldarars, unable to get involved in the pipe business, still avoided poverty and coped with situations of scarcity and uncertainty. By referring to the role education and occupation played in his life, Nicu Mateiescu offered me a key explanation for his family's economic status management:

C: Do you find formal education useful?

N: No. Someone asked why I do not want a degree. Why should I have one? Gypsies [Caldarars] will never have a profession as they say, a qualification in their life.

C: Are you sure?

N: I cannot say for sure because you can't be sure what is going to happen in the next 5-6 years. First, they were with the cauldrons, and then they *started to invent something new*. Painting roofs *was invented*. We saw it works and we decided to keep doing it. (Nicu Mateiescu, Caldarar Gypsy).

The statement shows a rejection of formal education and stable employment, which are not considered reliable way of adapting to an uncertain economic environment. The latter is affected by corruption, clientelism, low salaries and unemployment, which offer less than expected.

The term "to invent" comes close to, but differentiates from what usually Romanians call in their everyday life '*a te descurca*', which in English translation is 'to cope'. However, the term '*a te descurca*' goes beyond the English understanding of 'to cope'. It is rather connected to informal ways (connections, bribes etc.) of getting access to services and wealth, or overcoming difficulties created by an inefficient bureaucracy and an unstable economic environment. On the other hand, the verb '*invent*' used by Nicu suggests a different interaction with economic uncertainty. The actor adapts to uncertainty through invention and improvisation, acting in an ad hoc way, rather than searching for clear-cut, permanent solutions

*Invention* captures both the activity of the agent in an uncertain and fast-transforming economic sphere, and the imaginary adaptation to opportunities to be exploited. It is the Caldarars' own fluid approach to labour and economic practice, a mechanism of *social navigation*. They create 'tentative mappings' "entailing that the

map is never a static set of coordinates but a dense and multi-dimensional imaginary, which is constantly in the process of coming into being.” (Vigh 2009: 428).

As already discussed, most of the Caldarars, when asked what they would do if their activities were no longer be available or lucrative, invariably answer: ‘I will always find something else.’ It is their trust in relations they already have or which can be developed with economic partners in the sphere of informal economy. Therefore, ‘*invention*’ expresses the way Caldarars interact with the economic sphere and navigate across its constraints and opportunities, avoiding the first and exploiting the latter.

The relation between resources and movement, between gold possession and *invention* is an interesting one. Gold is clearly a valuable resource and the preferred form of accumulation among the Caldarars. Nicu offered a further explanation for that:

C: Why do Gypsies buy gold?

N: It is a long story, since they travelled by carts. When travelling, they could not buy and keep so many things and were obliged to invest everything in gold and carry it on their journeys.

C: But now don’t they keep their money in bank accounts?

N: Yes, but the gold was 12 units last year and it is 13 units this year. Gold’s price rises each year. (Nicu Mateiescu , Caldarar Gypsy)

As Nicu explained, gold has been a form of accumulation perfectly suited to their mobility. This form of accumulation lies outside institutional control (state, banks), and is an expression of their independent way of life. The possession of gold is not an indication of a fixed form of resource accumulation, but of a mobile and autonomous form of wealth.

The Caldarars still avoid contact with the state. Their possessions - houses, cars - are often unregistered and in this way almost non-existent from the viewpoint of state institutions. Due to their unofficial character, possessions are compatible with their seasonal mobility. Unrecorded possessions are no longer constraints. They are objects which do not necessarily belong either to state authorities or banks as identifiable resources. They lose fixity, escape attachment to sites of power and become part of the flow of possibilities and opportunities, part of the movement beyond the boundaries of institutionalized forms of power.

All the peasants and Romanianized Roma I talked to underlined the striking difference between the Caldarars' quite marginal status in socialism and the high socio-economic positions they got in the early 1990s.

C: Do Caldarars have power in Costesti?

Costin: The Gypsies?! It is not that they have power - they dominate everyone! They simply dominate us! (Costin, Romanian, former car driver for Caldarars).

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They come to the post office with their BMWs to collect their child benefits - 42 RON (local post office worker).

N: How can you see them driving cars worth thousands of Euros when I know they starved before? (Nicu Cristianu , Romanianized Gypsy).

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C: How were the Caldarars under socialism?

A: They travelled and sold cauldrons – clearly they were not as they are now. They were poor and ate left-over's from our garbage bin and stole food from peasants. (Adrian Sotu, Romanianized Roma)

Both Romanians and Romanianized Roma portrayed Caldarars in socialism as 'dirty', 'uncivilised', 'poor', interested in selling their products for food and small amounts of money. However, the Caldarars were not necessarily 'poor' as they always had gold, but they did not have the large houses they have today. Their mobile ways of life made them look very different in local population's eyes. The 'poverty'-image was associated with the Caldarars' nomadic way of life<sup>64</sup>. Adrian's statement is one of the most common remarks among both peasants and Romanianized Roma. Also, many Caldarars confirmed the disrespectful and sometimes aggressive ways in which the locals treated them during socialism. Since both peasants and Romanianized Roma had similar views on the Caldarars it cannot be claimed that they were rejected as Gypsies. Moreover, locals used to call the Caldarars 'nomads' but not Gypsies. They were considered to be very different from the local Romanianized Gypsies, who were settled and dressed similarly to peasants.

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<sup>64</sup> The Caldarars themselves told me they used to look differently. The men were long-haired and both women and men lived in tents and made copper cauldrons, which made them look unclean. As a child spending time with my grandmother in the countryside, I saw Caldarars once when they camped in the village. Locals used to call them 'nomads', rather than Gypsies.

As emphasised above, the Caldarars' discrimination and marginalization by both peasants and Romanianized Roma can be explained in terms of the nomad–sedentary distinction. 'The nomad' is the Different, the Other who opposes the ideology of sedentarism used as a control strategy by the modern state (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, McVeigh 1997, Scott 1998)

After 1989, the Caldarars became visibly richer, challenging the local hierarchy and adopting an attitude of disrespect similar to the one Romanians had against them during socialism. The perceived socio-economic positions were reversed in the development of the post-socialist informal economic sphere, differently managed by Caldarars, peasants, and Romanianized Roma. On the other hand, it cannot be ignored that many locals, including Senica Pamandi (cooperative manger), who worked with them in the cooperative farm, appreciated their abilities and readiness to travel to sell their products. However, as already discussed, due to their perceived illegitimate behaviour in the sphere of informal economy, the rich Caldarars are still not well seen by peasants and Romanianized Roma. Costin, like many other locals, considers that the Caldarars dominate in the village. *Domination* refers here to access to power and control over local institutions (e.g. local council and police) obtained through informal connectivity of some Caldarar families with upper-level officials involved in different businesses. Therefore, while the new contexts of informal economy brought new opportunities for Caldarars, they offered limited possibilities or even constraints for both peasants and Romanianized Roma. The next section concentrates on Romanianized Roma informal economic practices which emerged under post-socialism.



**Figure 19** Caldadar man from Costesti demolishing the peasant old house in the courtyard of his new property in order to build a house for his son, Photo taken by the author 2010.

On the roof the Caladarar owner, wearing a yellow t-shirt. Behind him stands a Romanianized Gypsy man hired as construction worker for the new house to be built. Another Romanianized Gypsy man stands on the site's ground.



**Figure 20** Interior decorations in middle income Caldadar families, Photo taken by the author 2010.



## **The longing for stability across survival possibilities: the Romanianized Roma experience of informal economy as a sphere of social relations**

After 1989, the Romanianized Roma either lost their temporary jobs or fell into long-term unemployment and became the most pauperized group in the village. Almost all families sold their plots and now survive on state benefits and local seasonal work in agriculture and construction. Approximately ten families have members who left for Italy and Spain to work seasonally in agriculture. The others rely on the local labour offered by peasant subsistence agriculture and by Caldarar families who build their large houses or need other casual labour.



**Figure 21** Romanianized Roma working for Caldarars and building their houses, Photo taken by the author 2010.

On the left, the Caldarar woman, owner of the household. In the middle, Romanianized Roma workers taking their lunch. Behind them, the foundation of the new building and in front of it, on the right, the former small peasant house bought by the Caldarar family.

Many Romanianized Roma were involved in thefts and local fights. More accounts about these come from Romanianized Roma themselves. Adrian Sotu is a 33-year old Romanianized Roma who worked as a guard for a company. Now he works locally for Caldarars and peasants and receives social benefits that guarantee free health care to his family.

C: How many people from around here were imprisoned?

A: 90% - ask all people here – they will tell you the same thing.

C: What about you, what did you do?

A: A boy was walking along - I took his necklace. And I served 5 years, 3 months and 13 days for that.

C: Are there people who got more?

A: Yes, lots. My cousin got 12 years.

C: How do you see these people's future?

A: No future for them. All of them are bandits and look for opportunities. None of them is any good. (Adrian Sotu, Romanianized Gypsy)

Adrian's statement reflects a common practice seen as necessary adaptation to extreme living conditions. When Adrian says "no future", that means there is no planning and predictability in the way people use resources and connect to institutions. Lacking resources and structural support, the Romanianized Roma throw themselves into the informality of economic practices and frequently get involved in petty theft or random fights for money.

A: That is the main source of income - the Caldarars! They wait here for them [Romanianized Roma] each morning to be taken to work.

C: How do you make a living?

A: Look at the scrap there, plus the transport I do for local stores! This morning I made three trips to carry concrete by cart, and I made 60 lei (15 Euros). It is not like that every day, but now I do it every two days. My brothers do that and have their pockets full of money...

C: Are there more people who were imprisoned here than among the Caldarars?

A: Yes, sure. The Caldarars travelled to other villages and worked, but these ones here started stealing - a horse, a cow - and they went to jail. It is hunger here! If they [the Caldarars] leave and return in the autumn, they make no problems here. (Adrian Sotu, Romanianized Roma).

Adrian, like many other Romanianized Roma, considers that the main source of living comes from Caldarars, who can offer work more often than the ageing

peasants who practice subsistence agriculture. However, it frequently happens that Caldarars do not offer them work and the Romanianized Roma often get involved in scrap collection throughout neighbouring villages. However these small informal activities bring low returns compared with the amount of cash the Caldarars make from selling cauldrons all over the country.

Adrian's last statements suggest that the Romanianized Roma's petty 'criminality' is the product of a local approach to limited economic possibilities, in contrast with the Caldarars' mobility, which brings opportunities on the move. It is a way of survival. The Romanianized Roma who were formerly employed as low-skilled workers also emphasised the insecurity and uncertainty that characterize their lives. Nicu Cristianu is a Romanianized Roma who worked in the mining town Moldova Noua for 16 years and experienced good salaried work. After the mines were closed, Nicu returned to Costesti as an unemployed man with serious worries about his future.

C: How did you earn your bread when you got back from Moldova Noua?

N: I came back in 2004, and I worked as a day-labourer in agriculture and pipe-cleaner for Caldarars.

C: What were the relations with the Caldarars, before 1989?

N: *At that time, there were no relations. There were no businesses.* They travelled with their tents, had no cars, but only their traditional occupations. Since I got back I have mostly been working with them, I had no other jobs. They [the Caldarars] are different. They travel and have gold. As for me - I am just like you. I have education, I learned a profession in school, I obtained a qualification as a mechanic, and since 1986 I worked as a mineworker. I was an army conscript, like everyone else. I have done everything.

C: Were you happy as a mineworker?

N: Sure - I had a job, good money, and my wife was employed too. I was a stable man. I was on a par with the others. I had holidays, a flat in Moldova Noua and many benefits. There were people who did not know what a permanent job was as they just worked as day-labourers for state farms. (Nicu Cristianu , Romanianized Gypsy)

Like other Romanianized Roma employed in socialist state factories, Nicu Cristianu expresses here his longing for the stability offered by the socialist state from which he got education, a profession, a permanent job. Interestingly, he emphasises that he followed the state's prescriptions. He did what the state expected and got access to



resources and stability. However, the benefits of his attachment to the state's structure and economic organization were severely challenged in the 1990s.

His statement "*At that time there were no relations. There were no businesses*" is crucially important for the Romanianized Roma experience of post-socialist transformations and their understanding of the new socio-economic reconfigurations. As already showed, the Caldarars' economic practices were embedded in their social relations with peasants and local authorities in the places they travelled to. Their relations continued and even expanded (e.g. connections with dealers, factory managers etc.) in post-socialism, and were experienced as a kind of continuity by the Caldarars. On the other hand, in socialism, the Romanianized Roma were mostly inactive within the second economy sphere, and relations with the peasants and Caldarars were not locally developed.

In the 1990s, the Romanianized Roma were alienated from the state's organized field of opportunities and forced to seek survival in local relations with the Caldarars. This is the moment when the two groups started developing local social and economic relations with each other, which constrained and limited the Romanianized Roma's likelihood of improving their socio-economic conditions. On the other hand, these local relations facilitated the Caldarars' exploitation of opportunities offered by the new informal markets. Many Caldarars travelling for business around the country employed peasants as drivers and generally used the Romanianized Roma's cheap labour force in their businesses and house construction. The potential these new connections have in producing either constraints or opportunities for the two Roma groups creates a power relation within which the Romanianized Roma are not, however, totally subjected to its forces.

There are two forms of interaction that show the dynamic, but also restrictive character of this power relation: 1) Romanianized Roma labour for the benefit of the Caldarars' entrepreneurial activities, and 2) the Caldarars informal arrangements to set up firms in Romanianized Roma names. Since the early 1990s, many Romanianized Roma provided cheap labour for both the construction of Caldarar large houses and the pipe business. However, these informal economic possibilities held a serious risk of cheating/non-payment, and consequent legal sanctions. Iorel, one of my Romanianized Roma friends, was, for a short time a permanent employee

and, after 1996, he worked for the Caldarars' pipe business. Similar to Nicu Cristianu ,he cleaned and painted pipes, and also dismantled metal structures from former state companies. In the summer of 2010 he was worried about his last collaboration with the Caldarars, and he wanted to share his experience with me. He did tell me a week in advance that he was about to leave with a Caldarar man to dismantle a greenhouse near Bucharest. In two days he got back, disappointed.

I: They did not pay us. They had a different business there which we didn't know about. We did not like that and left for home. I do not want to go to jail. I prefer not to eat, but to be able to sleep on my pillow. I was convicted in the past so I did not want new trouble.

C: What happened after you left?

I: They took other boys from here. It was their chance to make money and be imprisoned.

C: Were they not afraid that you could report them to the police?

I: No, because we were there too and now we are in the same boat. (Iorel, Romanianized Gypsy)

Iorel did not receive any money for his work and left for home after he realized the illegal aspect of the Caldarars' work. He related how the Caldarar man started begging them to stay and continue to work for him at the greenhouse. This indicates how the two parts are dependent on each other. The Caldarars know that the Romanianized Roma are a cheap labour force and amongst the few willing to get involved in risky deals. As far as an informal economic relation does not have any legal-institutional external basis, the power of relation is produced by the reciprocity of exchange between parts, which creates constraints but also survival possibilities for the Romanianized Roma, and opportunities for economic improvement and wealth for the Caldarars. Due to the bad treatment and shady businesses which could trigger imprisonment, some Romanianized Roma gave up working with the rich Caldarars and relied instead on casual agricultural work, scrap collection, begging and state benefits.

As often portrayed by the Romanianized Roma themselves, this renunciation is a contestation of informality and risk, and the constraining power of the socio-economic relation with the Caldarars. It also shows how Romanianized Roma *socially navigate* locally-limited possibilities of survival. However, this renunciation contributed to a local discourse about them as uneducated, lazy, criminal, and

inefficient. Although in the narrative Iorel revealed his anxiety about not being paid, he concluded that he would still continue to work for rich Caldarars if these ‘illegal’ actions could be avoided. Confidence in the ability to avoid risk varies among the Romanianized Roma and is sometimes connected to their experience in these informal activities.

As already mentioned, the Caldarars make informal arrangements to set up firms for selling and buying pipes and other materials from factories. However, they do not want to pay taxes and become identifiable/controllable subjects. Therefore they use the Romanianized Roma’s identities and papers in order to set up or transfer firms when huge debts are accumulated. For small cash amounts, the Romanianized Roma agree to become administrators in many of the Caldarars’ firms. Usually, the informal Romanianized Roma leader Ioader Candel, former team leader of seasonal work in state farms, currently a Roma Party representative, mediates the transactions. He collects the Romanianized Roma’s ID’s in order to enable the Caldarars to set up firms. Many of them confessed that they are ‘administrators’ for more than one firm and that they received small amounts of cash for each (between 100 and 200 RON). The people who accepted the deal lived in bad housing conditions and were investigated by the financial police for several years. Some of them tried to obtain further benefit from these exchanges when they duly realized that the financial police were interested in prosecuting the real actors behind these informal transactions. As Chelcea and Mateescu (2005), and Chelcea, Radu and Constantinescu (2005) argued, informal economic activities constitute a form of security for all those left at the margins of the formal labour market. This is also the case with the Romanianized Roma. In this sense, the Caldarars’ informal opportunities and state circumvention offer them survival possibilities<sup>65</sup>. However, these actions also involve high insecurity, risk of conviction and even imprisonment.

While some Romanianized Roma accepted work in the Caldarars’ businesses and households, others started to refuse their job offers. Paradoxically, many who refused work did accept the Caldarars’ informal arrangements to set up firms under

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<sup>65</sup>Compared to ‘opportunity’, which refers to a mix of high risks and high financial returns, ‘possibility’ implies low economic returns and high levels of social insecurity. The first are associated with informal entrepreneurial activities and the latter with economic survival.

their names. Although they are not work relations, these arrangements are forms of indirect economic exchange. In this sense, both Caldarars and Romanianized Roma circumvent state rules in matters of economic practice. They unequally exchange favours in the dynamics of the informal economic sphere produced by deindustrialization, lack of state control over markets, and general disinterest in supporting Roma communities who experience poor conditions of living.

These contradictory approaches in relation to Caldarars show both subjection to the power of an interdependent relation and its implicit contestations. The constraining and sometimes exploitative relations the Romanianized Roma have with the Caldarars are counterbalanced by the reciprocal ties they developed with the local peasants over time.

Peasants, shopkeepers and other locals sometimes rely on the Romanianized Roma labour force in subsistence agriculture, household and shop keeping chores in exchange for small amounts of money and goods. On the other hand, Romanianized Roma buy on credit from local shops and borrow money for undetermined periods from peasants, who sometimes pay their labour in kind. The money Romanianized Roma owe to their lenders is either returned by work or paid when they receive the monthly state benefits from the local council. In this way, peasants with low cash resources ensure cheap labour for their subsistence agriculture, while the shopkeepers can keep their survival entrepreneurial source of income going with the help of the Romanianized Roma clientele.

As was shown in an article on socio-economic relations between Roma and Hungarian peasants in Transylvania (Voiculescu 2004b), these relations between unemployed Romanianized Roma and peasants form local 'systems' for survival, which come close to what Sahlins (1999) called 'generalized reciprocity'. Compared to the socio-economic relations they have with the Caldarars, their relations with the local peasants and shopkeepers maintain social characteristics that prevail and are often strengthened by the kinship ties they establish (e.g. the peasants act as godparents for Gypsy children). Nevertheless, the relation is not always welcomed. Both Romanianized Roma and peasants criticise each other. While Romanianized Roma complain that peasants give small payment for demanding work, peasants consider that Gypsies ask for too much money which they cannot afford paying. In

reply, most peasants portray their demands or refusal as laziness. For the Romanianized Roma, however, refusing either peasants' or Caldarars' work offers shows a certain contestation of these relations, which are not always beneficial in terms of either economic returns (with the peasants) or social security (with the Caldarars). As Nicolae (2005) showed in the case of informal economic exchanges (in the context of numerous legal disputes over property) between woodsmen and villagers in Romanian Apuseni Mountains, the local informal economy creates relationships and intensifies interactions between locals.

However, these relations and interactions between Romanianized Roma, Caldarars and peasants seem contradictory and constantly changing. These contradictory aspects can be explained by the content of these relations, which involve, as any power relation, both 1) confinement to a restrictive form of exchange and 2) multiple forms of contestation. The Romanianized Gypsies sometimes work with Caldarars and peasants, while at other times they refuse to, and go for scrap collection or begging in neighbouring towns. They often mix all these activities in their everyday life. Also, most of them consider that all local relations have more disadvantages than advantages and sometimes look confused about their day by day prospects, as they are never sure what work they will get the next day. The contradictory and restrictive content of these relations push the Romanianized Roma into a sort of irregular movement. It is the *navigation of a local social labyrinth* with limited and restrictive possibilities for economic practice. The Romanianized Roma themselves confirmed that these types of exchange and relationships confined to the local do not offer them economic opportunities: "What can we do here? There is nothing to do".

In Szelenyi and Ladanyi's (2003) terms, the Romanianized Gypsies' movement within the relational sphere of informal economy can be seen as *navigation within poverty, which generally indicates a passive approach*. However, in my view, this movement across socio-economic relations constitutes a form of *social navigation within a locally restrictive labyrinth of the informal economy*, a dynamics of power struggles in which the Romanianized Roma are actively involved. *The emphasis is on the local character of these struggles, which are limited to local resources and possibilities of survival.*

The Romanianized Roma living conditions are not only the product of structural transformations reproducing their marginal economic position, but also the outcome of their interaction with post-socialist informal economy - based on the sedentary approach the state enforced over time. As already mentioned, this mode of interaction varied however among the Romanianized Roma, who, since socialism, had an approach to the economic sphere of varying degrees of independence. The fiddlers involved in socialist second economy are a case in point. In post-socialism the fiddlers integrated well with state and political structures and became Roma political representatives (e.g. Corina Sotu- Roma expert at the Goteni prefecture) or even local employers of the poorest Romanianized Roma (e.g. Cristian Sotu- local entrepreneur in construction). These influential Roma were connected to *patronage politics as a field of opportunity* in which members of the local patronage (mayor, vice mayor, local administrator/patron) supported and promoted their positions in the local economy and politics. A detailed analysis of the field of patronage politics is developed separately in the chapters on politics.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter presented a historical comparative analysis of the two Roma groups' informal economic practices, relations and interactions during the economic transformation from socialism to post-socialism.

The exploration went beyond the causal, static, unidirectional model of historical transformation proposed by Ladanyi and Szelenyi (2003). It developed a dynamic understanding of individuals and groups' historical trajectories, which are not solely the result of state policies, but arise out of interactions with an economic sphere in continuous transformation. As the data shows, the sharply different socio-economic conditions of the two groups can be explained by two relational patterns, influenced to different degrees by state intervention:

1. *The sedentarist model of economic practice* is aligned with the state policies of integration and assimilation. This was a centuries-old model, with its roots in Roma slavery, which was massively reinforced under socialism. The Romanianized Roma gravitated around this model. They were identifiable subjects of the state, workers in state and cooperative farms, and welfare

recipients. Most of them were seasonal or unskilled workers and therefore were able to act on the margins of the socialist economy. Others were fiddlers and acted in the sphere of the second economy, the informal 'entrepreneurial' sphere that could provide better incomes, falling outside the recording and controlling structures of the state. The fiddlers approached the spheres of economy and state more independently, which prepared them better for an active interaction with the uncertainty of the rapid post-1989 transformations. Post-socialist transformations intensified the sphere of informal economic practices and relationships and generated opportunities and also limited local possibilities, which were exploited differently by the Roma groups. The Romanianized Roma developed relations locally with those able to access opportunities (e.g. the Caldarar informal entrepreneurs), but also with those operating at near subsistence levels in the local informal economy (e.g. the peasants). The Romanianized Gypsies had limited mobility across these relations, which I have called the *social navigation of a limited field of possibilities*<sup>66</sup> *within the local labyrinth*. Possibilities are local, dependent on labour activities, restricted by weak economic resources such as land cultivated using poor technology, and local relations such as the Romanianized Roma-peasant survival system. I call this form of informal economy a *local informal labour economy of survival*, in contrast to the *translocal informal entrepreneurial economy* practised by Caldarars.

2. *As compared to the sedentarist model, Caldarars adopted a mobility approach* in the sphere of informal economy. Sedentarization did not wipe out the mobile approach to economic activity and relations as they continued travelling seasonally. Post-socialist transformations unleashed informal economy from the anxious and repressed socialist second economy and raised its velocity through deindustrialization, which generated irregularities able to be exploited by those who were ready to transform them into opportunities. Some of the Caldarar families translated economic uncertainties into

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<sup>66</sup> I refer to 'field of possibility', and later to 'field of opportunity' as expanded understandings of possibilities and opportunities, not necessarily factual, but created, increased or reduced through individual interactions with the post-socialist informal economy.

opportunities because they had resources such as gold to start with, a geographically mobile and flexible approach to economic practices and externality in their relations with the state institutions. They also avoided falling within the rigid controlling structures of state by making themselves and their belongings hardly identifiable. They continued and extended their *connections and relations*, developed in the informal economic sphere, from socialism to post-socialism and *navigated fields of opportunities* by the use of *social invention*.

*Invention* is related to the concept of *social navigation* coined by Vigh (2009), which brings back the dynamic perspective on the socio-economic environment. *Social navigation* refers to the individuals' movement within a socio-economic sphere in a state of change, "an environment that is wavering and unsettled" (p. 420), and reflects the interaction individuals have with the self-transforming contexts, or what I call 'spheres of power struggle' (economy, politics, state etc.). Vigh (2009) refers to African countries where socio-economic contexts underwent dramatic transformations, while populations had to face everyday uncertainties, adopt short term strategies, and imagine what he calls 'tentative mappings'. Similarly, as Burawoy and Verdery (1999) documented for Eastern Europe, post-socialist transformations<sup>67</sup> generated high uncertainties and an irregular movement/transformation of the economy in which groups of people became unemployed and, released from the state control mechanisms, needed to adapt to fast transformations.

Authors of Eastern European studies (Gabor 1979; Rodgers, Williams 2009; Stark 1986; Szelenyi 1988) suggest that these informal economic relations should be seen not only as a response to post-socialist uncertainties, but also as relations developed within the socialist second economy. However, not all the people were heavily involved in the second economy. Their differentiated involvement and experience triggered different ways of adaptation to the post-socialist informal economy. On the other hand, the social ties prevalent in post-socialism were not

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<sup>67</sup>Post-socialist uncertain transformations refer to state withdrawal from economy, privatization of property, deindustrialization, inflation, and deregulation of markets, high levels of unemployment which involved uncertainties on the labour and entrepreneurial markets.



necessarily the same as in socialism, as scholars (Polese and Rodgers 2011, Rodgers and Williams 2009, Stark 1986; Szelenyi 1988) suggest.

Therefore, my explanation is that the Caldarars and Romanianized Roma fiddlers, who worked in the sphere of second economy, were more informally engaged in the sphere of economy (as relations and economic practice) and thus more prepared to connect to new reconfigurations. Compared with large parts of the population who had a more local approach within the socialist second economy, the Caldarars had a translocal, continuously mobile interaction within the sphere of economic transition from socialism to post-socialism. The post-socialist local informal economy was restrictive and limited, but opportunities appeared on the move, in trading activities, spanning different localities.

Nevertheless, the Caldarars' mobile approach when interacting with transformations is not necessarily a resource that can be translated into wealth. For instance, in Moroieni, a village close to Costesti, the Caldarars are state benefit recipients and live in relative poverty and dependency with almost no success in mobile informal activities. Therefore, affluence cannot be guaranteed by resources (e.g. gold), a mobile approach, or connections alone, but by all of them together, connected to an economic sphere in continuous movement. Generally, the Caldarars were less connected to the state- promoted fixity and territorial dwelling -space, and therefore more likely to develop a *translocal entrepreneurial economy*.

To sum up, the socialist state economy was experienced as an opportunity by the Romanianized Roma and as a constraint by the Caldarars, who acted outside the state structures, in the sphere of the second economy. In the 1990s, the position of these groups and their access to opportunities/possibilities changed. The withdrawal of the socialist patriarchal state developed uncertainties exploited as opportunities for entrepreneurial activity by Caldarars and possibilities for informal low-paid labour by the Romanianized Roma. The gaps created by inefficient state interventions, corruption and economic clientelism were filled with local and translocal relational dynamics. In post-socialism, both Romanianized Roma and Caldarars needed to develop relations with each other and with other important actors involved in local

patronage: the local patron and his followers, Roma leaders acting as brokers<sup>68</sup> etc. For both groups, relationality became an interaction with uncertainty, experienced as possibility or opportunity.

This chapter also suggested that a historical analysis focusing on both individuals and groups should not concentrate solely on state policies or the accumulation of resources, but also on the two forms of movement suggested by Vigh (2009): 1) the movement/transformation of environments/spheres (e.g. state, politics, economy) and 2) the movement of actors within these spheres. Later chapters focus on the social dynamics of Roma power relations in connection with these two forms of movement involved in each sphere of power struggle - state, politics and religion.

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<sup>68</sup>An analysis of the local patronage and clientelistic relations extended at regional and central levels through webs of power relations is developed separately in the Chapters on politics.

## **Chapter 4. Historical transformations of the state and Roma leadership: old and new meanings and practices**

The previous chapter discussed the different historical trajectories of the two Roma groups, their relations with the state and interactions with the transformations in the sphere of the economy. This chapter focuses on an important theoretical and methodological aspect of my analysis of power brokers' relations and practices, which link different power levels and their manifestations. The Roma leaders often acted as brokers, connecting or mediating between the Roma communities and two different sources of state power: socialist apparatuses of control and surveillance and post-socialist governance and social integration apparatuses. Distinct forms of mediation performed by Caldarar and Romanianized Roma leaders created various forms of Roma subjection to a changing state power structure that generated further socioeconomic and political constraints and opportunities for the two Roma groups discussed.

The Roma leadership in Costesti does not comprise a stable, homogeneous category. As this chapter shows, it comprises a diverse, unstable, fluid relation between the Roma leaders and state, politics, and patronage actors. Under socialism, both Romanianized Roma and Caldarar leaders were informal, with roles adapted to the social organization of their Roma group. During the state enforced sedentarization of 1960s, a part of the Caldarar leadership was co-opted as *Securitate* collaborators - the socialist state's main apparatus of repression and control. The *Securitate* aimed at protecting the Communist Party's achievements and it continually sought to extend its network of informers and collaborators into every domain of activity (education, commerce and industry, health, culture, politics etc.). Collaborators were appointed to collect information about all those acting against the ruling party, to work with local police and persecute so called 'conspirators'. In relation to the Caldarars, the socialist state wanted to seize their gold, as the private accumulation of gold was illegal. The *bulibasi* who signed up with the *Securitate* were expected to provide information about Caldarars possessing large amounts of gold. This chapter argues, amongst other things, that their activity and collaboration

with the state apparatus of control produced critical transformations in the institution of the Caldarars' leadership (*bulibasa*) and in its meanings. These transformations in the institution of leadership resemble to some extent the changes in traditional chiefdoms which occurred in former African colonial states, when colonial governments co-opted 'traditional' leaders from rural areas into their administration (Bennett 2004; Keulder 2010; Miller 1968; Murray 2004). A number of the local African chiefs agreed to support the administration and received "local administrative and court responsibilities" (Miller 1968: 189). This was a colonial administrative mechanism used to build colonial states (Ray 2003) and govern extended rural areas. However, in the Romanian case, the socialist state was less preoccupied with the social governance of Caldarars. Rather it was interested in seizing their private possessions and confining their economic activities and restricting their mobility.

In colonial Africa, the reconfiguration and absorption of indigenous forms of polity into colonial rule was made using customary law enforced by the *local chiefs*, who had extensive coercive powers over local populations (Keulder 2010). Similarly, in Romania, during socialism, the *bulibasi*, were given coercive powers over the Caldarar groups and were empowered by the state as the main leaders of settled communities<sup>69</sup>. However, unlike the *colonial chiefs*, the *bulibasi* formed no part of the socialist state's administration and were not officially paid for their informal positions.

In post-socialism, following EU directives, the Romanian government initiated social inclusion projects as part of the larger 'Roma decade 2005-2015' program<sup>70</sup>. As part of the social inclusion strategy for Roma, in 2007 the government

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<sup>69</sup> When talking about *bulibasa* Iancu in socialism, the Caldarars alternatively used terms like 'security officer' and 'communist boss'.

<sup>70</sup> "The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 is an unprecedented political commitment by European governments to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of the Roma. The Decade is an international initiative that brings together governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, as well as Romani civil society, to accelerate progress toward improving the welfare of the Roma and to review such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way. The Decade focuses on the priority areas of education, employment, health, and housing, and commits governments to take into account the other core issues of poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming." <http://www.romadecade.org/about>

formalized and developed a parallel form of governance and a network of Roma experts and mediators for public institutions in all localities with large Roma populations<sup>71</sup>. The project aimed at improving relations between Roma communities and public institutions and implementing the state program of social integration for Roma communities.

The Roma mediators have specific roles related to education, police/public order, health and they connect institutions to communities. The second category of leaders formed by the Roma Decade is the Roma expert and comes closer to the understanding of brokerage and representation of state inside the Roma communities. Roma experts engage in mediation with local public institutions and are expected to implement the government's social inclusion strategy at the local and regional level. These days, both Romanialized Roma and Caldarars' forms of leadership are split between 'established' leaders who perform their roles of mediation and representation in an informal way, and Roma experts who work for the local council and are part of the state programs of social integration. This relative formalization of the Roma leadership was accepted by some informal leaders, but rejected by others. Furthermore, as part of the strategy, the government built a complex infrastructure of governance and communication involving both informal leaders and Roma experts, who are part of regional/county level joint working groups (JWGs), local initiative groups (LIGs), and local working groups (LWGs)<sup>72</sup>. Generally, the groups include representatives of local public institutions (e.g. mayors, deputy-mayors, teachers, doctors, lawyers and police officers), local council members and representatives from NGOs. Regular meetings are organized and all leaders are

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<sup>71</sup> [Formarea rețelei naționale a experților locali romi, mecanism de sprijin în implementarea măsurilor de incluziune socială a romilor, grup vulnerabil suspus excluziunii sociale](http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/proiecte_pdf/2275.pdf) [The formation of a national network for local Roma experts, a mechanism to support the implementation of measures for the Roma social inclusion, a vulnerable group exposed to social exclusion]. Source: Romanian Government, the National Agency for Roma population, [http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/proiecte\\_pdf/2275.pdf](http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/proiecte_pdf/2275.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> See Governmental Strategy for the Inclusion of Romanian Citizen Belonging to the Roma Minority for (2012-2020), 2011.

invited to participate. All the local Romanianized Roma and Caldarar leaders in the county are supervised by a regional Roma expert, Corina Sotu, a Romanianized Roma woman from the Sotu family of fiddlers. These meetings, facilitated by the government, between leaders and public institutions produced changes in the Romanianized Roma and Caldarars' informal leadership. In addition, the post-socialist informal economy and local forms of clientelism and patronage served to facilitate the continuous transformation of Roma forms of leadership.

Different forms of Romanianized Roma and Caldarars' leadership became an expression of the variation in the relations that Roma leaders progressively established with a multitude of actors from different spheres of power struggle, especially with state and political actors. In this chapter I explore these multiple and sometimes contradictory relations. The next section provides a brief examination of the Caldarar and Romanianized Roma leaders in Costesti and neighboring villages Liveni and Moroieni under socialism and post-socialism.

### **Different leaders and forms of leadership in Costesti**

In the first years of socialism, from late 1940s to 1960s, when the state had no clear policy of assimilating Gypsies, the Caldarar leaders were the product of their community organization. They were *bulibasi* traveling with their groups and had the role of settling everyday disputes and negotiating interactions with local authorities in the places where they used to camp. These mobile groups did not have a lot of contact with each other and were autonomous in their forms of socio-political organization. However, links between groups were created through marriage<sup>73</sup>. The *bulibasi* of different groups knew each other and cooperated but without this having any effect on the groups' hierarchies and leadership.

From the 1960 onwards, the socialist state initiated a coercive program of sedentarization for nomadic Roma, including the Caldarars. Many groups and leaders settled in Costesti and neighboring villages (Liveni and Moroieni). In Costesti, Iancu,

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<sup>73</sup> The Caldarars always looked for marriage partners from other Caldarar groups and that provided an opportunity to meet and establish kinship relations (horizontal) with other mobile Caldarar groups.

one of the Caldarar leaders, was co-opted and agreed to collaborate with the *Securitate*. His aim was to get the necessary support for a position of authority over all the groups settled in Costesti, which, at that time, had different *bulibasi*. On the other hand, the *Securitate* was interested in getting information about the possession of gold by the Caldarars and in seizing it. Thus, *bulibasa* Iancu often provided information and assisted the police in raids against Caldarar families. He was able to impose himself as the main leader for the settled Caldarar community in Costesti, part of which continued to travel in small groups organized by other *bulibasi*. However, the *bulibasi* of small groups became subordinate to *bulibasa* Iancu who was recognized as the main 'boss'.

In Liveni, a neighbouring village, Traian was the main *bulibasa*, while in Moroieni the most powerful position went to Ionel Torea's father. Both were collaborators with Securitatea. While supporting some Caldarar families, they assisted in the persecution and harassment of others they considered to be acting against their own interests. The *bulibasi* from Moroieni and Liveni considered that Iancu from Costesti had the most power and their decisions were often subject to his influence.

In interviews and informal conversations I had with Caldarars and former socialist authorities Iancu was portrayed as a man who was prepared to use his influence against even those prosecutors who opposed his actions.

R: 'Bulibasul' had unlimited powers, I can't say powers on life and death over his community members, but anyway... He had the power to say: 'Hey you! The police want to see you. Follow me to the post'. He was called in whenever there was any litigation. When two families had a quarrel they would ask bulibasa to help them. (Racov, former head of police in Costesti).

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C: Was Iancu working for the police?

I: My understanding is that he defended his Gypsies who had problems during their travels. On the one hand, he helped them. On the other, he disclosed information about them and asked them for bribes, to keep Gypsies out of the hands of the police. One day he beat up a prosecutor. His nephew killed a man in a car crash. Iancu went to the hospital and he beat up the prosecutor who was there (interrogating Iancu's sibling).

C: Why did he beat him up?

I: He just had power to do that then. (Ioader Candel, Romanianized Roma informal leader).

Racov, former police officer in chief in Costesti, suggests that *bulibasa* Iancu was able to act with all the authority and impunity of the police, being able to force Caldarars to comply with his orders, which were often illegitimate. When Racov says “*bulibasa* had unlimited powers”, he is referring to Iancu’s ability to threaten Caldarar families with action by the police as he pleased. In an interview, *bulibasa* Traian from Liveni confirmed that he had acted in similar ways against the Caldarars in Liveni. He claimed that Iancu would incriminate Caldarars for no reason and send them to the police station merely in order to demonstrate that he was backed by the power of the Securitate.

In the second interview fragment, Ioader Candel suggests that Iancu acted within dual frameworks of power. On one hand, he was empowered to lead the Caldarar community and help them in their dealings with the regional police when needed. On the other hand, he was subject to the security services’ power and was therefore expected to provide information about the Caldarars who possessed gold. However, as Ioader Candel suggests, *bulibasa* Iancu could challenge and overrule local/regional police officers’ decisions to imprison Gypsies prosecuted for informal trade. He could also use violence, not only against his community, but also against people from the institutions of the socialist state (e.g. prosecutors).

These observations identify further similarities between the Caldarar *bulibasi* under socialism and traditional political leadership in colonial Africa. Colonial leaders were given “extensive powers, especially power of coercion” (Keulder 2010: 150) over populations. Adopting administrative colonial positions, “many traditional leaders transformed themselves from custodians of their people into custodians of the colonial order” (Keulder 2010: 151) and became ‘*local despots*’ (Mamdani 1996). Similarly under socialism, the main Caldarar *bulibasi* performed the role of local despots and informal Security officers.

Under post-socialism, the leadership changed dramatically. In Costesti, the aging *bulibasa* Iancu lost his support from the security services and his authority over the Caldarars. In the 1990s, the Caldarars started businesses and some of them



got rich. The new rich, including Leonard, Iancu's son started claiming the role of *bulibasa*. Leonard fulfills only a limited version of his father's role. He mediates between community and local police in matters of local fighting or disputes, but he is not always recognized as a legitimate mediator by some Caldarar families, nor does he occupy the same kind of privileged position with the authorities that his father had. The other two competitors – Razar and Sterea - come from rich rival families connected to Iancu through kinship ties (marriages between their children or nephews). Razar is the son of a former Caldarar *bulibasa* of a small mobile group who accepted Iancu's collaboration with the Securitate under socialism. Sterea is considered by many Caldarars in Costesti to be the richest Gypsy and the most successful businessman. As the other Caldarar *bulibasi*, Sterea acts as a broker for political parties and persuades the Caldarars to vote for one party or another during elections. In Liveni, Traian, former collaborator of Security services, is still a *bulibasa*, but with dramatically diminished authority over Caldarars. He is in competition with another Caldarar family which claims the leading position. Traian is also a Pentecostal convert enjoying very good relations with the Gypsy believers in Costesti.

In Moroieni, where the Caldarars did not become as rich as in Costesti or Liveni, Ionel Torea, the son to a former *bulibasa*, became a Roma expert with the local council, mediating between the Caldarars' queries and the local council in matters of papers, social benefit applications etc. As previously mentioned, all these leaders have known each other since the time of socialism, and often come into contact with each other at meetings organized by the government.

Corina Sotu, the Romanianized Roma woman who oversees the other leaders of the region, is originally from Costesti. However, while talking with Romanianized Roma about leadership in their community, almost all of them told me that they never had leaders. The members of the Sotu family, who acted for a considerable period as mediators with the local council, are not generally considered as legitimate leaders. However, their conception of leadership is the Caldarars' *bulibasa*: "We do not have leaders, we do not have *bulibasi* like the Caldarars do". Rather they suggest they just had mediators. Today there are two Romanianized Roma from the Sotu family who claim to be local leaders in Costesti: Ioader Candel and Dinica Sotu.

Dinica Sotu is Corina Sotu's brother and Ioader Candel is her cousin. While under socialism Ioader Candel used to organize seasonal work at state farms in the neighboring villages, Dinica Sotu was a regionally well-known fiddler.

Nevertheless the development of the Romanianized Roma leadership took shape after 1989, when the Roma were recognized by the state as a minority and allowed to set up NGOs, which could also function as political parties<sup>74</sup> and participate in elections. In the early 1990s, the Roma Party developed a nationwide network of activists. The Roma Party representatives were more or less informally appointed at each administrative level<sup>75</sup>.

Upon Viorica's recommendations, the Sotu family became the informal representatives of the Roma Party in Costesti. On the other hand, in an interview, Ioader Candel claimed that he was elected by the Romanianized Roma themselves, who chose him in an informal vote at a large meeting in the local stadium. Ioader told me that the crowd refused to accept his relative and partner Dinica Sotu then. However, Dinica did not comment on the event and merely mentioned his collaboration with Ioader in matters of institutional mediation on behalf of the Romanianized Roma community, before his appointment as a Roma expert for the council. At some point they both ran for a position of local councilor for the Roma Party. However, only Dinica Sotu, supported by his sister Viorica, was elected councilor for 4 years.

In 2005, when the government started the Roma expert program, Dinica Sotu undertook a period of training. In 2007 he became a local Roma expert in Costesti, based at the local council, in the social work office. The position was funded by the central government between 2007 and 2013, with the intention to be transferred to the local council. Dinica, as a local Roma expert, is expected to represent and

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<sup>74</sup> To be officially registered, political parties need a large number of members. Like other small Roma organizations, the Roma Party did not succeed in collecting the required number of signatures and established itself as an NGO. For this reason the government allowed the Roma NGOs to act as political parties.

<sup>75</sup> Details of the post-socialist transformations in the Roma politics are discussed in the Chapter on local level politics.

mediate on behalf of all Gypsies in Costesti (including the Caldarars). However, he rarely visits the Caldarars' district, which is under the *bulibasi* control. However, he is known by both Roma groups as the 'local council man'.

In the meantime, Ioader undertook a police mediators' training course and he considers himself to be a Roma mediator with the local police. However he principally acts as an informal leader. The Romanianized Roma recognize both Dinica Sotu and Ioader Candel as mediators, but not necessarily as legitimate Roma representatives or their leaders.

## Questions and theoretical references

The roles of Roma leaders within socialism and post-socialism show no clear-cut distribution and classification of leadership forms among the two Roma groups. These forms of leadership are produced in interaction with transformations in state governance (*Securitate* under socialism, the government's Roma expert and mediator networks under post-socialism), politics (the Roma Party's need for local representativeness), informal economy (the Caldarars' businesses) and religious discursive practices (authority transfers from *bulibasa* to God<sup>76</sup>).

Arising from these observations, the questions this chapter seeks to answer are:

*How did these interactions between Roma leaders and the transformations and contestations within the spheres of power, especially the state, constitute or alter the forms of Roma leadership?*

*How did the state's attempts to reorganize and integrate Roma groups through formalized networks of leaders transformed the Romanianized Roma and Caldarars' forms of leadership, their practices and meanings?*

*How did these transformations in Roma leadership from socialism to post-socialism produce the Gypsies' subjection to state power?*

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<sup>76</sup> Transformations in the Caldarars' political leadership and its meanings are discussed in the last Chapter - on religion, empowerment and subjection to power.

Leadership has been conceived either as an individual entity or as a social-relational construction (Uhl-Bien 2006). The entity perspective individualizes action and conceives of individuals as entities somewhat separated from their environments. They also emphasise 'positions' and 'resources' 'owned' by two categories of actors related to each other through exchange: leaders and followers (Brower et al. 2000; Graen, Scandura 1987; Graen, Uhl-Bien 1991, 1995; Hollander 1978, 1979). From the same perspective, hierarchical and relational 'realities' are already organized 'out there', and are easy to represent (Dachler 1992; Hosking, Morley 1988). Social network theory can be considered an example of an entity-approach as it looks at individuals and their interactions as instruments for network enactment (Uhl-Bien 2006). It is a way of mapping social relationships "concerned with description (eg. who talks to whom, who is friends with whom) and taxonomy (eg. friendship network, advice network, ego network) of relational links (...) rather than [with] how relational processes emerge and evolve" (Uhl-Bien 2006: 660).

On the other hand, the relational approach sees the production of transformative power in relations and emphasises the capacity of relatedness (Uhl-Bien 2006; Pearce, Conger 2003; Pearce, Jay, Conger, Locke 2007). From this perspective, leadership is always shared, collaborative "with others for the construction of a particular understanding of relationships (...) [while] leaders and those with whom they interact are responsible for the kinds of relationships they construct together" (Dachler, Hosking 1995: 15). It is not a pre-established organizational reality, "but an emergent reflection of socially constructed realities in constant change" (Dachler 1992: 171). The relational constructionist approach (Meindl 1995) looks at leadership as a process in which both individuals and relationships undergo transformations (Hosking. 1988, 2000) in a historically and socially self-transforming environment (Uhl-Bien 2006).

An analysis of leadership as a process is less about "traits, behavioural styles, or identifying particular types of leaders or people management techniques" (Uhl-Bien 2006: 662), but from my viewpoint, it is rather about interactions between state/politics/economy transformations and the leaders' actions. It is a relation established between Roma leaders, state apparatuses of control and governance and communities through which "both collaborators and leaders are all doing leadership"

(Rost 1995: 133). Leadership is primarily a power relation for two reasons: 1) it releases power to transform the leaders' positions and actions through interactions with other leaders and political actors and 2) it has the capacity to produce empowerment and transformations in the Roma subjection to state power. Forms of Roma leadership, as power relations, transform themselves in interaction with post-socialist transformations in the state, economy and politics. In order to understand political leadership in the making (Dachler, Hosking 1995), my thesis incorporates historical and social dimensions into the constitution of dynamic relationships of power.

The dynamic between local state actors, Roma and central state/political leaders reveals further interesting similarities with the traditional and colonial leadership in African states. As Verdery and Chari (2009) suggested, post-socialism and post-colonialism provide a good empirical basis for extended analytical comparison.

During both colonialism and socialism, tradition was "used as a strategic resource" (Keulder 2010: 152) to give "rapid and recognizable symbolic form to developing types of authority and submission" (Hobsbawm, Rangers 1994: 237). However, the 'traditional' leader's authority is not necessarily connected to *tradition*, but to custom (Keulder 2010), which "does not preclude innovation and change up to a point, though evidently the requirement that it must appear compatible or even identical with precedent imposes substantial limitations on it." (Hobsbawm 1994: 2). Customs are not "real" or "invented" (Keulder 2010), but in continuously in a state of change and in communication with social, cultural, and political meanings and practices. In this sense, customary law was both "the mechanism to enforce the colonial order" and the "site of contestation and struggle" (Keulder 2010: 151) within which 'chiefs' accepted some colonial claims while rejecting others. Similarly, *bulibasa* was the Caldarars' traditional institution of leadership informed by customary forms of organization, which were altered and used by the socialist state as forms of control and oppression against their communities. In post-socialism, Romanianized Roma and Caldarar forms of leaderships were reconstituted and challenged by the post-socialist state through new parallel structures of governance (e.g. the Roma expert/mediator network). Roma leadership *as process and site of*

*struggles* fits well with these observations on the Caldarars and the Romanianized Roma forms of leadership.

The remaining parts of the chapter explore different forms of leadership, through individual interactions with historical transformations in the state and its programs of assimilation and social integration. The next section concentrates on the history of relations between Caldarars and the socialist state and the ways the institution of the *bulibasa* was transformed.

### **The Caldarars - socialist state encounters**

Until 1960s, the Caldarars were nomads, barely subjected to the control and identification mechanisms of the state. They were organized in small mobile groups under the guidance of an experienced Caldarar man able to deal with identification, documentation and authorization issues as they arose in various places of work and settlement. These customary leaders called *bulibasi* were part of the Caldarars' form of self-governance aimed at representing community needs in dealings with local authorities.

The 1960's sedentarization brought about a period of stability for governance and state control over the Caldarars. It was also the period during which all the Caldarar groups from Costesti came under *bulibasa* Iancu's control. Iancu was also the regional coordinator of all the other *main bulibasi* from neighbouring villages, who were, at their turn, collaborators with *Securitatea*. *The main bulibasi served as the channel by which oppression by the socialist state of Caldarar communities operated.* Nevertheless, the Caldarars continued to travel during the warm seasons, led by other *bulibasi* who had travelling responsibilities<sup>77</sup>, but less influence. The main *bulibasi* for the settled community – Iancu from Costesti, Traian from Liveni and Ionel Torea's father from Moroieni - were mostly 'sedentary'. They had given up travelling for work in favour of ruling multiple groups of Caldarars in the new settled communities.

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<sup>77</sup>They used to negotiate various issues with the local councils and police at the places where they travelled :their temporary settlement/camping, work matters, and taxes to be collected from them.

By entering into an exchange of power with *Securitate*, the Caldarar main *bulibasi* were both empowered and subjected to state power. They were primarily responsible for the Caldarars' subjection to the socialist state's surveillance and repression. Mateiescu George is one of the Caldarars from Costesti who, after 1960s, continued traveling around the country. He frequently experienced state oppression and *bulibasa* Iancu's control over his trade.

C: Who helped you when the police came?

G: He [the *bulibasa* for the mobile group] had been taking care of our tents as he was a *bulibasa* for our group. If someone else [from Cluj, for example] came to us, it wasn't the same – he couldn't do anything to protect us. For instance when I was caught by the regional police, they beat me and asked me where I was living, and with whom. Then, they went to the local police station to ask how many people were camping there and how much equipment they had with them. Our *bulibasa* [for the mobile group] begged the local police to intervene [and mediate] and asked them to understand that our people could not give any information about that.

C: What was then the difference between the leaders organizing the camping groups and those organizing the settled one?

G: The one organizing the camping supported us while the other one (*bulibasa* Iancu) supported the police. (Mateiescu George, Caldarar man, Costesti).

From George's statement it is clear that the *bulibasi* for mobile groups were those who acted on behalf of the Caldarars and supported their interests. Yet, *bulibasa* Iancu had better connections with the regional police, which was subordinated, as a Ministry of Interior institution, to the *Securitate*. The Caldarars' statements show that Iancu enforced the often violent rules of the state in his community, and that he provided information to the authorities about the Caldarars' identities. Documenting identity was not an easy job for the police. The Caldarars had the same surname: Mateiescu. To seize their gold, the police needed to collaborate with *bulibasa* Iancu, who disclosed the identities of those possessing gold. Large amounts of gold and work tools and equipment were thereby seized by the state.

The weakness of the links between the Caldarar *bulibasi* for *mobile groups* and the regional authorities often proved to be a disadvantage in the Caldarars' encounters with the police and administration. These leaders had good links with local institutions, but had no connections in the central and regional authorities. They

were less able to protect the Roma mobile groups. Mateiescu George and Mateiescu Alexandra, two other Caldarars from Costesti, told me about their vulnerability in relation to regional authorities who used to team up with *bulibasa* Iancu.

G: Even if a [local] mayor knew us, when we were caught by the regional police, the local police would refuse to honour the arrangement that they made with us, pretending that they didn't know anything about our presence: "We don't know when they arrived here". They used to seize our buckets, our tools; we were pushed into wagons and sent home. Our children were beaten, and then our wives, they came with dogs to search for us. We were sad, we lived in hard times. (Mateiescu George, Caldarar man)

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C: Was it possible to escape the police control by showing your trading license?

A: If you gave something to the mayor, you could get a paper, but it was only valid for that village. During Ceausescu's regime, we were severely punished. They confiscated our papers, everything they found on us. (Mateiescu Alexandra, Costesti).

As George and Alexandra suggest, the Caldarars always negotiated their activities with the local authorities (police officers and mayors). Yet, the man who could negotiate the issues was the *bulibasa* of the travelling group. The other people, lacking ID cards and birth certificates, were almost non-identifiable. The *bulibasa* for mobile groups was the legible and 'legal' actor. He always had an ID and was supposed to have a trading license too. Getting work permission for an area was however not sufficient for full protection in their relations with the regional authorities, who had the right to engage in unannounced controls and to seize gold and copper. *Bulibasa* Iancu was the only one who could resolve disputes and legal actions initiated by the regional police against the travelling Caldarars.

Although sharing some of the Caldarars' interests and sometimes rendering useful service, this new form of leadership tended towards a distant and non-democratic form of governance of the Caldarars. However, the *main bulibasi* received significant support from their own communities who were many times protected from the state violent actions. As Bennett (2004) argued in the case of colonial Africa, the chiefs who acted against the community's interests were



repudiated. So in order to maintain their positions, *main bulibasi* had to address their community's problems.

On the other hand, the less influential travelling *bulibasi* had more flexible relations with their fellow Caldarar tradesmen and generally developed a more democratic form of governance. *Bulibasi* for traveling groups were *customary* inheritors. Their power stemmed from their good relations with their communities. From this perspective, the Caldarars customary leadership was a genuine form of self-governance undermined by collaboration between *main bulibasa* Iancu and Securitatea and state police. The next section goes into the details of the controversial relationship between *bulibasa* Iancu, the state surveillance services, and the other Caldarars.

### **The expansion of the Caldarar leaders' power via the state's surveillance networks**

In most cases, the collaboration with the security services was an exchange between the main Caldarar *bulibasi* interested in strengthening their power and the socialist state interested in the Gypsies' gold. In this sense, this form leadership can be considered relational: "it assumes the existence of some people who follow one or more others (...) [it] is about influence, so it is social by its very nature." (Pearce, Conger, Locke 2007: 287). Traian, the *bulibasa* from Liveni, offered me an interesting account on his subjection to socialist authorities.

C: What was the advantage from your collaboration with *Securitatea*?

T: It was good because they used to help you. If you wanted to help someone who was arrested they were ready to free him. If it was about someone in jail, they lightened his sentence. If it wasn't a serious accusation, a theft or fight, we used to go to the prosecutor and the head of police would intervene and say: 'We'll let him off'.

C: Which policeman? At the county-level?

T: Yes, someone from the regional level. They were lieutenants, assistant-lieutenants. They arranged everything and told me: 'Traian, you bring us 3 golden coins if you don't want your Gypsy to spend 2 years in jail'. He would give the gold to the police officer and then go to the prosecutor to declare that the Gypsy had donated some gold. And immediately they would release him.

C: Where did the gold go?

T: It was sent to the state bank and the police officer to a higher position”  
(Traian, *bulibasa* Liveni).

In the conversation I used the term ‘collaboration’ to refer to many of the statements made by Caldarars suggesting a twofold meaning to the relationship, which produced both violence against Gypsies, but also some support for them in the conflicts with the regional police. For Traian and Iancu, the ‘collaboration’ meant a form of partnership in actions like the identification of Caldarar families and gold seizure.

My interview with Traian reveals exchanges of favours between the socialist state and *bulibasa*. Police officers and prosecutors represent here the state’s pragmatic interest in the Caldarars’ gold, but also its ideological commitment to capturing and transforming individual property into collective property. The gold was not appropriated by police officers, prosecutors or governmental representatives, but taken to the state bank as the collective property of the socialist state. In order to seize their gold, the police used to raid the Caldarar settlements quite regularly. For each forced “gold donation”, the Caldarars had receipts<sup>78</sup> confirming the transfer to the state. In this context, *bulibasa* Traian was interested in strengthening his leadership and developing good relations with both the state and the Caldarars. The Caldarars who were fined or even imprisoned for trading copper needed Traian’s support to obtain their release. In all these exchanges, usually paid in gold, all the participants (*bulibasa*, police officers, Caldarars) received some “advantage”.

However, the exchange between *bulibasa* and the Caldarars was quite unequal as the leader received protection and support from authorities, while the Caldarars were supported selectively by Traian. Those who had good relations with their main ‘*bulibasa*’ and had enough gold to offer were more likely to get protection. The others were often harassed. Thus, the state acted as a violent actor against the Caldarars through practices mediated by main *bulibasi* in an unequal power relationship. Nevertheless, Traian considers that he was able to support his

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<sup>78</sup> According to my respondents, the papers stated how much gold was seized, the name of the ‘donor’ and the date of collection.

fellows more during socialism than in post-socialism, when he lost his connections with the security services.

C: What about your actions? Were the Gypsies unhappy with them?

T: At that time, I was able to help them. Now there is not so much choice, they can be imprisoned anyway. It was the police who kept you in your position as *bulibasa*. When they came to ask 'who Ion Mateiescu is' - as we have 100 people here named Ion Mateiescu - they went to my place for me to get me to give them the information needed. (Traian, *bulibasa* Liveni)

Traian's statement indicates that 'the help' given to Caldarars was manufactured as part of a planned exchange with the police. The socialist state manipulated a double form of violence: 1) the visible/open coercion and physical abuse and 2) the symbolic power (Bourdieu 1989), its ability to manufacture 'services', empowerment for *bulibasi* and 'support' for common Caldarars. However, while the main *bulibasi* lost large parts of their legitimacy in their communities, the Caldarars lost their gold and much of their ability to govern themselves was subject to continual alteration.

It is important to note that the *bulibasa's* double game strengthened his domination and control over Caldarars. Most Caldarars I have talked to emphasised both the negative and positive aspects of Traian and Iancu's actions. They talked about both fear and appreciation in relation to the main *bulibasi*. These accounts raise the question from where did the main *bulibasa's* authority come from: the Caldarar community or the state apparatuses? The partial restoration of the leaders' legitimacy was produced through the socialist state's manufactured 'help', which explains why the Caldarars portrayed Traian in Liveni and Iancu in Costesti as both good and bad. Traian's statements confirm further his dual position and shared form of leadership with the socialist state.

C: You said that police maintained you as *bulibasa*...

T: Yes, the police, but the Gypsies did too. If the Gypsies would have rejected me as *bulibasa*... that would have not happened because the police supported my position... If you were a *bulibasa*, you were in the service of the state. (...)

C: When you had to intervene in a local fight did you go alone?

T: Yes, I used to go alone. There were not so many involved.

C: Were not you afraid?

T: I was not afraid because I had someone to support me. I had the telephone number of the general police in Bucharest and I had a paper certifying that I was a gold collector. (Traian, *bulibasa* Liveni)

It is clear that main *bulibasi* were not only simple collaborators, but also gold collectors with clear responsibility in relation with the police. His role was certified by a document that strengthened his authority in relation to both police officers and the Caldarar community. The Caldarars were expected to submit to his orders. At other times, this document was a source of threat for those who opposed his actions. The official paper can be interpreted as an evidence of the legalized theft the socialist state used to practice with the support of community leaders. The Caldarar leaders and the state apparatuses of control played, more or less informally, a violent power game encroaching upon Roma individuals' rights.

Many stories coming from Caldarars, institutional representatives and the *bulibasi* themselves portrayed the main principal *bulibasi* (e.g. Iancu, Traian) as aggressors who used their connections to state institutions to obtain personal advantage and seek revenge. *Bulibasa* Traian told me the way he used to make abuse of the mechanisms of control in order to maintain and strengthen his leadership position.

T: If someone annoyed me, I used to call the police to get him, even at night. In the morning he would already have been taken by the police. It was a kind of revenge... I was bad - I beat all the Gypsies [Caldarars] because they were not paying the electricity bills, because they were stealing. They were all afraid of me... I used to tell the police about their gold. I was an informer, I was a boss... That wasn't good for Gypsies but they (the *bulibasi*) have always done both good and bad things altogether. (Traian *bulibasa* Liveni)

Traian reflects back on his actions and repudiates and distances himself from his former leadership self constituted by socialist security services. He offers a remorseful portrayal of his previous form of leadership, shared with the *Securitatea*. He regretfully considers that his former actions, arising from pressure by the security services, affected his leadership position and authority in post-socialism. From these reasons he refers critically at his former leadership self as 'informer' and 'boss'. His self-reflexive narrative suggests the destructive character of the empowerment which gave him the *power to exercise violence* against the members of his own community. This form of *destructive empowerment* did not only affect the main *bulibasa's*

legitimacy, but also dehumanized his sense of belonging to a community, his sense of responsibility and his awareness of his actions against his fellows.

Similar to Traian, Iancu from Costesti was well connected to the Ministry of Interior and he supported the traveling Caldarars from Costesti arrested for illegal commerce in other localities. The manufactured 'help' was paid by the Caldarars in gold which was "donated" to the state. Leonard, one of the present *bulibasi* in Costesti, portrays his father's actions in terms of personal power and the capacity to overrule and negotiate with the authority of the socialist state.

L: Everyone knew him. The police knew him. When Gypsies had problems in another county the police would call him and he would fix the problem. When he opened his mouth, the Gypsies [the Caldarars] listened to him (...). During Ceausescu, everything was restrictive. It happened once that some Gypsies were caught by police, tied up with wire and forced to donate gold. He [Iancu] brought the police to the old district where the Gypsies lived, and they started to beat them: 'Give me 10 pieces of gold otherwise I won't stop beating you'. My father didn't agree with this treatment. In the meantime, other Gypsies grabbed a policeman and beat him. My father received a call from the Goteni police, that one of their policemen was being lynched by Caldarars. He released the policeman and asked the police officers to release the Gypsies arrested in Focsani for illegal trading. (Leonard, Iancu's son, *bulibasa* in Costesti)

Leonard suggests that his father not only controlled and abused his community, but also negotiated the state's violence against Caldarars. Iancu, as a regional Caldarar leader, coordinated the activity of the *bulibasi* for traveling groups. His control over the expanded network of *bulibasi* made him a valuable connection for the police interested in seizing large quantities of gold from the Caldarar traveling groups ruled by different *bulibasi*. In this exchange, Iancu was able to negotiate with the state and give support to Caldarars. The supervision of the *bulibasi* network also produced Iancu's access to significant power to negotiate his subjection to the state demand for control and surveillance of his community.

The socialist need to patronize and capture individual properties and assets introduced the Caldarar main *bulibasi* to the higher power structures where the secret police, central state representatives and local authorities were formally and informally connected. Regional and central authorities produced *bulibasa* Iancu and *bulibasa* Traian's powers as commanders over the Caldarar mobile groups. On the

other hand, these interactions and communications with the police state disturbed and transformed their selfhood, belonging, and legitimacy as leaders, and damaged their community's customary forms of self-governance based on mobility and representativeness (the *bulibasa* as institution). Rather than an individual asset, these leaders' power was produced both by their 'collaboration' with Securitatea and their support given to Caldarars. The main *bulibasi* performed leadership in a dynamic relation with opposing actors, and oscillated between support for their community and the enforcement of state rule.

Therefore, Caldarar leadership was constituted by contradictory relations, which had the character of a power struggle, within which the leader was one of the main actors. *Power struggles defined the Caldarars' customary forms of leadership as a power relation continuously transformed through its main actors' performances that changed and redefined the bulibasa's institution under socialism. The bulibasi for traveling groups became less and less important and visible for their communities and state authorities, and in time lost their leadership roles. The socialist state centralized the Caldarars' leadership and their actions became the new focus for the institution of the bulibasa, which is currently a site of contestation by Caldarars.*

### **Post-socialist Caldarar forms of leadership: from centralization to multiplicity and loss of authority**

The centralized production of repression dissolved after 1989. The state's withdrawal from the economy and politics brought rapid transformations and unpredictable socioeconomic changes (the emergence of a new sector of informal economy, inflation, unstable markets, and corruption and patronage politics) which transformed the Caldarars' forms of leadership, their claims and their meanings. Caldarars, no longer forced "to donate" gold to the state, did not need the *bulibasa's* "support" services. On the other hand, many Caldarars got wealthy and had no interest in following a leader who might serve to limit their authority.

No longer supported by the authorities, the main Caldarar *bulibasi* have largely lost their authority and legitimacy in relation to all members of their community. Power, no longer centralized by the state, was shared with other Roma

leaders (both Romanianized Gypsies and Caldarars) and mediated by the local patronage politics (the mayor and deputy-mayor's political interests). The 'despotic' rule of the Caldarar *bulibasi* ended. The *bulibasa* slowly became a peaceful mediator of community problems, positioned in a loose relationship to local and regional public institutions. Members of the Caldarar community made the comparison between aggressive socialist leaders and new ones who seem no longer as important and influential as they had been. Without representing one or the other, the Caldarar *bulibasi* reached a balance between the support offered to their community, on one hand, and to state authorities on the other. Traian from Liveni told me about his experience of losing his authority.

C: How was *bulibasa* after 1990?

T: It wasn't the same as during Ceausescu. He was much stronger then... He had good relations with the state and police and everyone was afraid of him... Now Gypsies expect you not to disclose any information about them. When there was such a thing as *bulibasa*, there was more authority [for the leader]. Gypsies and even the police officers were afraid... Now if you want to complain... Where can you do that? When you wanted to do that, before, you went to Bucharest or the prefecture and they came to investigate. *If you want to be bulibasa for your people you need to be useful. But how can you work in this way without denouncing your Gypsies?* I am *bulibasa* but I no longer have the authority to send a Gypsy to jail.

C: Is it important to have a lot of money and houses to become a *bulibasa*?

T: To become a *bulibasa* you need to support both the police and the Gypsies. Since I became a Pentecostal I stopped harming people. My *bulibasa* position is now lost. (Traian, *bulibasa* Liveni)

Traian's statement shows the contradictory workings of the *destructive empowerment* produced by the state: being able to do harm in order to 'help', restore what was damaged, and then to be able to harm again. As many Caldarars suggested, the *bulibasi* had the power to do good and bad things altogether. Without support from the authorities, the main *bulibasi* would have not been able to pass on information about Caldarars, or to send them to prison. They would have neither been able to offer support for the evil done nor to restore their legitimacy undermined by acting as an agent of state violence. This shows that in socialism, the power of the Caldarars'

main *bulibasi* was produced by the way they enforced state violence, which created a space for them to perform the manufactured “help”.

In his last sentences, Traian suggests that in so far as he is not able to support the police and produce harm in order to “help”, he is no longer able to be a *bulibasa*. Also, his ‘lost’ much criticized position, has been replaced by a religious discourse of reconciliation inspired by the practice of Pentecostalism. It is also interesting here to notice that Traian does not discuss the functionality and legitimacy of *bulibasa* as an institution of customary leadership practiced before 1960s. For Traian and Ioader, the *bulibasi* for traveling groups had little or no power because they only handled small mobile group problems and were not able to exercise or control state violence against Caldarars. During socialism, the role of *bulibasa* in representing the community, and legitimized by the community, was replaced by the state’s violent control, which proved to be considered a more powerful source of leadership based on the direct subordination of the Caldarars.

Immediately after 1989, the state weakened its control apparatuses over Gypsies. The Caldarar *bulibasi* had to find new ways of preserving or reinventing their authority and legitimacy. Traian and Iancu started to get involved in the state's reparation and restitution of seized gold. They continued their collaboration with high-level state representatives and this time both the Caladarars and their leaders had some benefits. *Bulibasa* Traian narrated the story of the restitution of gold to the Caldarars.

C: After 1989 you continued your links with the police?

T: Yes, as we gave the gold back to the Gypsies. After the revolution me, Iancu, King Adrian [the self entitled king of the Gypsies] from Cornesti went to Bucharest for a week. We knew the people whose gold had been confiscated. We then stayed a month in Goteni and took all the Gypsies’ gold back to the village. I would be lying if I didn't say that the Gypsies always gave us something in exchange. Those who received the gold back gave us 2,000-3,000 lei. And even now - if I do a good thing for a Gypsy I can't cannot say that he doesn't give me 1,000-2,000 RON for that. I do not ask for cash anymore. When I was a *bulibasa* and a Gypsy asked me to get him out of jail, I demanded 5,000 RON in exchange. From that I gave 3,000 to the policemen, and the rest of 2,000 was mine. It was a bonus and he was happy that I had helped him. (*bulibasa* Traian , Liveni)



After 1989, the exchanges of favors between *bulibasi* and their communities continued but the level of inequality diminished due to the absence of authoritarian state institutions. Traian suggests that Caldarars offered money to *bulibasi* when they needed their support in matters of mediation with the police. However, after 1989, many Caldarars chose to deal directly with the state institutions and rely less on the *bulibasa's* ability to mediate with the local and regional authorities. Through informal economic practices and through new religious practices they strived to become independent from any external form of power (e.g. leaders).

In Costesti, Leonard took over the main responsibilities from Iancu, his father, and continued to mediate at a lower level between the local council and police. However, the institution of *bulibasa* is now much more locally based and is being challenged by other wealthy Caldarars. In Costesti, there are three people who all claim the same leadership position: Leonard (Iancu's son), Razar, and Sterea. They all collaborate with the local authorities but lack the necessary legitimacy from the Caldarars who think that "they claim to be *bulibasi*, but no one appointed them so" and "they are *bulibasi* for themselves". In addition, *bulibasi* themselves consider that the *bulibasa's institution* is dying, being challenged by the new relation towards the transformed state institutions. For example, Leonard considers no longer appropriate support to the police and provide information about Caldarars engaged in informal economic practices.

C: What's changed for the *bulibasa* now?

L: Now they all have money and do whatever they want. It is very different now.

C: Were they afraid before?

L: Yes, they were because the police forced them to hand over gold and every week someone would ask my father for help. Now it is different - they only come to me when there is a scandal or something. I only get involved in minor issues - I can't help with serious problems. If some of them fight and injury others, I can't secure their release from jail.

C: How many claim they are *bulibasi* in the Caldarars' district?

L: My father was a *bulibasa* but now others claim that they are '*bulibasa*' too. Whenever I go anywhere I don't tell anyone that I am a *bulibasa*, I just introduce myself as Mateiescu Leonard. If I go to the police, they know me, but if I go to somebody else who does not know me I would not tell them: 'You know who I am? I am *bulibasa*.' I don't have to praise myself. Nobody pays me for that. (*bulibasa* Leonard, Costesti)

Similar to Traian, Leonard suggests that he cannot offer manufactured “help” any longer. Neither can he overrule local authorities’ decisions and secure the release of someone from jail. For these reasons, Leonard said he cannot claim he is a *bulibasa*. He even avoids using the term, which is associated by Caldarars with socialist state violence. Moreover, the *bulibasa* position is no longer legitimate in relation to both Caldarars and state authorities.

Razar, the main contender for a *bulibasa*’s position in Costesti, confirms that the old leadership terminology is no longer appropriate. He is a wealthy Caldarar who participates in the county level-meetings organized by the government and regional Roma expert Corina Sotu. His leadership claim was strengthened by the way he started to forge links with regional and central institutions (police, local council, the Roma Party, PSD local/regional/central representatives) in matters of community issues.

C: What does it mean for you means to be a *bulibasa*?

R: I call myself president.

C: Since when have you been a president?

R: I’ve been a president for the last 15 years. I do not like to be a *bulibasa*. That was during Ceausescu. Before 1989 we had no elections in Romania. Now we have started to have presidents, councilors, lots of types of things. I said I do not like *bulibasa* - I like ‘president’.

C: How do people refer to you?

R: They say I’m a representative, some call me on my mobile phone, others come directly to my house, and others find me at the local council.

C: Do you go often to the local council?

R: Yes, I go there and I act as a mediator between Romanians and Gypsies. The police also call me. (Razar, *bulibasa*, Costesti).

The definition of *bulibasa* underwent transformations due to the interactions with the new forms of state power. These days, the institution of *bulibasa* is associated with the security services and state violence, which substantially diminish its legitimacy and its symbolic capacity of showing the ruler’s power. In this context, it has acquired the aura of being an undemocratic form of governance, which is in contradiction with the transformation of the state and bureaucracy and its terminology. Razar’s use of ‘president’ and the new bureaucratic language reveals his attempt to gain a certain status in relation to the local authorities. However, none

of the local council bureaucrats and police officers takes his self-awarded title seriously. On the contrary, his statements are the target of their jokes and criticism. Given his low-level of formal education and his weak legitimacy among the Caldarars, they consider that the new vocabulary is entirely inappropriate.

Traian's, Leonard's and Razar's statements show the leaders' attempts to redefine their positions in relation with the state and community, and to explore alternative sources of authority and power. The meanings of leadership are deeply embedded in the leaders' practice of state violence and in their close 'collaboration' with the socialist state apparatuses. Leaders are now trying to distance themselves from the former meanings through different kinds of interactions with the restructured state and its newly devised democratic forms of governance aimed at Roma inclusion and development (e.g. meetings for Roma leaders, Roma experts and local/regional authorities organized by government).

Both the Caldarar and Romanianized Roma leaders, interested in developing and strengthening their leadership positions, have been involved formally and informally in the government's strategy of Roma integration (2005-2015). The lack of financial resources meant that local informal Roma leaders began to occupy positions of Roma experts and become paid state employees working for local councils or regional administrations. Roma expertise is not necessarily held by Gypsies who are members of a specific Roma community, but by those with modest resources obliged to work for and from within the state structures. Ionel Torea, Caldarar leader in Moroieni, and Dinica Sotu, Romanianized Roma in Costesti are Roma experts and relevant examples in this sense. The next section details their occupational histories and concentrates largely on two Romanianized Roma leaders – Dinica Sotu and loader Candel, and their relations with Romanianized Roma and the local authorities in Costesti.

### **The post-socialist state and the Romanianized Roma forms of leadership**

As already mentioned in the first section of this chapter, Dinica Sotu, a Romanianized Roma informal leader was helped by his sister Corina Sotu, a Roma

expert at the Goteni prefecture to become an expert for the local council in Costesti. He completed governmental training in 2005 and occupied his post in 2007. As a local Roma expert, he is expected to work with both Romanianized Roma and Caldarars, and link them in with local institutions. Nevertheless, as a Romanianized Roma himself, he is more involved with the Romanianized Roma issues. As a state employee, he gets paid by the central government and he is expected to implement locally the governmental strategy for Roma social inclusion.

The main four goals of the Roma expert program are: 1. “to increase the level of Roma representation in the structures of public administration for all 8 regions of Romania (...)”; 2. “the sustainable development of a national Roma expert network, which can support the implementation of measures for social inclusion (...)”; 3. “the development of the institutional capacity of the local public administration (...)”; 4. “facilitating the constitution of local working groups for the identification, organization, and implementation of actions that can lead to the socio-economic inclusion of Roma”<sup>79</sup>.

However, in the Roma expert program, the Roma experts’ role of representing the Roma communities’ needs and interests in the local public institutions is not discussed. Rather it is implied that the Roma experts are expected to mediate access and penetration of the state structures in the lives of the Roma. On the other hand, the Roma are expected to follow the state’s external form of governance. In this context, the Roma experts can be considered to be state representatives within Roma communities, rather than Roma representatives within state structures. Their official role and its implications trigger multiple difficulties for the Roma experts, who struggle to get recognition from their communities and be accepted as leaders.

Dinica supports the Romanianized Roma by solving their difficulties related to identification papers, health and education services. In the early 1990s he has been

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<sup>79</sup>See “The National Network of Local Romani Experts, Support Mechanisms in Implementing Social Inclusion Measures for Romani Minorities, a Vulnerable Group, Subject to Social Exclusion”- Project developed in partnership with the National Agency for Romani People, Romanian Government and funded by European Social Fund (ESF). Available at: [www.anr.gov.ro/docs/proiecte\\_pdf/2275.pdf](http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/proiecte_pdf/2275.pdf).

an informal leader and a Roma Party representative teaming up with the present informal leader Ioader Candel. As Dinica stated in an interview, his early leadership positions and actions were part of the Roma Party's national program for forming local action groups on Roma issues, a project initiated in the early 1990s by Nicolae Paun, president of the Roma Party.

C: When did you start to deal with Roma issues? Was it a question of being a Roma representative?

D: Since 1991. Yes, Mr Nicolae Paun organized us in teams and since then I have worked voluntarily for the local council. We were all members of the Costesti-Goteni team.

C: Were you a Roma Party member?

D: I was a member of the Alliance for Roma Unity and after a while I changed my membership to Roma Party. These are not proper political parties, but NGOs, and at some point, they amalgamated. They didn't collect sufficient numbers of signatures and that is why they are still NGOs. You know how Gypsies are. They do not want to see me as their boss, everyone would like to be in charge, and everyone would like to be a boss. So we get King Adrian with his supporters, Emperor Iodoran with his, Nicolae Paun with his followers. (Dinica Sotu, Roma expert, local council Costesti).

Dinica's statements show the weak representation and support for the Roma Parties and the limited political power of the Roma as an ethnic group.. I will show later in the thesis that Roma politics became almost non-existent under the patronage of the Romanian governing parties. In the early 1990s, Roma political options were unevenly distributed amongst stronger parties (e.g. PSD, PNL, PDL) and small Roma political organizations. The Romanianized Roma, who started to receive state benefits, and the Caldarars, who received their gold back, both supported PSD, the governing party at that time. As compared with the Hungarian minority's parties who always received support from the ethnic Hungarians and were always elected to the Romanian parliament, the Roma political parties, with minimal support from the Roma, remained in inchoate forms and never succeeded in getting into parliament. In the context of weak or almost nonexistent Roma politics, the local Roma Party representatives Dinica Sotu and Corina Sotu, with less financial resources, chose to work as Roma experts for the government, in the local and county councils respectively.

In Costesti, the Sotus are known as a respectable, well-off family. During socialism, they used to be renowned fiddlers. In this way, they differentiated themselves from other Romanianized Gypsies. After 1989, using their influence, they succeeded in securing key positions in the informal Roma political organization as Roma Party representatives. Corina is now the president of the Roma Party for the entire South-Eastern region, the president of Romani women at the county level, and the prefect's councillor on Roma issues. Her cousin, Ioader Candel, remained an informal Roma leader and a Roma Party representative. He ran for an official Roma Party councillor position at the local council with no success though. To strengthen his informal leadership in the Romanianized Roma community he trained to be a police mediator.

C: When you were working with Dinica at the local council, you did not have any salary

I: It was my ambition, I helped them with their houses during the floods, I petitioned at the prefecture for them, I helped them with everything, and Dinica won the place that was meant for me. All the mayors knew me and I knew how to deal with people...

C: Did you attend any training?

I: Yes, I went to mediator's training [police mediator] for a year. The last time we met in Cluj - we were 100 people and a part of them were from the Roma Party.

C: Who was there at the meeting?

I: Only big men, it was just me and somebody from Loreni who were on a lower level, the rest were lawyers, prosecutors etc.

C: Are you paid as a mediator?

I: No, absolutely not.

C: So how do you benefit from being a mediator?

I: Benefit? I gain honor in front of my people and I am requested [to mediate] everywhere. When the prosecutor asks, 'Who deals with the Roma here?', they say 'Ioader!'. 'Well, bring him here!' (Ioader Candel, Romanianized Roma informal leader).

Although not paid, both Dinica and Ioader have mediated between Romanianized Roma and local/regional institutions for a long time. Ioader considers that that main benefit of his informal position was the opportunity of getting into contact with 'important' people from public institutions: mayors, lawyers, police officers etc. In addition, he suggests that his actions were able to bring him authority among Romanianized Roma. When mentioning that Dinica won the position that was meant

for him, he refers to the Roma expert position now held by Dinica. To maintain his leadership role and to restore his authority among the Romanianized Roma, Ioader found new leadership roles as a police mediator. However, as mentioned in the Chapter on the informal economy, Ioader is not paid for his mediator's role<sup>80</sup> and he lives off informal economic practices<sup>81</sup>. Taking the position of police mediator, he tried to restore parts of his authority lost in competition, not necessarily against Dinica Sotu, but against the new position of Roma expert that swept away his main role as a mediator between community and local public institutions. However, with no secure source of income, Ioader found himself pushed into the informal economy, which is inconsistent with his police mediator's role. His role and its benefits are part of the same pattern of movement I identified for the Romanianized Roma in the sphere of informal economy: a *social navigation of local limited possibilities* transformed in this case by new governance structures (the Roma expert/mediator network)..

Ioader's contradictory performance shows how informal leaders, in their struggle for economic wealth and leadership, can act in conflicting spheres of power struggle (state versus the informal economy), a movement stimulated by the state's programs of expertise and mediation for local Roma communities. For these reasons, it can be considered that while Ioader Candel remained an informal leader, Dinica Sotu, as Roma expert, became a formal one.

Between 2000 and 2003, Dinica worked and was paid as a *school mediator* as part of the government project for Roma inclusion. New regulations were imposed and those with no high-school education were no longer eligible for the program. However, he decided to pass his position on to his daughter, and run instead for the position of a Roma Party local councilor. In 2004, supported by his sister Corina

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<sup>80</sup> Police mediators are not state employees, but state trainees. In addition, they do not represent the state. They mediate between police and community in matters of local conflicts and disputes. Unlike Roma experts, school and health mediators do not receive any salaries and are not paid by the government. See the "Report on implementation of Governmental Strategy for Roma situations within a year's implementation progress", The Minister of Public Information, Bucharest, 2002.

<sup>81</sup> Ioader mediates "illegal" firm-transfers between Caldarars and Romanianized Roma for cash.

Sotu, who convinced the Roma to vote for her brother, he was elected as a Roma Party councilor. He held this position until 2007, when the Roma expert network program was launched and gave him the opportunity for formal employment.

Dinica suggests that his abandoning local councillor position was determined by his poor economic condition. It is interesting to note that the modest financial condition of both Dinica and Ioader pushed them into opposite directions. While Ioader became an informal dealer between Caldarars and Romanianized Roma, Dinica became a Roma expert, a state representative. Both struggled for a paid form of leadership but only Dinica succeeded.

Dinica explained further the disadvantages that the Roma expert's position poses in terms of representing the Roma communities. After the 2009 presidential elections, significant cuts in social welfare benefits were made by the local council. All councilors, including the PSD representatives and a PSD Romanianized Roma local councilor were no longer interested in the Roma's votes and decided to re-evaluate social benefit applications and raise the threshold for informal day labor and household expenditure included in the calculations of the minimum guaranteed income. The Romanianized Roma, local state welfare recipients, were much affected. Dinica described his position in this situation.

D: I asked the mayor, 'Why did you reduce the number of social benefits?' and he replied: 'Dinica, it was not mine, but the councillors' decision'.

C: What would have happened if you had been a local councillor?

D: I would have shown them my fist.

C: But you resigned from your councillor's position...

D: Yes, I did, because I'm an old man and I have to get my pension, how am I supposed to live, otherwise? When I was councillor, Mr. Sorin Comsa [the village's administrator/patron] knows, I showed my fist and I did what I wanted. Cristian Sotu [another Romanianized Gypsy] who represents the Social Democrat Party in the local council should have refused to vote for lower social benefits for the Roma. I reproached him: 'Why didn't you raise your hand?' [against the local council decision]

Gypsies have nothing to reproach me with. I helped them get water and electricity in their district. I sent their children to school... This is my role. (Dinica Sotu, Romanianized Gypsy, Roma expert).

Dinica was not able to get involved in local decision, in so far as the Roma experts are state representatives and their roles are confined to mediation between local



authorities and the Roma community. On the other hand, Cristian Sotu, the PSD councillor, a Romanianized Roma himself, had no objections to local council decision and he supported his political party. Dinica suggested that while a Roma Party councillor has some control over decisions, a Roma expert has none. His change in position from being a Roma Party councillor to a Roma expert entailed a loss in his capacity to represent the interests of the Romanianized Roma community and participate in local council decision making. The Romanianized Roma themselves confirmed that Dinica is no longer a Roma representative, but a local council employee who cannot afford to do more than what his superiors (e.g. the administrator, mayor) say.

As Dinica stated, becoming an expert was an opportunity for some Roma to get a monthly salary with the promise of a pension and secure life. In a similar, but also contrasting way, another example comes from a Caldarar leader Ionel Torea, a Roma expert in a neighbouring village, Moroieni. His father was a *bulibasa* for 50 years, but Ionel Torea decided to formalize his leadership position and became an employee of the local council.

C: Why did not you run for a councillor's position at the local council instead?

I: The problem was money. It was a problem for me then. It is still a problem for me now. You cannot do too much for 4 children (and with 8 people in the household) with 480 RON which is my salary. As a local councillor you receive 120 RON - can you believe that? And you have responsibilities for 1,730 souls [the Caldarars in Moroieni]. When it is about elections – yes, we vote for the candidate who supports us...

C: You said that that the presence of 1-2 Roma councillors at the local council would [positively] influence local decisions...

I: Yes, it would be different as I can't make decisions alone, from my position at the moment. But I am respected as a colleague ... there are 22 of us employees [at the village hall]...

C: As a Roma expert do you have more or less power than a *bulibasa*?

I: I have more power than a *bulibasa* because I understand everything differently and I know the law. In case the Gypsies are fined I can intervene and they know that and stop doing illegal activities. (Ionel Torea, *bulibasa*/Roma expert, Moroieni)

Keeping the customary leadership power – *bulibasa* - seems difficult when individual access to economic resources is low. Due to the lack of a stable income,

Ionel Torea, like Dinica, chose becoming a Roma expert, a state employee with a regular salary. As Roma experts, both have experience of the impossibility of making political representation on behalf of the Roma concerning their queries/social problems. The alternative of being a local Roma councillor offers more possibilities for representing the Roma in local decision-making, but with lower and symbolic remuneration. In both cases, the low-income Roma leaders were drawn into the state's organized forms of leadership. However, Ionel suggests that by working for the state, he gets training, state knowledge, and access to formal government networks, which are helpful for the poorer Caldarars, who need access to state services. Also, he still has an influence over his community, which can be used during local or national elections to get control over the local distribution of votes and strengthen his connection with local patronage.

C: Who do you help more: the Roma or the institutions?

I: I think I help the institutions: the local council and even institutions from Bucharest were happy with the votes I secured from Gypsies.

C: Are Roma supported in any way?

I: They get support from the 416 Law [the social benefits/minimum income law]. They also get 'support' from lies and unfulfilled promises politicians make to them, but the story is going to be different from now on. In the next elections I will provide the voters' names list, but no one will go to vote! (Ionel Torea, Caldarar, Roma expert Moroieni)

Ionel's statements express a discontent and reveal the Roma experts' practice. They are expected to help institutions to deal with Roma issues, but not to directly help their communities. Interestingly, when he says he helps institutions he makes reference to patronage politics and vote-buying practices, which in Romania cannot be disconnected from state institutions, and are an established feature of post-socialist politics. As Ionel suggests, these clientelistic exchanges<sup>82</sup> (votes for social benefits) upheld by Roma experts, seem to bring little benefit to the Roma communities (eg. the Caldarars in Moroieni). With no access to the local decision-making, Ionel suggests that he can use voting behaviour as the only instrument of

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<sup>82</sup> The role of Roma experts in these clientelistic exchanges and local patronage politics is discussed in the Chapter on patronage politics and political patronage.

control over a local governance and patronage that pays minimum attention to the community's needs.

Both Corina and Dinica need to follow both the state's interests and the interests which arise from the local patronage. From this viewpoint, community representativeness and active political participation by Roma experts in local governance are limited by the state's definition of Roma experts as institutional representatives, and also by the dynamic of local patronage politics. These differences between Roma leaders and various forms of leadership show the continuities in the way in which the Roma leaders were connected to the transformations of post-socialist spheres of power struggle: the state and the informal economy. *Post-socialist state structures did not capture informal structures of leadership, only the leaders with poor financial resources.*

Nevertheless, the state governance and the Roma expert network program facilitated connections between local Roma experts, informal Roma leaders and representatives of public institutions (Roma Party representatives, lawyers, mayors, police officers). The next section looks at the collaborative relationships between the Caldarar and Romanianized Roma leaders, and at the way leadership is shared and negotiated at different administrative levels.

### **Collaborative leadership: loose and tight power webs**

Both the Caldarar and Romanianized leaders interviewed confirmed their role in the development of the Roma districts' infrastructure and in mediation with local/regional authorities. Settling community problems and mediating with the police are among the strategies for strengthening their authority over their communities. However, the success of their actions depends on their collaboration with the local institutional representatives and other local Roma leaders.

Caldarar Ionel Torea from Moroieni, *bulibasa* Traian from Liveni, *bulibasa* Leonard from Costesti, Romanianized Roma loader Candel and Dinica have known each other since socialism but their collaboration intensified after 1990, when the government developed new structures of governance (Roma mediators/experts). The power that comes with leadership seems to be shared in an extended network of

institutional representatives, informal Romanianized Roma leaders, some Caldarar leaders, and institutional actors involved in community governance. Ionel Torea is in contact with the regional Roma expert Corina Sotu and collaborates with the Caldarar leaders from Costesti (Razar and Leonard) to solve community problems.

C: Instead of asking state institutions or the local council, have you ever-asked *bulibasa* Razar or *bulibasa* Leonard for help?

I: I have never asked them. On the contrary, I stopped the state institutions who wanted to raid their Gypsies. Police from Goteni were just about to go into their community. Their parents married some minor girls, 5-6-years old... I talked to Razar and then to Ms. Corina Sotu. Then Corina talked to the Goteni police and we were left to solve the problem ourselves, in a Gypsy way. I helped him, and then he helped me.

C: What makes you powerful?

I: You know, what are the things don't make me powerful? The fact that I don't have a villa makes me less powerful, but as for the rest I can get access to any institution immediately. (Ionel Torea, Caldarar, Roma expert Moroieni)

Ionel Torea describes a situation of shared leadership in the informal management of community issues, which were solved without any institutional involvement. Compared to the informal leaders (*bulibasi*), Ionel Torea, as a Roma expert, was better able to negotiate the intervention of state authorities in community issues. Ionel's access to power arises from his connections with and proximity to institutional actors. Yet, this form of *power* to which he gets access as a Roma expert is constituted by state forms of governance and often confined to formal roles and political interests (patronage politics)<sup>83</sup>. I call this form of power with high levels of subjection to state governance, accessed primarily by Roma experts, *connectivity power, and the power of exercising state governance*. In addition, Roma experts are not able to act independently in overlapping spheres of power struggle (informal economy, political brokerage, mediation with the state institutions), which are usually the preserve of the Caldarar *bulibasi* from Costesti (Razar, Leonard, Sterea).

To sum up, the informal leaders such as Romanianized Roma leader Candel, *bulibasa* Razar, *bulibasa* Leonard, are situated in a shared leadership nexus with the

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<sup>83</sup> The dynamic of patronage politics is discussed at length in the Chapters on politics.

Roma experts and local/regional state and patronage actors (PSD representatives, mayor, vice-mayor, local administrator, and prefect). They are able to act within *loose power webs* in which the state is just an external partner. At the other pole, the Roma experts primarily enact the *tight webs of power* from within the state structures of governance. The Roma experts have wide-ranging connections to administrative levels in which they are not expected to negotiate the rules, but to fulfill the demands of the state administration.

Why do I speak about loose vs. tight webs of power and not about weak vs. strong ties? Granovetter (1973, 2001) considers that the weak ties developed between spatially distant actors create a strategic perspective on resource management for individuals. Romanianized Roma Dinica Sotu and Caldarar Ionel Torea, as paid Roma experts, do get access to high officials (spatially distant actors). However, their ability to negotiate the community's problems is limited and they are obliged to operate within the limits of the government's definition of their formal role and local patronage politics entangled in state functionality. In this sense the experts' position, acting from inside the state structures of governance, increases their subjection to state power and patronage politics and consequently minimizes the leaders' ability to negotiate over community issues. In this context, the loose/tight webs of power emphasise degrees of constraint on the Roma leaders' initiatives in the dynamic of power relations, rather than the positions of or the distances between the actors. These power webs are informed further by other spheres of power struggle (politics, informal economy, religion, community) within and across which the Roma leaders act and map their relations.

## **Conclusions**

The Roma leadership underwent substantial changes in parallel with the state transformation from socialism to post-socialism. For the Romanianized Roma, who had been incorporated at the margins of the state and who had a recognized position within it, leadership took inchoate forms, mainly fulfilled by members of Sotu family of fiddlers who would on occasion undertake the role of mediation with local institutions.

On the other hand, before sedentarization of the Caldarars in the 1960s, leadership was organized by *bulibasi* over small mobile groups. From 1960s onwards, the institution of *bulibasa* was centralized and partially captured by the socialist state. While the Caldarars still continued to travel, their *bulibasi* for small groups became subordinate to a main *bulibasa*, who would serve as a collaborator with the state surveillance agencies and as a *state broker in a shared control-dyadic relation of leadership with the socialist state*. The relations between *bulibasa*, the socialist state and the Caldarars were inter-related and formed interdependent power relations or power struggles<sup>84</sup>, which institutionalized the new form of leadership and damaged the institution of *bulibasa*, its meanings and practices. However, to a certain extent, until the late 1980s, the Caldarars preserved their mobile approach as a form of self--governance and they continued to be organized by their previous *bulibasi* in small mobile groups.

Under post-socialism, with no support from the institutions of the state and with a de-legitimated institution of *leadership* associated by Caldarars with the violence of the socialist state, the *main bulibasi* lost a significant degree of their authority. On the other hand, the informal economy created opportunities for the Caldarars to improve their material position and for members of some wealthy families to claim the position of *bulibasa*, which *decentralized and multiplied the Caldarars' claims to leadership*. The development of Roma NGOs/political parties and new structures of state governance (e.g. the Roma expert program) formulated and reformulated both the Romanianized Roma and the Caldarars' forms of leadership. Informal Roma leaders, both Caldarars and Romanianized Gypsies with low resources agreed to become state employees (Roma experts) and to represent the institutions of state governance.

Going back to the parallel between colonialism/post-colonialism and socialism/post-socialism, the customary leadership was always in communication with the institutions of state governance. In colonial states, customary leadership was

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<sup>84</sup> I refer here to two sets of interdependent and contradictory relations implied in *bulibasa's* roles: 1) ruling and domination through the enforcement of state action against the community, and 2) struggling for legitimacy by mediating state violence or overruling the socialist state actors' decisions.

almost wholly absorbed by the British administration and untrained leaders became in effect state functionaries. This form of state governance, “decentralized despotism” (Mamdani 1996), gave extensive coercive powers to local leaders to serve the interests of the colonial states. However, some writers (Keulder 2010) have argued against this interpretation and have suggested that customary leaders often challenged colonial rules. The situation was analogous to Romanian socialism. Although the main *bulibasi* were empowered by *Securitate* to serve the interests of the state, *the customary Gypsy leaders* (*bulibasi* for small groups) were not totally drawn into its politics of violence. In their struggle for legitimacy over their fellows, the *main bulibasi* challenged the state’s actions and not all *bulibasi* agreed to collaborate with *Securitatea*. A large number of them (less influential) remained leaders of mobile groups.

A total subordination of the customary leaders by the colonial or socialist state thus never existed. It is more than clear, however, that the legitimacy and the democratic workings of these forms of self-governance were seriously affected during both colonialism and socialism. Restoration of customary leadership was an aim for the post-colonial states (Murray 2004; Ray 2003), but not for the Romanian post-socialist state, which had no interest in supporting those customary Roma forms of self-governance and leadership that had existed prior to socialism. The Roma expert network works as a structure of governance, which serves the development and penetration of the administrative apparatus of the state into the lives of Roma communities and does not encourage community representation. On the contrary, it establishes barriers or even excludes the Roma experts from local decision-making processes.

In their struggle to keep their positions as leaders, rather than trying to become able to represent their communities, the informal and formal Roma leaders gravitated around the institutions of state governance and local patronage politics. However, a formalization of Gypsy leadership has never been made or completed by the state, neither during socialism, nor in post-socialism. While during socialism, the *Caldarars* leaders were powerful ‘settled’ main *bulibasi* and less influential *bulibasi* for mobile groups, under post-socialism they either became Roma experts or continued to act as informal leaders.

In terms of my thesis' general goal, the power relations and struggles involved in leadership acted in different ways in transforming the two Roma communities. Through their main *bulibasi*, the Caldarars became subjects of the state and lost part of their control over every day socioeconomic activities. I described this socialist empowerment of the Caldarar leaders a *destructive empowerment*, with a high level of subjection to state power and negative effects for both the empowered *bulibasi* and the Caldarar community. In post-socialism, as many Caldarars, including leaders, suggested, the institution of *bulibasa* is in a terminal phase. The relation between the socialist state and the main *bulibasi* succeeded in destroying their customary form of leadership. Yet, the forms of Caldarar self-governance were maintained through their practice of travelling. Mobility and the mobile approach to economic practice brought them opportunities for economic improvement on the move, especially in post-socialism.

On the other hand, for the Romanianized Roma, the constitution of leadership through the Roma Party's networks and state structures of governance did not bring them the necessary representation, but a consolidation of their position of subordination in relation to the institutions of the state and to local or regional patronage politics. The negotiations from within patterns of subordination (patronage politics, state governance) performed by the Romanianized Roma leaders encouraged Romanianized Roma to become dependent on the state and on local patronage, and blocked the development of self-governance and of local projects of social change which could have created opportunities for lucrative socioeconomic practice.



## **Chapter 5. Local level politics: Patronage politics and Political patronage**

As I showed in the previous two chapters, Roma relations under post-socialism occurred at the intersection of spheres of power struggle (state, politics, and informal economy) which emerged in the wider post-socialist society. Therefore, politics cannot be treated separately or independently from the transformation of the state and informal economic practices. They come together at the level of local politics and political processes (e.g. patronage politics), and cannot be confined to local politics or central government. In this context, Roma politics has been transformed through these local and trans-local temporal dynamics of power relations, which occurred simultaneously at different administrative levels. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the transformations of Roma politics in the context of the larger political transformations, which took place in Romania after 1990 and explore their relevance for the empowerment or disempowerment of the two Roma communities. Roma involvement in the everyday politics is analysed separately in chapter six.

### **Political and social organization of Roma leadership in Goteni and Costesti**

The early 1990's were characterized by the emergence of political pluralism and democratization in the sphere of politics mainly through the practice of free elections at both national and local level. At present, the Roma Party is the most important Roma NGO and political organisation with its president, Nicolae Paun, occupying a deputy's chair in the parliament. For each region, there are Roma Party representatives who many times work as Roma experts for county councils/prefectures. The distribution of Roma Party representatives runs in parallel to the distribution of Roma experts. The latter act within a complex bureaucratic apparatus devised by the state as part of the national strategy -2012-2020 for the

inclusion of the Roma (2011), which includes local and regional offices concerned with Roma issues.

“County offices for the Roma are functional structures organized at county level within prefectures. Their composition includes 3-4 experts [who] operate in subordination to the prefect” (p. 34). The Roma experts are nominated by the prefect and are responsible for organizing joint working groups (JWG) “composed of local representatives of ministries, members of Roma NGOs and delegates from communities of ethnic Roma citizens, including county/local counsellors. The JWG is established by order of the prefect”. Corina Sotu is the regional Roma Party representative and the Roma expert nominated by the prefect of Goteni. The Goteni JWG includes both informal and formal Roma leaders from Costesti: a. Dinica Sotu, Romanianized Roma, Corina Sotu’s brother, Roma expert and Roma Party representative; b. Ioader Candel, Roma Party representative, Romanianized Roma informal leader; c. Razar, informal Caldarar leader; d. Leonard, informal Caldarar leader, *bulibasa*.

However, as I have shown in the previous chapters, informal Roma leaders do not act from inside of one sphere of power struggles or another (community representation, local politics, local state mediation, informal economy) and from this point of view their leadership position is controversial. As I have already shown in the chapter on the informal economy, the informal Romanianized Roma Ioader Candel is a police mediator for his community and is also suspected of being involved in the informal transfers of the Caldarars’ firms to Romanianized Roma. Informal Caldarar leaders, Razar and Leonard are both involved in informal businesses with pipes, come from the richest local families and ‘compete’ for the *bulibasa* position among the Caldarar community in Costesti. They both mediate between the Caldarar community and local authorities, especially the police and participate in the regional meetings of the JWG organized by Corina Sotu, the Roma expert at county level.

At the local level, the government strategy includes local initiative groups (LIGs) “made up of representatives of communities of Roma ethnics” and local working groups (LWG) composed of “local experts, representatives of local public institutions, members of the local council, and members of non-governmental

organisations and a delegate of the local Roma community in the LIG.” The LWG is established by the local council. Here, besides the Roma leaders I mentioned above, during my fieldwork in Costesti I talked to 3 local council members, who were frequently active in the LWG: a. Dan Popescu, the president of the local PNL organization; b. Grinea, first mayor of Costesti, a PNL local councillor and sports teacher at the school attended by Caldarars, and c. Rodan, a PDL councillor. I intentionally chose to talk with councillors from local political opposition groups (PNL, PDL), who could offer different accounts of Roma leadership in relation to public institutions from that presented by the main local PSD patronage actors: Mayor Sorpaci, the deputy mayor and local administrator Sorin Comsa. While Sorpaci is the main supporter of Romanian inhabitants and known for his anti-Gypsy views, Sorin Comsa is a Romanian who grew up among Romanianized Roma. He was a teacher and a director of the school which the Romanianized Roma attend and he has always been a supporter of the Roma interests and helped Roma families directly (through social services, employment and cash). In his official role he is the administrator of the village, while informally he serves as the local patron.

Mayor Sorpaci has ruled the local council since 2000, the year when, in order to get political support from the PSD ruling party, he chose to join the PSD just after the local elections and he appointed his PSD running mate Sorin Comsa, as a deputy mayor. In 2008, Sorin Comsa became a councillor at the Minister of the Interior Delu Nistor (PSD), a period during which he channelled governmental money to Costesti. In 2009 he returned and he was appointed by the same mayor as local administrator of the commune. These days both PSD leaders are interested in convincing the Roma to vote for their party in exchange for local council services or cash.

However, at the county level, the administration adopts a different approach to the patronage politics. From 2005 (a situation which changed only in 2012), representatives of the liberal and conservative parties (PNL and PDL) held the position of prefect<sup>85</sup>. In order to serve as senior state officials, the prefects, as

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<sup>85</sup> PNL prefect of Goteni County ruled between 2005 and 2008 and PDL prefect ruled between 2009 and 2012.

representatives of the government appointed by the Minister of Interior, have to abandon their official political positions<sup>86</sup>. However, despite this official renunciation, they continue to maintain informal links with their political party. The prefects' political interests often clash with their administrative role for the state. In this context, Corina Sotu, the Roma Party representative and regional Roma expert, appointed by the prefect, should follow either the prefect's political interests (PNL or PDL) or the Roma Party's, which are opposed to the Costesti patronage politics (PSD) described above. This overlap between state administrative roles and patronage politics, which occurs at different administrative levels (PSD in Costesti and PNL or PDL in Goteni) creates conflicts among Roma experts and state actors dealing directly or indirectly with Roma issues. In matters of voting, Corina Sotu frequently found herself in conflict with her brother Dinica Sotu (the Roma expert in Costesti) who is part of the local PSD network of patronage formed by Sorin Comsa and his followers. For these reasons, the two Roma experts, members of the same family, the Sotu, were often unable to collaborate and ensure development for the two Roma communities in Costesti. In this chapter, I examine the explanations of conflict and collaboration between the Roma leaders (both Roma experts and informal Roma leaders) and actors in the patronage politics in Costesti and I answer the following questions:

*Does Roma politics constitute an independent field of politics able to channel power to the Romanianized Roma and Caldarars?*

*Can Roma experts or informal Roma leaders be the advocates of Roma interests and practice activism locally?*

*If not, what exactly prevented the development of Roma politics and diminished the effectiveness of both Roma experts and informal leaders in local decision making and in determining the social organisation of Roma communities at the local level?*

I answer these questions by exploring connections between local and regional political organizations as they interacted with the larger transformations taking place in the post-1989 Romanian sphere of politics.

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<sup>86</sup> Source: [www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/lege\\_institutia\\_prefectului\\_340\\_2004\\_2008.php](http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/lege_institutia_prefectului_340_2004_2008.php).

## **Local-level politics as an incomplete field of action**

In post-socialist Romania support for the ruling party became a necessity for obtaining business, making social connections and obtaining public positions and goods (Gadowska 2006). Overall, the intersectionalities between politics, the state and the informal economy favoured the development of patronage politics. As argued in the first chapter, post-socialist transformations did not necessarily bring about a "privatisation of power" in the shape of 'chiefdoms' able to act independently from central government, as Verdery (1996) suggests, but led to a general politics of clientelism, in which local patrons become state representatives, in control of local resources and the distribution of welfare, but dependent upon and subordinate to central governmental and political actors.

When clientelism becomes a rule at higher levels, in an authoritarian political system, where bureaucrats use personal contacts to allocate resources and ensure their own interests, the socio-political system is called *patrimonial* (Sandbrook 1985; Hilgers 2011). It is assumed that authoritarian regimes such as the socialist states in Eastern Europe (e.g. Romanian socialism) were based on repressive modes of organization making citizens the main clients of the system. When the political pluralism and competitiveness do not abolish the clientelistic character of the system, the „bureaucratic institutions function based on personal relationships and where officials use clientelism to ensure political order" (Hilgers 2011: 582), the social political system is called neo-patrimonial (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, Eisenstadt 1973; Erdmann, Engel 2006; Hilgers 2011) and is generally characteristic of post-socialist Romania.

Clientelism was a constant both in socialism and post-socialism. In socialism the centralized political organization aimed at restricting and controlling individual initiative and action. However, as Burawoy and Verdery (1999) argued, party bureaucrats and locals, through their everyday practices, domesticated the restrictive centralised distribution of resources by Communist Party. In this sense, socialism was both a paternalistic and patrimonial system with local clientelistic ways of working, not always following the rules of the centre (Eyal, Szelenyi, Townsley 1998).

In post-socialism, the withdrawal of the state from the economy, privatization and the de-centralization of economy and politics generated informal inter-dependencies between the spheres of power struggles (politics, state, economy), which gave way to the development of new forms of clientelism, patronage and a neo-patrimonial system as a whole. Clientelism (dyadic relations between a person with a higher rank and a client with lower rank) and patronage politics (distribution of administrative positions by actors organized around a political party) became a rule, taking place both locally and at the centre, and politicians became the main supporters of business actors and were often implicated in cases of corruption. Central and local politics were of equal importance in the complicated process of post-socialist transformation.

As Swartz (1968) suggests, local-level politics is not local per se but has to be analytically examined, and treated as an incomplete field of action, involving negotiations with regional and central politics, in which local actors and their practices are engaged with outside actors at different levels in the political structure (national, regional, cross-regional). Neo-patrimonial politics is not only how governance is conducted but also the mechanism whereby power is manifested and negotiated through practices and relationships between local, regional and central politicians and state actors. In this context, Romanian neo-patrimonial politics is a sphere of action and power struggle "defined by the interest and involvement of the participants in the process being studied and its contents include the values, meanings, resources, and relationships employed by these participants in that process" (Swartz 1968: 9). The local and central levels are not fixed points of reference in the individual's relations and practices, but nodal points in a complex web of power relations.

Moreover, as Swartz (1968) argues, "the spatial and temporal extension of political processes" (p. 6) are incorporated in the term of *field of politics* that "is composed of the actors directly involved in the processes being studied" (ibid.) and involves both *continuity and change*. For example, *post-socialist patronage politics* is an illustrative example of *field of politics* in which patrons and their followers, as representatives of parliamentary political parties, operate within different spheres of power struggles (politics, state, economy) and connect local and central politics.

Through his positions in the local and central government, the local administrator of Costesti, Sorin Comsa, bridges different political and administrative levels. *Patronage politics* is an expression of the transformations occurring in the neopatrimonial political sphere of power and an effect of a *spatial and temporal extension of a political process* (p. 6), which might incorporate and interact with other fields of politics (e.g. political patronage).

### **The local dynamics of patronage politics in the development of the Romanian neo-patrimonial political system**

After 1989, the politicization of social and institutional local life became the norm in the everyday local practices. In Romania it is generally known that political allegiance is the main criterion in the distribution of institutional positions and that a change in the government is usually followed by a change in the managerial structure of public institutions. Managers of public institutions are required to be members of the ruling party and pursue the governing party's interests at the local and institutional level. In my field research, Grinea, the first mayor of the locality, a sports teacher and the local representative of the National Liberal Party in Costesti, indicated a strong connection between local institutional practices, the distribution of local positions and the growing politicization of the local public administration:

C: Do you think that education is much more politicised now than before 1989?

G: Yes it is. It has never been worse than now. Once I was at the regional inspectors office and I heard a discussion in the hallway when the general inspector was telling to his deputy: "We need to change 65 directors in Goteni county". The deputy replied: "We need to slow down". However, the general inspector said: "No, we have the necessary leverage, we will change everything and we'll get our people in".

G: There has never been a politicisation like it is right now, not only in education, but in all areas. I used to talk with an engineer who was head of police. He got fired and they installed a man coming from a completely different field. While the first was a member of the PNL, the new man was the member of PDL [the governing party]. The new employee was looking for people to help him do his work. He didn't have a clue what he had to do, but the PDL man had to be there to oversee the institution. I had never seen such a thing in my life before! (Grinea, first mayor of Costesti, school director and president of local PNL organization).

Politicisation refers here to the direct intervention of the central ruling party in the distribution of managerial positions in local public institutions (schools, financial offices, hospitals etc.) and which is called in my thesis patronage politics. In this context, managers of public institutions can get easier access to central resources and connections. However, problems appear when central government is ruled by a party different from the local or regional patronage party (e.g. Costesti - PSD; Goteni - PNL/PDL). In cases where the local government (Costesti –PSD patronage) has a different political orientation from the central government (PDL), the distribution of local public resources to public institutions is blocked by the local council administration, which generally follows the direction of local patronage politics (PSD)<sup>87</sup>.

Similarly to the second, in the first example above, Grinea makes references to the last decade (2004-2008) when central government was run by a PDL majority, and when representatives of the local public institutions such as schools were replaced by people who were not necessarily qualified for those positions but who were members of the PDL. For Grinea, a PNL representative, the neo-patrimonial system was detrimental to his career as a teacher and school head. In 2008, when the PDL won the parliamentary elections and formed the government, the regional PDL office asked him either to change his political membership from PNL to PDL, or to resign. At that time, Grinea considered that it was more important to keep his PNL membership and risk his position (as head of the school). Later on, the regional education management replaced him with a PDL teacher who was less well qualified.

From the accounts given by public institution managers and teachers from different local schools including Grinea, all those who were in the PDL kept their managerial positions, while others, from other parties, were either fired or demoted. Similarly, Dan Popescu, head of the PNL local organization, currently a local

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<sup>87</sup>Two school directors in Costesti, who are PDL members complained that they are not supported by the local council and do not receive public funding for infrastructure projects. One of the school directors (a PDL member) complained that the mayor, the deputy mayor, the local administrator and PSD local councilors (PSD local patronage) refused to provide funding for renovating a workshop class room and also for school access to the gas supply. Gas infrastructure was developed through a local council project made with governmental money channeled by local patron Sorin Comsa, at that time councilor of Minister of Interior.



councillor in Costesti, expressed his discontent with the post-1989 politics and economy.

D: I expected the 1989 revolution to change the values and bring them back to their right place, but the opposite happened. Values were reversed: if you had money, you had everything. It does not matter if you are smart, educated, or if you work hard. You need to have money. It does not matter how you get it. And now we have the Gypsy-like model: arrogance and disdain are at the governmental level. The Caldarars have become rich, they speculated for 5-6 years and were attached to a party.

C: Which party?

D: First, they were with the PSD [the Social Democrat Party], then with the PDL [the Liberal Democrat Party]. They did the same and they got rich.

C: Do you think they would have been able to succeed without being attached to a political party?

D: No. Without public money you cannot succeed... Don't you see that all businesses are legal ... (Dan Popescu, head of the PNL local organization Costesti)

It is interesting to observe that Dan Popescu does not make a clear differentiation between local and central politics. On the contrary, he considers that all economic and political practices (local and central) are part of the same socio-political context. The post-1989 reality is not a one-way process from central to local practices, but a complex transformation in which politics and informality come together in the development of patronage politics and extended clientelistic relationships between individuals with unequal positions. In his analysis, the respondent transfers the characteristic of the Caldarars' economy<sup>88</sup> – informality - developed during both socialism and post-socialism, to the whole post-1989 neo-patrimonial system. In the Romanian context, it is a common perception that associates the Gypsies' informal economic activities with the side effects of an uncertain transition, becoming in the process a symbol of informality and 'illegality'.

The so-called "reversal of values" is rather the experience of confusion and uncertainty generated by the irregular post socialist transformations<sup>89</sup> (Burawoy, Verdery 1999). It also symbolizes a transition from a centralized authoritarian system

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<sup>88</sup> The respondent made a direct reference to those Caldarars who got rich after 1989.

<sup>89</sup> Burawoy and Verdery (1999) generally refer here to inflation, deindustrialization, privatization of property, market instabilities, low levels of formal employment, development of informal economy.

to the uncontrolled emergence of overlapping spheres of power (state, politics and informal economy) in which the political favouritism becomes the main basis for ensuring personal relations, institutional practices and success in business. This state of affairs was reflected and accommodated within local-level politics where patronage (a local team supporting one political party with access to local resources and distribution of resources) developed through successive forms of political governance and political favouritism. For the case of the Caldarars, clientelistic dyadic relations were developed in connection with representatives of both central and local ruling parties, thus alternating between the PSD and the PDL. Dan's non-specific answer to my question 'which party?' suggests that clientelism was a constant in the Caldarars' informal entrepreneurial activities irrespective of the political orientation of the central or local government. In the next paragraph I offer a brief history of the central politics linked to Costesti local-level politics, which shows connections between local elections and the succession of central governments. It is the story of the emergence of local patronage politics.

In 1992, in the first democratic elections, the PSD (mostly composed of former party cadres) won the majority and formed the government. In 1996, a change was expected and the CDR (Romanian Democratic Convention), a democratic and conservative coalition won the elections. After 4 years of economic recession, in 2000, the Social-Democrats won the elections again. From 2004 to 2012 a conservative-liberal party, the PDL, became dominant, setting a socio-economic agenda which was strongly contested by the opposition, especially over the last 4 years.

In 1992, 1996 and 2000 there were strong connections between central elections and local ones held in Costesti. The same political parties ruled at both central and local level. 2004 was different. While at the central level the PDL took power, in Costesti, the same mayor, a PSD representative, was re-elected, a situation which reoccurred in 2008. This political dissociation between central and local results in Costesti dated back to 2000 when the representative of a small party, Sorpaci (the present mayor), won the local elections against his opponent, Comsa (the PSD representative, local patron). In order to get government support for his local activities, the mayor Sorpaci chose, just after the elections, to change his

political membership to PSD, the ruling party at that time. The second candidate, Comsa, PSD representative, became his deputy mayor. Both mayor (Sorpaci) and deputy mayor (Comsa) became the local exponents of PSD politics and since 2000 developed the PSD patronage politics locally.

Starting with the 2000 local elections as a time reference, the history of patronage politics expanded through the actors' connections to central level politics. In 2004, Sorin Comsa came in contact with Delu Nistor, a PSD vice-president of the central executive bureau of the PSD regional organization. In 2009, Delu Nistor, who had been named vice- prime minister in 2008, became the country's Minister of the Interior, and Sorin Comsa, now his councillor, left his deputy mayor position in Costesti to work for the central government. Sorin Comsa used his position in the government to channel financial resources to Costesti and develop local infrastructure (water, gas facilities, sports facilities for a local school, an open-air market etc.). In this context, he paid special attention to the Romanianized Roma district where he grew up. He supported developmental projects in the area with both information and money (water facilities and road improvement). He was highly appreciated by the locals, especially by the Roma, who generally considered him the most important political leader involved in the development of locality. The help he was able to extend owing to his position in the central government recommended him as the 'local patron' of the village. In exchange, he expected allegiance for his party - PSD - from the locals and especially the Romanianized Roma.

*These new bonds between local state representatives (mayor, vice-mayor, and followers) and PSD representatives situated at upper level politics created the local level patronage politics, which, since 2004, has started to act independently from central elections and government. Local patronage politics thus developed can also stand as the main explanation for the political continuity of the Costesti dominant party - PSD - since 2000. Therefore, I call patronage politics the field of politics with its own constitutive and interactive history including relations between local political actors (e.g. PSD representatives, mayor and deputy mayor Sorin Comsa) and central level politicians (e.g. Delu Nistor-PSD regional president and Minister of Interior) who have access to resources and distribution of resources locally or*

*regionally but also a variety of local power struggles between Roma voters, political, state and institutional representatives (e.g. local council and schools).*

## **Local Patronage politics**

*Clientelism* is a dyadic direct personal hierarchical relationship between an actor with higher status, who is not necessarily an established patron (e.g. local council bureaucrats, mayors) and one with a lower status. On the other hand, *patronage* implies that the local patron and his followers make use of their membership to a main political party to stabilize local power as patronage politics of a main political party and get control over the local distribution of positions and resources. The patron maintains and develops relations with local clients and political brokers<sup>90</sup>, clients and upper-level party members for whom he often becomes a broker himself (Hilgers 2008; Remmer 2007; Hilgers 2008). In Costesti, the PSD was the patronage party and provided support for the local patronage actors (mayor, vice-mayor and local administrator) who were, in their turn, the governing party clientele. As Gadowska (2006) notes for the case of Poland, *the local patron* is not only the main actor in local businesses, but also the main player in local level politics .

For Costesti, Sorin Comsa is the main actor in local patronage politics, connecting higher political levels with the local politics. Strong relations with central government underpinned his position as the main political leader, in other words, the local patron of the village. After losing his position as councillor to the Minister of the Interior, he was assisted by the present mayor, Sorpaci, (PSD representative), in obtaining the official position as village administrator. In this context, the patron's informal position became institutionalised at the local level. Many controversial stories about his past and present positions and activities have been told by local political representatives, Romanians and Roma. Dan Popescu, president of the local PDL and Grinea, a PNL member, provided more details.

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<sup>90</sup> I refer here as political brokers to all those, especially Roma leaders, who mediate between local communities, local governance and higher upper level politics and who also convince Roma to vote for one political party or another (Scott 1977).

C: As I understand, Comsa made financial efforts for the village.

D- No, not at all. He praises himself; he always pursued his own interests. However, to speak the truth, he is the one who leads the community politically. (Dan Popescu, head of the PNL organization, Costesti).

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G- Comsa wants the local council at any price. I have never seen a man so greedy for power.

C: Comsa holds a position with the local council at present?

G: Yes, he is the administrator, but this is a strange position. All these administrative issues dealt with by Comsa used to be dealt with by the mayor and his deputy. Except for these trees on the side of the main road, Comsa hasn't done anything. He goes to local council just to lock and unlock his office door. (Grinea, former mayor 1992-96, former school director, teacher of sports, local PNL councillor)

The statements are critical as they come from two local PNL representatives who criticise the PSD's local governance. Although both recognized Comsa's leading political role, they strongly contested his position as an official administrator or manager of the commune. The two PNL representatives claim that his new official responsibilities in attracting European funding and organizing local infrastructure projects and development are part of the role of the mayor and do not justify his new position in the local council. In this context, both of them suggest his official position as administrator of the village is an expression of his personal desire to institutionalise his leading position as informal local patron of the village. Comsa's patron position overlapped with his administrative roles (former deputy mayor, present manager) in the local council, and local councillors have accused him of 'abuse' of administrative power by interfering in the local government processes. In one of the interviews, Dan Popescu offered an illustration of this.

D: The former deputy mayor at that time, Cornea had a farm and 2 hectares of forest, so he was a rich person. In the same period, Cornea had a fight with Comsa and decided to resign from the PSD. Cornea was going to vote against the PSD and Comsa was not going to get the same number of votes. Comsa told Racov [local chief of police] that Cornea has stolen something and then Cornea was charged with theft. At that time I told Racov "Aren't you ashamed? Cornea has 2 hectares of forest, the same as me, how can you imagine me stealing?". The accusation was false but Racov was Comsa's man at that time. I sent the whole story to a local newspaper. 'We, the local councillors were offended...' What was going on? Political police? Then they sued us for slander, but subsequently we have showed the military court's decision to Comsa and Racov: Cornea was not guilty. After several meetings in the court,

Comsa dropped the charges. (Dan Popescu, head of the PNL local organization Costesti)

In the interview, Dan Popescu suggests that Comsa's candidature for the position of mayor was threatened by Cornea's withdrawal from the PSD. Cornea wanted to run for the same local council position (mayorship). As Dan further suggested, Comsa (local patron) used his connections with the local chief of police to undermine Cornea and eliminate him from the election race. In this context patronage politics worked through informal, abusive collaborations between local authorities (police) and the main political leader.

It is important to notice a distinction between a classic clientelistic relation and patronage *politics*. For the latter it is important to understand that political party membership plays a significant role in collaboration and control over state apparatuses of control. Patronage politics is more than a simple patron-client exchange relationship, as in Scott's conception, in which, the patron exercises control or ownership of resources (Scott 1972, 1977). It is the binding power between the ruling party and state institutions. Moreover, it is the link between central and local politics, developed in parallel with the structural transformations occurring in post-1989 Romanian society at large.

Students of Eastern European studies<sup>91</sup> argued that the transition from socialism to post-socialism entailed continuous transformations in the state and economic spheres of power. Individuals did not experience it as a rupture, and were not subject to a dramatic shift from one source of power and another, but rather navigated the transition through clientelistic relations, which had existed during socialism, under the coercive, authoritarian patrimonial socialist system. Comsa's position as a local patron has been built over time and is based on his connections with higher administrative levels, ever since socialism. In an interview, Dan Popescu offered an example of Comsa's influence and his clientelistic connections under socialism.

D: Comsa made an accident. He was not prosecuted, and the police did not even take his driving license.

C: Do people know about that?

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<sup>91</sup>This is discussed at greater length in the chapter entitled 'Historical transformations'.

D: Of course they know.

C: So why do they still vote for him and why does he have so much power?

D: *He is not the one who has the power. He gets his power through those in Goteni and Delu Nistor. They are on the same level.* (Dan Popescu, head of the PNL local organization Costesti).

In the interview, Dan Popescu suggests that Comsa made use of his connections with local authorities, which have existed since socialism. The narrative also contains elements of subjectivism, showing the discontent of local political representatives with the patron's politics. It is also a challenge to the legitimacy of Comsa's influence in the village. As Dan Popescu claims, although all locals know about Comsa's power abuses, the majority still vote for him. Nevertheless, the explanation for this does not rely on the patron's authority, his legitimate power or *stabilization of power* in Graziano's (1976) terms, but from his relations of power with higher-up party members, which enable him to get access to governmental funding and therefore gain support from local populations and Roma communities.

As Dan Popescu argued, Comsa does not effectively hold the power but sources it through his connections and relations with the senior political actors in the field of patronage politics. Therefore, once more it is clear that patronage politics is more than a classic clientelistic relation of domination. It is the manifestation of a web of power relations, which extend from local to central politics, from within which the local patron and patronage team control local resources, voting behaviour and local governance. In this sense, local governance is more than governance. It is patronage politics and it affects the way the two Roma communities are represented by their leaders and their involvement in local decision making.

### **Roma allegiances: from restitution politics to patronage politics**

For the Roma, patronage politics was less important in the 1990's and gradually became more prominent in the 2000s when the mayor and the deputy mayor became part of the same PSD political patronage grouping.

However, in the early 1990's, Gypsies, especially the Caldarars, were greatly affected by a different form of politics, which I call here "restitution politics", directly related to the activities of the central state. The Social Democrat Party, at

that time (PDSR) aimed at reinforcing its legitimacy and solidifying its political power through the restitution of land to peasants and gold to Gypsies (Caldarars). In the 1990's and early 2000, *restitution politics* was a source of political power for the PSD. Dan Popescu, president of the local PNL, as well as many other political representatives and Caldarars present a picture of Roma allegiance to PSD politics and its emblematic figure, former president Ion Iliescu.

D: In 2000, the Caldarars supported the PSD and voted for the existing mayor. I had been in their houses. Inspectors from the regional financial offices came to look for them but they were afraid of going alone to the Caldarars' district and for that reason I joined them. I went inside their houses and I saw posters with Iliescu [head of the PDSR, president in 1992-96, and 2000-04] on the walls, just like you sometimes see orthodox icons in Romanian peasant houses. (Dan Popescu, head of the PNL local organisation Costesti)

In this historical context, Iliescu's photograph has become the symbolic iconography of the *restitution politics*. The analogy between religious and political icons made by my respondent is a proof of the symbolic process in which *restitution politics* endows the head of the PSD with authority and, in Graziano's terms, with *pure power* (Graziano 1976). Pure power is produced in an unilateral relation in which the leader "increase[s] his own formal power by providing individual services to his subordinates, so as to 'obligate' them and make them comply with his orders 'voluntarily'" (p. 167). The latter is generated through an unidirectional and *indirect* exchange between the president of the country (a symbolic patron) and the Caldarars (his clients) in which the patron expects returns (votes) by creating *obligations* among his clients.

Compared to a classic client-patron relationship, which implies a direct exchange of goods or money for votes, the *pure power* of national PSD leader symbolic patronage is triggered by one single form of exchange (gold restitution-PSD allegiance), established by authority exercised from distance, manifested as respect and endorsed by its clients (Caldarars) in a long lasting relation.

Restitution of gold substantially changed the Caldarars's life trajectories. Many were able to become rich and affluent by investing it in their business with state enterprises. In this sense, President Iliescu, who opened the door for these opportunities, has for a long time been a symbolic patron (godfather) and authority



figure in their everyday lives. All these were perceived as major benefits brought by the act of restitution itself. However, the emergent symbolic attachment between gold/ land restitution and the PSD developed into what I call *restitution politics* (the politicisation of restitution) as part of a larger discourse on justice (Mihailescu 1996) and reparation of previous socialist forms of injustice. In a search for legitimacy, this type of discourse was promoted by both PDSR members and its leader Iliescu, who were accused of harbouring former communist convictions by other conservative and liberal political formations and by part of the population.

Similarly, the PDSR ideology was considered to be a rehashing of the former Communist Party. This restitution discourse was integral to the party's electorate attracting strategy for the first democratic elections, which took place in '92. That explains, how in the 90's, not only the Caldarars were happy to claim they voted for PDSR and Iliescu, who gave their gold back, but also the peasants, who considered that Iliescu gave them back<sup>92</sup> their land. The restitution was deeply politicised and created a relative stable PSD electorate among those Gypsies and peasants who were able to repossess their gold/land.

By managing the local restitution of gold, the *bulibasi* were still important as Gypsy leaders and directly connected to the central politics and people holding important positions in the government. The old *bulibasa* Iancu of the Caldarar community from Costesti, a Securitate agent under socialism, acted as mediator for the gold restitution process. He was the main link between the Caldarar community, central government and the National Bank, where the gold had been stored. He would collect the receipts, the proof of the amount of gold confiscated, that the Caldarar families had received from the socialist authorities, and bring them to the National Bank. His Romanian driver related how, in the early 1990s he went with *bulibasa* Iancu to Bucharest, to the Cotroceni presidential palace. He was amazed at how *bulibasa* Iancu succeeded in getting permission to park his car in front of the presidential house and meet President Iliescu and his staff. In the early 90's Iancu was still considered an influential Roma leader.

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<sup>92</sup>These interpretations are based on my personal experience of living in Romania but also from my extensive experience in doing sociological fieldwork in different rural areas and interviewing local peasants, Roma, bureaucrats etc.

Nevertheless, *bulibasa* Iancu did not succeed in fully recovering the gold from the National Bank. There were also many allegations that an unequal and unfair distribution had taken place. Many Caldarar families claimed that they needed to pay *bulibasa* a percentage of the gold received (Fieldnotes, 9 Nov 2009). In the late 1990's, *bulibasa* Iancu was not alone in being able to connect to the upper levels of governance, other Caldarars, who claimed to be leaders, started to exert influence on the Caldarars' voting behaviour. I offer here two examples of the way local Roma leaders, both formal and informal, Caldarars and Romanianized Roma, from Costesti and Moroieni, created power relations through *patronage politics*. Ionel Torea is a Caldarar Gypsy, Roma expert in Moroieni (a village nearby Costesti) and leader of a poorer Caldarar community. As I discussed in the chapter on Roma leadership, as a Roma expert he became a leading supporter of the local patronage party (PNL), the mayor's party.

C: What happened in the 90's when you came into contact with the local council?

I: It was not a connection, but all of the candidates were looking to get more voters. And a part of us, the Roma, voted. Some went with the PSD, others with the PNL, the PDL. In the late 90s we went with the PNL.

C: Why did you choose the PNL?

I: For the first elections in the 1990's we voted for the PSD because of President Iliescu who gave the gold back to us, along with all the rights taken away under socialism. The President came here, to our locality. My father [former *bulibasa*] had the chance to kiss President Iliescu. President Iliescu came here in 1992 for the elections: 'vote for me'...

Before 1992, our mayor was from the PSD. Then we went with the PNL [the new mayor's party]. The mayor is a respectful and polite person. He didn't differentiate between Roma and Romanian children. It did not matter if it was my child or somebody else's. He was always considerate to everyone and my father [former *bulibasa*] talked to the Roma telling them that it was good to vote for him. (Ionel Torea, Caldarar, Roma expert, former *bulibasa*, Moroieni).

This narrative shows a transition from *restitution politics* to *patronage politics* in Roma everyday politics. Ionel, a Caldarar Gypsy, a *bulibasa's* son, confirms this transition. His answers differ in relation to the time reference. When talking about politics and voting in the early 1990s, the Caldarar leaders and all the other Caldarars either from Costesti or Moroieni tend to make references to the PSD and the emblematic President Iliescu. However, in the late 1990s, many local informal Roma

leaders in Costesti and Moroieni became political brokers for their mayors' political parties (Costesti – the PSD, Moroieni – the PNL) in both presidential and local elections. In Moroieni while the first mayor was a PSD member, the one elected in early 2000 was a PNL representative. In the interview Ionel suggests that, together with his father he convinced many Caldarars to follow the mayor's political party and vote for the PNL in the last elections.

In 2000 patronage politics became important for Romanianized Roma leaders in Costesti too. Ioader Candel, the informal Romanianized Roma leader, who fulfils what are sometimes contradictory roles (police mediator, mediator for the transactions of local commercial firms) gives here a detailed account of his progressive allegiance to the PSD.

C: Were you interested in the PSD?

I: Yes, we were interested. Because we support the PSD, I mean my brother-in-law works for Vega [a regional gas company]. And if he works at Vega we support the PSD.

C: Why? Vega is a PSD company?

I: Yes. It is Delu Nistor 's company and we go with Delu Nistor [former Minister of the Interior]. Since the 1990's I have been friends with Delu Nistor.

C: How did you meet?

I: In official meetings! In the first meeting we had he asked me who was the Roma leader? Ioader Candel! [the respondent]. He came here telling us to vote for him.

C: When was that?

I: In 2004, when he was campaigning for the PSD, and he invited me to the meeting. Comsa and Sorpaci were in the same political party and I asked them to be candidates of different parties. One of them could work with the government, directly with Delu Nistor. I took Comsa to the local school in Coroieni [local name of the district where the Caldarars live]. Delu Nistor came with 12-15 people there, important people, and he asked me: What should we do with Comsa? And I said, Comsa should lead the PSD local organization and after that he [Sorin Comsa] became the head of the local PSD (Ioader Candel, informal Romanianized Roma leader).

This interview excerpt illustrates how informal leaders circulate and connect central and local levels of power by the negotiation of local political positions. Assuming that Candel's story is accurate, it is intriguing to notice that in the distribution of

PSD positions at the local level, Delu Nistor<sup>93</sup>, a representative of the central level PSD politics, asked an informal Romanianized Roma leader for advice. In this context, Ioader Candel, the Romanianized Roma informal leader, operated as a broker not only between the Roma community and local authorities, but also in relation with representatives of central politics. By taking responsibility for Roma voting behaviour, his advice became important in the local distribution of PSD party positions.

Moreover, Ioader Candel's voting options are not pre-determined by local patronage politics. In the interview he mentions Vega, the regional gas company associated with Delu Nistor's interests, as an important reference for his voting options. He also mentions that he personally knew Delu Nistor (the PSD regional president and former Minister of Interior) from meetings organized by the Roma Party, most probably from 1999 onwards when the Roma Party established a political coalition with the PSD. The statement also shows his main interest lies in connecting with higher level PSD political representatives and strengthening his position as broker by being able to mediate between different political levels. In this sense, Ioader Candel can be seen as a *power broker* able to *circulate* between levels and spheres of power (informal economy, police mediation), able to come into contact with political representatives with different levels of influence and even to advise about changes in their local position.

As I already suggested in the chapter on Roma leadership, Roma experts act from within *tights webs of power* in the state bureaucracy and are *patronage brokers*. Informal Romanianized Roma leaders such as Ioader Candel and Caldalarar *bulibasi* in Costesti, who convince the Roma to vote for different political parties, are *power brokers* who act across *loose webs of power*. The latter connect different political levels, exploit boundaries between *spheres of power struggle* (informal businesses, local authorities, politics), and even give advice that local political leaders follow.

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<sup>93</sup>Since 1996, Delu Nistor has held important positions in the parliament and the Social Democrat Party: deputy in the Chamber (since 1996), -deputy-president of PSD, Goteni county, member of prime minister's cabinet, 2000-2004 and Minister of the Interior in 2008.

Roma power brokers' actions show how local and central-level politics are entangled and act together within the *field of patronage politics*.

## **Roma politics: Political patronage and patronage politics**

In the early 90s, the Roma were recognized as a minority and according to governmental Act 8/1990 they were allowed to set up political parties and NGOs. On the other hand, in agreement with governmental Act 21/1994 minorities have the opportunity to launch candidates in the local and presidential elections<sup>94</sup>. Since 1990, the Roma have had a Roma deputy in parliament, a representative of their main political formation, the Roma Party. In 1994, other 23 Roma organizations joined the Roma Party, which became the main Roma political organization.

Nevertheless, 1999 was the year when the Roma Party agreed to have an official, open-ended political partnership with PSD, for both presidential and parliamentary elections, and nationwide local council elections<sup>95</sup>. According to this, Roma Party representatives are required to extend political support to PSD candidates. In exchange, the Roma Party expects to receive support in the promotion and representation of the Roma needs/projects related to education, social welfare and cultural rights. This political partnership engendered *political patronage* at different levels of organization in which leaders who are also Roma Party representatives<sup>96</sup> are expected to convince the Roma to vote for the PSD in both local and national elections.

The transition from *restitution politics* to *patronage politics* and *political patronage* (the *PSD-Roma Party* coalition) discouraged the emergence,

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<sup>94</sup> More info can be found at: <http://www.partidaromilor.ro/despre-noi/scurt-istoric.html>

<sup>95</sup> The information on political partnership between the Roma Party and the Social Democratic Party (PDSR/PSD) can be found on the Roma Party website <http://www.partidaromilor.ro/despre-noi/scurt-istoric.html>.

<sup>96</sup> Corina Sotu ( regional Roma expert), Dinica Sotu (Romanianized Roma expert), Ioader Candel (Romanianized Roma informal leader), and some Caldara informal leaders.

development, and representation of ethnic politics among Roma groups. The *political patronage of Roma politics*, which institutionalised at the central level, strengthened *PSD local patronage* power in Costesti. However, in other villages, like Moroieni, or at the regional level (Goteni prefecture), the general *political patronage* orientation (PSD) did not correspond to the political orientation given by the *local patronage politics*, the mayor's or prefect's political party (PDL/PNL). These contradictions between the mayor's or prefect's political orientation and the PSD-Roma Party coalition generated conflicts between Roma leaders, especially Roma experts, who follow either one political option or the other or alternate between parties.

Most of the Sotu family members are either informal or formal leaders in Costesti and are Roma Party representatives in the regional area. Corina Sotu, as a regional Roma expert and prefecture employee, is expected to be a state representative for the Roma communities (including those from Costesti) and at the same time a political broker for the PNL regional patronage politics (the prefect's party). In addition, as a Roma Party representative she needs to support both the Roma Party and the national Roma Party-PSD political alliance (political patronage).

From her positions, the *PNL regional patronage politics* offered by the prefect's political orientation and *national PSD political patronage of Roma Party* are contradictory fields of politics through which Corina Sotu needs to negotiate and mediate. On the other hand, in Costesti, all her family members including Dinica Sotu, local Roma expert, support the local PSD patronage. These divisions between Costesti and Goteni political orientation often generated conflicts between Corina Sotu and her brother Dinica Sotu. Due to the different political interests they needed to follow, they could not collaborate in matters concerning Roma community issues but were rather involved in political struggles. Each of them was interested in persuading the Roma to vote for one political party or another. Thus, the interference of *PSD political patronage of Roma party* and the variation in *patronage politics* at different administrative levels altered the role of Roma experts, who were not primarily interested in representing or handling Roma community problems, but rather in representing different political interests.

The most delicate situation is that of Roma experts (patronage brokers), whose official positions and responsibilities confine their leadership actions to state

strategies of social integration and local patronage. However, the informal Roma leaders (power brokers) of both Romanianized Gypsies and Caldarars have more space for negotiation inside the two fields of politics: political patronage and patronage politics. Ioader Candel, the informal Romanianized Roma leader in Costesti narrated a brief history of his political brokerage and the transformations in Roma local voting behaviour.

C: How were the Roma Party representatives established in Costesti?

I: We announced that one week in advance. Who came then? The state secretary of the Roma who is also a Roma representative for the Roma Party in Goteni. Corina Sotu, who works for the prefecture, invited him. Corina Sotu told me: 'he is going to nominate you'. Now it is not as it was before - public elections. We had 5-600 people [attending the meeting].

C: Who were the other candidates?

I: Only people from the Sotu family: Costin, my nephew, was 18 years old, and, overall, there were six of us. Those from Bucharest said [to all Romanianized Roma on the stadium] 'raise your hands' and they all raised the hands for me.

C: And in 1992 you had the first elections for the local council. Whom did you vote for and how did you tell Gypsies to vote?

I: Votes were distributed randomly. People [candidates] came with packs [of food] and asked the Gypsies to vote for them, and Gypsies divided between different parties.

C: And how did you tell Gypsies to vote?

I: It was not our elections to tell them not to vote for somebody.

C: That means you had no interest in any candidate.

I: No, none.

C: When did you start to get interested in voting for one candidate or another?

I: Since Sorpaci came, in 2000. I started, because we knew each other from the cooperative state farm. (Ioader Candel, informal Roma leader Costesti)

This interview fragment shows how in the early 90s Roma politics started to take shape locally through community elections under the coordination of the Roma Party, which aimed to build an infrastructure of local political activism in all the regions of Romania. As Ioader Candel claims, these were community elections among the Roma, which were later formalized in local or regional elections for the position of Roma Party councillor, a position difficult to obtain in competition with main political parties (PSD, PNL, PDL).

In the early 90s, the first community elections for the positions of Roma Party representatives were organized only among Romanianized Roma. More than that,

Roma Party candidates were all from the same family of fiddlers - Sotu, who were active in the socialist second economy and succeeded, after 1990, in becoming local or regional leaders and later on active political brokers in local and regional patronage politics. On the other hand, the Caldarars, who always acted as a separate group, did not participate in these elections and were still organized around the main *bulibasa* Iancu. More than that, while in early 90s, Caldarars were connected to *restitution politics* (especially those who received back their gold), showing allegiance to the PSD and former president Ion Iliescu. On the other hand, in the same period, Romanianized Roma were susceptible to vote buying and split their votes between different political parties.

Interestingly Ioader Candel's statement, 'It was not our elections, to tell them not to vote for somebody,' suggests that in early 90s he was not interested in convincing Romanianized Roma to vote for one political party or another and he did not act as a political broker for political parties. He suggests that in the 90s the local mayoral elections were of little interest to Romanianized Roma.

In the 2000s, he became interested in supporting the main candidate, Sorpaci, because, as he says, he knew him and in his terms that represented the main reason for his political and electoral assistance. However, it is not clear if his support for candidate Sorpaci came before the local elections, when Sorpaci was part of a different party, or after elections, when Sorpaci and Comsa formed a local PSD patronage team.

My explanation for Ioader Candel's late interest in political brokerage is that 2000 was the year when the local PSD patronage team (mayor Sorpaci and deputy mayor Comsa) was constituted and Roma leaders were asked by local patronage actors to influence the Roma's voting options in exchange for favours.

That can be applied both to Romanianized Roma and Caldarar leaders (formal and informal) who found in the new PSD local patronage a source of power, which enabled them to strengthen their leadership positions. Forms of Roma leadership (Roma experts, Romanianized Roma informal leaders and *bulibasi*), weak in terms of legitimacy, became valuable in terms of political brokerage for the local PSD



patronage battling with the opposition<sup>97</sup>. From 2000 *local patronage politics* became a common political practice organized locally by Sorin Comsa (local patron) and his followers' co-PSD team members such as mayor Sorpaci and Roma expert Dinica Sotu but also by Ioader Candel (informal Romanianized Roma leader) and other local PSD councillors and supporters. Ioader Candel told me more about the complicated voting options informed both by Roma Party and PSD local patronage.

C: Did Corina Sotu support the PSD or the Roma Party?

I: She was with the PSD then. When we did not have problems with our votes, we were with the PSD, for the parliamentary elections. When we needed votes for the Roma Party, we told them "brothers, we cannot vote for two people because Gypsies would vote for different people and thus cancel out each other's votes. Those from the PSD said, 'It's okay, Mr. Ioader.'" (Ioader Candel, informal Roma leader, Costesti)

Ioader Candel suggests that voting options for the Roma Party needed to be negotiated with local PSD patronage actors and central Roma Party representatives, who in 1999 entered a political coalition with the PSD, thus allowing Roma leaders to support their Roma Party during different elections. However, in other situations, the Romanianized Roma leaders Corina Sotu (regional Roma expert), Dinica Sotu (Costesti expert) and Ioader Candel (informal leader) were expected to support regional/local patronage politics (regional PNL/PDL, or Costesti PSD), the Roma Party, or the coalition PSD-Roma Party (support for the PSD).

This complicated picture created by overlappings between *patronage politics* (the mayor's or prefect's party) and *political patronage* (PSD-Roma Party alliance) is able to generate conflicts between Roma experts, who act as patronage brokers at different administrative levels where mayors or prefects may have different political membership and voting options. That provides the main explanation for the different voting patterns proposed by local and regional Roma experts.

In the 2008 parliamentary elections, while Corina Sotu advised Gypsies to vote for the Roma Party, Dinica Sotu, her brother, supported the PSD, (*Costesti local patronage*). In addition, in the last Euro parliamentary elections, Corina Sotu

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<sup>97</sup> The struggles and competition for leadership between *bulibasi* go through political brokerage and local patronage and are discussed in the chapter on every day politics.

supported the prefect's party (PNL) and aimed to convince Roma from Costesti to vote for the PNL. She did not agree with her brother Dinica Sotu, who generally supported and acted as a political broker for the PSD local patronage. The Roma experts' different political and voting options blurred the relevance of their kinship ties and for a long time they could not collaborate over Roma community issues. Dinica Sotu, Roma expert in Costesti, explained why he votes for the PSD rather than offering his support to the Roma Party.

C: Who do you actually support?

D: I go with the PSD.

C: Why not the Roma Party?

D: I also go with the Roma Party, but did the Roma Party come here to help me? I'm asking you. Did the Roma Party help me? Or was it the PSD?

D: So why did they (the mayor, deputy mayor, and administrator/patron - PSD patronage team) help Gypsies? Because I was here and I told him: 'Mr. Sorin, they are poor'. Sorin Comsa has known the Gypsies since he was a teacher. They were his pupils at school. Go into Tiganie (the Gypsy district) and you'll see that no one speaks badly about him, about Sorin. Only a mad person would say something bad about him. All of them support him. Do they have water, electricity, gas? (a rhetorical question).

C: Who then supported Corina Sotu?

D: Corina goes with Paun (the president of the Roma Party). (Dinica Sotu, Roma expert at the local council Costesti).

Mayor Sorpaci and the administrator/patron Sorin Comsa are PSD local political leaders who support Romanianized Roma in their everyday difficulties (documentation, exemption from taxes, and social services) in exchange for their votes. As Dinica Sotu suggests, the Roma Party cannot offer the same benefits and social and economic support that local PSD patronage offers them. On the other hand, Dinica Sotu's actions for the Romanianized Roma community are strongly supported by Sorin Comsa, who generally channels funding into local community development projects.

In this way, Dinica Sotu as a Romanianized Roma leader became dependent on local patronage politics and a *local patronage broker* who needs to convince Gypsies to vote for the PSD. In this context he is almost unable to support the Roma Party. In the interview, he mentions that Corina Sotu (his sister and regional Roma

expert) is the person who actively supports the Roma Party but, as I have shown, her actions are caught in the same contradictory problematic structure of patronage.

On the other hand, as I showed in the previous chapter on Roma leadership, Dinica Sotu was a Roma Party councillor but, for financial reasons, he had to leave his position and become a Roma expert. As a Roma Party councillor he was more able to act against local council decisions, which were disadvantageous for the Romanianized Roma. These days the only way for him to support Romanianized Roma community interests is to ask local patronage actors for help. In this way he subordinates his leadership actions to PSD local patronage and he is less able to express his critical views on local governance for the Roma.

C: How important is politics in the life of the Roma?

D: They are not interested in politics. They vote because I tell them who to vote for. I go there and tell them: 'Look, Comsa is running for election in 2012. You know this man and you know what he does for you. If you could not get a paper because you did not pay the council tax he went and put a word in for you. You didn't have food, one day. You didn't have money. You went and asked for money, and he gave you money and that didn't happen only during elections'. This happened frequently. If someone else is elected, it means nothing to me. Nothing can happen to me. I could be fired. So what? If someone else comes into the council I can choose not to cooperate with him as I do with Sorin Comsa and we minorities always have support in the government, as they need the Roma as institutional representatives. They can nominate someone else. If he does not appoint me as a Roma expert, the Roma Party will. (Dinica Sotu, Roma expert at the local council Costesti, Romanianized Roma)

Dinica Sotu, who is a Romanianized Roma and a Roma expert mainly refers to his relations with the Romanianized Roma community and almost not at all to the Caldara community, which officially should be represented by the same Roma expert, but is informally and institutionally mediated by the Caldara *bulibasi*. In the interview fragment he suggests that in terms of politics, Romanianized Roma do not have ideological options and they mainly follow his advice in terms of voting. From the discussions I had with Romanianized Roma, it is clear that the voting goes through the local patronage politics and is not always influenced by Roma expert Dinica Sotu (patronage broker) but mainly by Sorin Comsa (local patron) who,

through a long term relationship and direct exchanges (cash, services for votes), convinces the Roma to vote for his party (PSD).

Moreover, Roma experts acting as patronage brokers experience the constraints of power relations imposed through both *local patronage* and the Roma *expert state program*. Dinica's last statement shows the way he plays the game of independence from within these constraining power relations: local PSD patronage, Roma Party, central state. By looking at the contradictions inherent in his multiple subordination relations within and across overlapping spheres of power (local level politics and state governance) he envisages a possible escape route. Either the Roma Party or central government can nominate him as a Roma expert but collaboration with local patronage actors is the most important factor for his role and leadership activities. Through these collaborations he is able to support the Romanianized Roma in matters of social benefits, or applications for identity papers. Nevertheless, as one of Comsa's followers and a supporter of his political options and interests, he cannot afford to be critical of local patronage actions and local council decisions.

The existent local patronage politics was developed and maintained through local distribution of public resources and welfare. In the 90s, the Romanianized Roma who were seasonal workers during socialism were affected by chronic unemployment and became the main recipients of social welfare distributed by the local council. On the other hand, though not always eligible, the Caldarars were also interested in the welfare opportunities offered by the post-socialist state.

Grinea, first mayor of Costesti, currently a PNL local councillor, remembers that in the early 1990s there were no social benefits and the Roma were rarely in contact with the local council employees, including the mayor and deputy mayor, who are now part of the same patronage team.

C: Do you remember what else you have done for the Caldarars in your time as a mayor?

G: They did not use to come to the local council, except for their house sale papers, when needed. It was mostly the poor who came for heating and other benefits.

C: Do you consider they go to the council more often now?

G: Yes, there are more Roma going to the local council now. They heard that they give benefits but when they tell them to pay their debts and taxes, they just

say: that's not my business'. (Grinea, former mayor and school director, local PNL representative)

In the early 1990s, when the state had very few social welfare programs for those classified as 'disadvantaged groups', including the Roma, local patronage politics and clientelistic relations were nearly non-existent and there were almost no informal exchanges between the mayor/administrator and the Roma. As there were fewer things to be exchanged (e.g. votes for social benefits/services), the Roma and local governance actors were less interested in each other. Things changed from 1995 onwards when the state initiated the provision of social benefits for families with low incomes (Zamfir 1999). The program was designed to be implemented and organized by the local councils, who were responsible for distributing government funding (Lazar 2000). Since then, relations between the Roma and Costesti local council employees intensified, and welfare distribution started to work through clientelistic relations and later through the established local patronage politics.

Lipsky (1984) suggests that extensions or rather cuts in the welfare provision for minority or poor groups change their relation with the state, increase or diminish their political participation as citizen in the local decision making. In the context of my research, the effect and reaction to the institutionalization of state welfare provision were different for the two Roma groups. The Caldarars with high levels of autonomy became very active in the interactions with the local state institutions, eager to claim their citizen rights, from an external independent position. On the other hand, the Romanianized Roma's dependence on the state support became institutionalized and inscribed in their everyday discursive practice as a patriarchal relation with the state. Furthermore, from 2000 onwards, the relation with the state started to be mediated through local PSD patronage politics and the ways it was managed and negotiated revealed the Caldarars' high levels of externality in relation to state and local patronage and the Romanianized Roma's high levels of subjectivation to state and patronage politics. These aspects are discussed in the next chapter on *Roma-state encounters*, where I show how Roma, usually get access to the state's welfare through the back door of local patronage, where either the administrator of the village, the patron, or the mayor, are ready to help them when the local council workers reject their claims.

In this sense, Rodan, a PDL councillor, explained his discontent with local PSD patronage, which makes use of local welfare distribution to create a political monopoly on Roma political voting options.

C: Are the Roma politically important?

R: They are not only important, but extremely important for a certain political group.

C: Why are they not so important for the opposition?

R: Because they are manipulated through the social benefits they receive from the government. Everything is done through the local council where the same team has been in power for 12 years now. There are people who have been working there since 1990 and they have control over the Gypsies.

C: Do you have any Roma who support your party?

R: We try, but everything is monopolized. It does not work with those from the valley – [the Romanianized Roma]. I talked to them personally and they promised they would vote for my party; then, on the next day, the whole PSD commando [ironically-representatives and supporters] were there, putting pressure on the Roma. They use pressure and blackmail. (Rodan, PDL, local councillor)

Rodan's statements suggest that the local distribution of state welfare, which is made through the local council, has become a key instrument of political monopoly for those who lead the local governance (mayor, deputy mayor and administrator) and their followers. The local patron/administrator of the village Sorin Comsa is surrounded by council employees, who need to please his Roma clients, and the *Roma brokers* (Roma experts and informal Roma leaders). Usually, Romanianized Roma brokers negotiate in the best interest of both concerned parties: votes for local patronage by the PSD and Romanianized Roma's applications for state welfare. In some cases, as Rodan suggested and Romanianized Roma confirmed, Roma voters are threatened by local patronage main actors with losing their local social benefits. Moreover, the Roma patronage brokers (Roma experts) and their followers, who also engage in political campaigns, maintain the local patronage politics and do not leave space for representatives of other political parties or the Roma Party itself to get support from Roma electorate.

## Conclusions

*The main pattern of change that affected the post-1989 Roma politics is the change from restitution politics to patronage politics and political patronage.* Restitution politics started in the early 90s and mainly influenced Caldarars' voting options. For a long period Caldarars were interested in voting for Iliescu's party (PSD) and had almost no interest in giving their support to the Roma Party. Local PSD patronage politics was institutionalized in 2000, when mayor and vice-mayor joined the same PSD team and started to assist Romanianized Roma in everyday problems and interactions with the local council in exchange for votes.

However, the *patronage politics*, the expression of this intersectionality between state and politics varied according to the dominant political party of the region/locality (PSD, PDL, and PNL)<sup>98</sup>. It served primarily to transform Roma leaders like Dinica Sotu and Corina Sotu into *patronage brokers*, who started to follow the prefect's or mayor's political interests and to convince Roma to vote for their parties. Roma leaders became less able to participate actively in local decision making, to represent Roma communities and to react to acts of injustice (e.g. distribution of social benefits), done by the local government to the Romanianized Roma.

Therefore, *restitution politics*, which was much more effective for Caldarars' voting options and later on, *local patronage politics*, prevented both Caldarars and Romanianized Roma from voting for Roma parties and precluded the local development of Roma politics.

Moreover, from 1999 onwards the political alliance between the PSD and the Roma Party established a central *political patronage within Roma politics*, which extended to local levels and affected Roma Party representativeness and leadership. Roma Party representatives, who are local Roma leaders were expected to support the PSD in elections and extend their support to the Roma Party only in negotiation with PSD representatives and patronage actors.

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<sup>98</sup> 'Cine conduce Romania! Harta baronilor locali din Romania. Baronii vechi si noi' [Who rules Romania! The map of local barons in Romania. Old and new barons]. Source: [Econtext](#) - April 11, 2011.

*While in the early 1990s, the field of Roma politics was overshadowed by the field of restitution politics, in the late 1990s was almost totally absorbed and captured by two other fields of politics (political processes): patronage politics and political patronage.* At the local level, these two fields of politics, which overlapped or contradicted each other, complicated the positions and actions of the formal and informal Roma leaders, who needed to accommodate both. It generally obstructed the active participation of Roma experts in the local decision making process but also obstructed Roma communities' political support for the Roma Party, main Roma political formation.

Tracing the practices of mediation between public institutions and the Roma communities, I described the Roma experts as *state/patronage brokers* and the informal Roma leaders as *power brokers*. Being directly connected to central level political actors, such as Delu Nistor, informal Roma leaders, such as Romanianized Roma leader Candel, are able to give preferential support to the local patron or political actors from the opposition, but do not necessarily represent and support Roma communities. Nevertheless, neither the Roma experts-patronage brokers, nor the informal Roma leaders-power brokers can be characterized as genuine Roma representatives or activists, who focus primarily on Roma interests and actively participate in their communities' development.

The transition and overlapping between fields of politics (restitution politics, patronage and political patronage) undermined the development of an independent field of Roma politics, which could have become a bridge between different Roma groups (e.g. Caldarars and Romanianized Roma) and a strong source of Roma representation and participation in both central and local decision making.

In terms of the aim of my thesis, which is to explore sources of empowerment vs disempowerment for the two Roma groups, the transformations occurring in Roma politics through power relations established at the centre (*PSD political patronage* of the Roma Party), and also locally through *patronage politics*, obstructed the development of forms of self- governance among Romanianized Roma, which had been encouraged by the Roma Party in early 90s.

Moreover, the under-development of Roma politics served to maintain the barriers between the two Roma groups (Romanianized Roma and Caldarars), who were not



encouraged to form links and continued to exclude each other. On the other hand, Caldarars were precluded from reformulating their form of *bulibasa* leadership, which transformed in time into political brokerage. However, political power brokerage performed by *bulibasi*, aimed at convincing Caldarars to vote for different parties, did not limit their form of economic self-governance, shaped by a mobile approach to their economic practices.

## **Chapter 6. Membership without Belonging. Roma Encounters with the State: Documenting Identity and Levels of Subjection to State Control**

The present chapter is a continuation of the one on Roma leadership, which developed the historical dimension of Roma leaders' interaction with both the socialist and post-socialist state. It questions Roma subjection to state power and identifies changes brought by post-socialism in the relations Roma have with the state. *In the chapter, I explore variations and differences in the relations Roma groups established with the local state, which bring differential access to opportunities and constraints in their socio-economic organization and forms of self-governance.*

The state is an everyday presence in the lives of individuals and communities, which acts more or less repressively. It can constrain individuals and groups' practices and actions as much as it can offer spaces for interactions and negotiations of identity. For the Romanian Gypsies, the state has always been an important actor, defined and approached differently in various periods. While the socialist state was constructed as a centralized and a repressive structure with harsh mechanisms of control and surveillance, the post-socialist political and economic transformations generated gaps of authority and legality. As described in the chapter on 'Historical transformations', the withdrawal of the state generated a high level of insecurity and inequalities due to monopolies of power<sup>99</sup>, but also informal opportunities to be exploited further. As I analysed in the previous chapters on 'Roma leadership' and 'Local level politics', representatives of the local patronage politics (mayor, deputy-mayor and the administrator of the village) have control over the local distribution of welfare and process of obtaining identity documents. Roma relations with the local state are often mediated through patronage politics. In this chapter, I aim at exploring

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<sup>99</sup> Bridger, Pine 1998, Grødeland 2006; Humphrey 2002 a,b; Eyal, Szelenyi, and Townsley 1998; Verdery 2002, 1996, 1993, 1991; Szelenyi, Szelenyi, Kovách 1995.

in detail this type of mediation between local state authorities and members of both Roma communities. The questions I seek to answer are the following:

*Are the two Roma communities subjected to state power or local patronage politics?*

*How are Caldarar and Romanianized Roma communities affected by clientelism in their relations with bureaucrats?*

*What are the consequences of the clientelistic mediation between Roma and the local state representatives on forms of self-governance and community organization?*

In the next section, I will present the main forms of interaction with the local state and with the main state actors and patronage followers in Costesti.

### **Local state actors, local government and Roma**

During my fieldwork, I made regular visits to the local council administrative and social work offices, where I actively observed the interactions between the Roma and state workers. I participated in these interactions and on occasion tried to mediate conflicts between Roma local council workers and to support Roma with advice about documentation issues. Both the Romanianized Roma and Caldarars come often at the local council to claim the certificates and documents required for social benefit applications. The volume of claims is overwhelming for the local state workers. Even the physical space of the local council seems insufficient to accommodate their visits.



**Figure 22** Entrance of Costesti local council, Romanianized Roma, guardian of the local council during the weekends, Photo taken by the author 2010.

The local council is a medium-size building with 8 or 9 office rooms of which three are occupied by the mayor, deputy-mayor and the administrator of the village. I frequently observed many Roma standing in the hall ways of the council's building, especially Caldarar families with their children, waiting to get in and ask for information and documents. The atmosphere was always tense and full of anxiety and there were frequent quarrels between Roma and local state employees. I had informal conversations with social workers and was present in their offices during opening hours when most of the Roma would come and ask for documents or apply for social benefits. I used to visit two offices: the council's agricultural registry office and the social assistance office where I witnessed informal conversations between local social workers and members of Roma community.

I was mainly in the council agricultural registry office of inspector engineer Moraru, who, together with his office mate, was responsible for the identification, measurement and registration of all buildings and land properties in the village area.

He was the principal person involved in quarrels with Roma, especially with Caldarars. Although he was a supporter of the PSD's political ideology and their local representatives (local administrator Comsa, mayor Sorpaci and PSD councillors), he disagreed with the local practice of patronage and with Comsa's strategy of supporting Roma in exchange of votes. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Comsa is the most important local state and political leader, the local patron of the village, interested in accessing political power through clientelistic relations and exchanges with the two Roma communities. Bureaucrats are often unhappy about these practices, as they interfere with their capacity to fulfil their responsibilities and override the legal procedures they need to follow in their everyday professional practice.

In the social assistance office, three social workers were responsible for state social benefit applications made by both Romanians and Roma. I should mention here social worker Rodica Sterea with whom I often had informal conversations about Roma applications and queries. In the same office Roma expert Dinica Sotu, who is responsible for mediating between Roma communities and local bureaucrats, helping social assistance workers prepare the necessary documentation for Roma social benefit applications. He would also join local officials on their visits to Roma districts, especially to the Romanianized Roma district, but only occasionally on visits to the Caldarars' district. Dinica Sotu explained that as a Romanianized Roma, he usually avoids the Caldarars' district and he pays visits to the Caldarars' area only when there is an urgent need or local officials need to contact a Caldarar family to resolve legal problems/issues. He was present in the office on several occasions, but most of the times he was out dealing with Roma issues.

All the local council, employees emphasised the problematic nature of local patronage represented by the mayor Sorpaci, the local administrator of the village Comsa and his supporters, PSD councillors, whose principal aim is to satisfy Roma demands in return for their votes. The two Roma communities' problems provide a key underpinning for the structure of local patronage politics, which exerts pressure on local council employees to deal with Roma problems.

The secretary of the local council told me that the commune of Costesti has a big problem as it has two categories of Roma: 'rich' and 'poor' compared with other

communes which have only either 'poor' or 'rich' Gypsies. From her point of view, the rich are those who cause problems for the local administration because they do not pay taxes for their firms and houses, for which they have no papers. She considers that 'poor' Romanianized Roma are not a source of big problems for the local council. She considers it is easy to communicate with them and they generally pay their debts to the local council. In cases where they do not pay taxes, they are registered and easily identifiable by the local council representatives, unlike the Caldarars who generally lack official papers (*Field notes, 13 October 2009*). Most of the local officials I talked to considered the Caldarars to be the most problematic group, as they manage to avoid state control and identification.

I also had informal conversations about the issue of identity documents with both Roma and police officers dealing with local issues, which included Roma districts, and a formal interview with the former local officer in chief, Racov, who gave me details about how the police deal with identification and control among the Caldarars. In the next section, I will present the general theoretical outline, which informs the ethnography of this chapter.

### **State encounters and documenting identity**

The state categories are not only those of surveillance and control, criminality and illegality, but also those of welfare, which mark out the limits of legibility for applicants. As Caplan and Torpey (2001) argue, the transition from a police state (e.g. Romanian socialism) to a welfare state has entailed the development of new categories of identification and criteria of eligibility for citizens. The 'legibility effect' (Scott 1988) is generated through documentary practices, which indicate "the double sign of the state's distance and its penetration into the life of the everyday" (Das and Poole 2004a: 15). In order to be governed, to fall within the scope of the state's welfare net, individuals need to be identified and quantified through documentation procedures (Caplan and Torpey 2001).

Documenting identity is one of the identification mechanisms that intervene in any citizen's life, it has both 'repressive', and 'emancipatory' effects, it grants and restricts individual rights and access to benefits (Caplan and Torpey 2001).

Therefore, individuals seem to be challenged to place themselves either inside or outside the state's sphere of action. Those who accept documenting and identification procedures get permission to use state services and benefits but become, at the same time, subjects of its control and surveillance. Moreover, through the documenting process, individuals can be partly 'expropriated' (Caplan and Torpey 2001: 8) of their own identity and subjected to the state's classificatory categories and they become identifiable governable subjects.

Nevertheless, the performative element involved in identity challenges the fixed identity categories (Ferme 2004, Fraenkel 1992, Jeganathan 2004, Poole 2004) proposed by the state and its classificatory procedures. Nelson (2004) argues that the state can have a double face and produce in individuals' reactions of both fear and desire. In this sense, I consider that membership and belonging are not individual or institutional choices, but subscribe to the logic of encounters with state actors, who, sometimes, coincide with local patronage ones. In these interactions and encounters, Roma can be subject to state power and local patronage politics.

Individuals can fear belonging but desire membership in so far as state laws offer both constraints and opportunities. The most significant encounters Caldarars have experienced with the state were those of identification, programs carried out by both socialist and post-socialist states with or without their collaboration. My ethnographic study on the Roma encounters with the state goes beyond apparent binary and sharp oppositions between being inside or outside the state mechanisms of control and identification, between the "repressive" and "emancipatory" powers of documents. It shows the ways in which relations with the state rules, procedures are performed, negotiated between Roma, state workers/bureaucrats and local patronage actors. In this sense, Lipsky's (1971, 1980, 1984) discussion on 'street level bureaucrats' as "ambassadors of government with particularly significant impacts upon the lives of the poor and of relatively powerless minorities" (Lipsky 1971: 392) is relevant. Lipsky (1971) considers that an efficient interaction between bureaucrats and citizen is deterred by a series of factors : 'inadequate resources' (technology, information), 'physical and psychological threats', 'contradictory or ambiguous role expectations' and 'conflicting role expectations' (p.393-5). In this context, it is useful to explore and understand the barriers of interaction between state workers and the

Roma and what exactly causes inefficiency, dissatisfaction and stress for both parts involved (state bureaucrats vs. Roma). It is also worth mentioning that in the Romanian case, street -level bureaucrats are not simply government ambassadors as Lipsky (1971) defines them in the context of American society, but they are or expected to be local patronage followers. This kind of overlapping roles adds another source of conflicting interests, stress and impediments in the relations between state bureaucrats and citizen. In the next sections I mainly concentrate my attention on present Roma interactions with the local state bureaucrats (e.g. police officers, local council workers) in matters of identification, benefit applications, family and community problems.

### **Romanianized Roma and their interactions with the local authorities**

During my fieldwork sessions at the local council and in the Romanianized Roma district, I was particularly attentive to the everyday interactions Romanianized Roma have with the local authorities and to their accounts of these interactions. In the next two paragraphs I present two vignettes from my field notes, which will reflect the way Romanianized Roma interact with the local authorities and the main local PSD patronage actors (mayor, village administrator, deputy-mayor).

Marina is a Romanianized Roma who lives on state social benefits. On one occasion, she was asked by the local doctors to pay for the health certificates needed to register her child at school. Marina refused to pay and she went to the local council accompanied by two other women to ask for help. The mayor, Sorpac, PSD representative, offered to help the Gypsy women himself. He called the local clinic in order to resolve the problem but he was unable to convince the doctors to exempt the Gypsy women from paying for the health certificates for their children. However, the mayor decided to give them the amount of money (4 RON each) needed to cover the price of the health certificates (*Field notes, 21 October 2009*).

Adina, another Romanianized Roma woman, had a different experience in her interaction with the local council. She told me a story about how she approached the local council to ask for access to EU benefits (mainly food products: packs of flour and sugar). Initially the local mayor repeatedly refused her application and



threatened to call the police. Adina did not give up and she continued to pay weekly visits to the local council. One day when a commission from Bucharest was present at the local council she decided to challenge the mayor's decision by entering the council meeting room unannounced and expressing her discontent with regard to the distribution of EU benefits. At that moment, the mayor, who was alarmed and worried by her unanticipated approach, declared publicly that he would provide the food products to eligible beneficiaries as soon as possible. However, the mayor did not keep his promise and Adina continued to pay visits to the local council for several weeks with no success (*Field notes, June 2010*).

The above accounts offer two different stories about the same mayor, who is sometimes helpful to the Roma, and at other times discriminates against the Roma. An explanation for this behaviour is given by multiple positions local patronage actors (mayor, local administrator) occupy across spheres of power (state and politics) and interest. Both mayor Sorpaci and local administrator Sorin Comsa are state representatives but they are at the same time main PSD patronage actors who are interested in getting Roma's votes.

The mayor does not have a consistent approach in relation to Romanianized Roma and Caldarars. It is well known that he is supportive of the Romanian community and less so with his Roma clients. However, in many cases the mayor provides clientelistic support to the Roma as part of the system of local patronage politics.

On the other hand, actions of local institutions are sometimes discriminatory and work as a deterrent in their everyday life. The Romanianized Roma report they are confused in their relations with the local administration as they are not sure whether they can rely on institutional support or not. Rather, they have expectations of support from mayor Sorpaci and administrator Sorin Comsa, who are interested in solving their problems in exchange for their votes and political support. Romanianized Roma queries are institutionally rejected, but they are always solved through the backdoor of local patronage politics. Sorin Comsa, the main Social Democrat representative, the local patron of the village, who previously had a central government role, is one of the people who was always able to obtain Romanianized Roma votes and support during electoral campaigns in this way.

The Romanianized Roma are aware of these differences between important local political actors and institutional practices and they know that in their everyday issues they need to negotiate with the PSD officials rather than with the local state bureaucrats. The result is the maintenance of clientelistic relationships between Roma and main local patronage actors, based on contradictory feelings of obligation, appreciation but also discontent.

### **The state signature and procedures of identification: Caldarars interactions with the local state**

Documentation of identity is produced through individual - state encounters, negotiable interactions between the Roma and local state workers performed at the intersectionality between state and politics (patronage politics). The state procedures of documenting identity are often domesticated and conducted through unofficial means by local patronage interests. In this section, I provide an analysis of the interactions and debates the Caldarars have with the local state authorities (local council, police) in matters of welfare distribution and access to state services. Caldarars predominate in everyday interactions with the local state. They usually come with their families to solve issues regarding documenting identity and obtaining the documentation needed for social benefit applications. Their strong visible presence and insistence is the source of much debate and even quarrels with the local council employees.

On the other hand, Romanianized Roma, who hold identity documents and are main recipients of the state welfare, pay fewer visits to the local council and have less conflictual relations with the local employees. In this section and the following, I will focus primarily on issues of documenting identity, faced mainly by Caldarars in interactions with the local council employees.

Caldarars are locally known as those who avoid the documentation of their properties. Most of them have neither property papers nor construction certificates for their buildings. Their houses are very large – approximately 500 square meters each - and in each courtyard, they build more than one building. Most of medium level income families buy one piece of land on which they build separate houses. Usually, they buy land without papers from the Romanian peasants with the aim of

avoiding identification by the local authorities. This lack of property documentation creates many problems regarding tax collection and for these reasons the local council has frequently been fined by their regional and national financial headquarters.

There are many situations in which the Caldarars, who are not eligible for state social benefits<sup>100</sup>, insistently visit the local council and ask for housing and child social support benefits. In these instances, the council workers are not usually able to help them. (*Field notes, 27 October 2009*). For any kind of state support, the Caldarars have to have proof that they do not run a firm. Local council workers frequently get annoyed about the fact that the rich Caldarars always attempt and sometimes succeed in getting state or social benefits by avoiding the identification process.

For instance, engineer Moraru explained how Caldarar families succeeded in applying for the housing benefits usually granted to single youths. Although Caldarars live together with their partners and children, they lack marriage certificates and property documents. Caldarar men hold all the properties and firms in their partner's name, which gives eligibility to at least one partner to claim state benefits (heating subsidies, state assistance for lone parents).

On the other hand, it is interesting to notice, as many other local officials told me, how some Caldarars come to the local council in their expensive Jeep 4X4 cars in order to apply for social benefits, which usually represent only very small amounts of cash. This attitude can be associated with their commercial spirit, which they use in any sort of negotiations, and from which they expect to gain maximum returns.

The local council functionaries are frequently upset and stressed about the whole situation, as they know that many Caldarars are much richer than they are, and yet still manage to obtain social benefits. As Goffman (1956) argues, 'servers' who experience a lower socio-economic position in relation to their clients engage subtle

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<sup>100</sup>Many Caldarars who claim housing benefits are considered ineligible by local bureaucrats, because they either lack the necessary documentation or they are involved in informal businesses with high returns which are not documented.

forms of aggressiveness in their attitudes. That underlies the tense interaction between the two parts, which many times erupts in quarrels.

On the other hand, many Caldarars do not understand why some of them are eligible while others are not. Few of the cases are clear-cut, which are usually the older people who have received reparations for their deportation during the Second World War to Transnistria. Both parts (Caldarars and bureaucrats) accuse each other of defiance. While the bureaucrats consider that, the Caldarars are rich and not entitled to claim state benefits, the Caldarars claim they are discriminated by the state workers.

However, eligibility is the product of communication between state functionaries and Roma applicants. Documents are subject to negotiable meanings by both parties (Das and Poole 2004 a, b). In the following paragraphs, I present an account of a quarrel between local council workers and a young Caldarar man who wanted a certificate to confirm his address in the village so as to be able to renew his ID card. Engineer Moraru, the local inspector on building issues, advised him to ask the people he lived with and share the same house and probably had property papers, to help him with this matter. The young man came back with his mother and they told engineer Moraru that they could not find the other person they live with but they really needed the certificate.

Engineer Moraru aggressively refused them: If you are Gypsies, you have to live in your Tiganie [Gypsy quarter]!

The Caldarar man: Why don't you hit us? What do you want? Money?

Moraru, smiling nervously: Yeah, that would probably work.

The Caldarar man: We need ID cards to vote for your party [the PSD patronage party].

This was the moment when engineer Moraru became really annoyed and yelled at them.

The Caldarar man: Why are you being so mean?

Engineer Moraru, almost yelling: 'I'm simply telling you how it is, I am sincere.' At the same time, he asked his female colleague: 'Do not give up, do not surrender to them, if you do that I will never help you again'.

To the Gypsies: 'God will give you justice!' Then he asked them loudly to get out: 'Take your ID cards and get out now! Then he remarked ironically to his colleague: 'You should bring him to my house. Give him this, give her that and then when you go to their house they would put their dogs on you.'

The mother of the young Caldarar man told me that several days before, some police officers together with *bulibasa* Razar came to bring their certificates to remind them that they would have to renew their ID cards if they wanted to vote (*Field notes, 12 November 2009*).

The story reveals some of the common tensions between local bureaucrats and Caldarars who usually have informal claims, which cannot legally be fulfilled. Patronage politics is the main source of confidence for Caldarars, as well as a source of stress and disruption for local bureaucrats who are required and entitled to apply the state laws to solve documentation problems. Local council bureaucrats are aware that Caldarars' performances are supported by relationships they have with main local PSD actors (administrator/patron Comsa and mayor Sorpaci) and they need to decide whether to follow the law or the local PSD patronage interests. These contradictory directions produce inconsistency in their actions as state bureaucrats, who many times feel overruled by the local patronage actors (e.g. mayor, vice mayor) who give access to state welfare to those ineligible Roma. In this context, Roma-state interaction 'situation', in Goffmanian terms, is never clearly defined. It is rather continuously negotiated between Roma, state bureaucrats and local patronage actors. 'The situation' is a space of negotiation between state laws, Roma claims and patronage interests. The latter can variably support or reject the Roma's state benefit entitlement. Therefore, the source of information needed for a clear definition of 'the situation' of interaction (Goffman 1956) between bureaucrats and the Roma is highly unstable. With this lack of coordination of the role expectation and performance, interactions between Roma and state bureaucrats remain in a state of "anomie that is generated when the minute social system of face-to-face interaction breaks down" (Goffman 1956: 6). In Goffman's terms the interactions lack what defines as 'working consensus', which takes place between "participants [who] contribute to a single overall definition of the situation which involves not so much a real agreement as to what exists but rather a real agreement as to whose issues will be temporarily honoured"(p.4). Real agreement is also made in order to avoid "an open conflict of definition of situation" (p.4). In the absence of this kind of tacit agreements over the definition of interaction, the encounters between Roma and local council bureaucrats take, most of the time, the form of fights and intense aggressive quarrels. However,

in the case of local council workers interactions with the Caldarars, there is a generalized lack of agreement, which also includes non-agreement in issues of documentation and proofs of documented identity.

During one of my visits, the two social workers of the local council told me that a Roma social worker was needed. In this way, they could avoid direct involvement with their problems. I asked them why the Roma expert Dinica Sotu does not manage the situation. Their answer was that he usually does not want to get too involved. However, the Roma expert is not allowed to undertake the social workers' responsibilities. His role is to mediate between the Roma communities and state functionaries but not necessarily to solve their applications and queries directly. Moreover, the Roma experts are state employees with separate funding from a governmental strategic project that ends in 2013. Therefore, the employment condition of the Roma expert is highly dependent on the governmental structures and he is, in this sense, directly subjected to their powers. Through his position within the local council, Roma expert Dinica Sotu in Costesti feels in a vulnerable condition and therefore subject to the functions of local state which frequently overlaps with local PSD patronage politics represented by mayor Sorpaci and local administrator Comsa.

Often these claims and queries centre on exchanges between Roma interested in state benefits and the local council interested in tax collection. The mayor and the deputy-mayor decided that before being able to get certificates, papers and applications, the Roma must pay their fines and their local taxes. However, the exchanges are contextualized and mediated by political interests. The mayor and the administrator, who are local PSD representatives, have a considerable interest in attracting more Roma supporters to their party. They are the ones to establish the rules and they change them to suit their own preferences. Those Roma who promise to vote PSD are exempted from paying council tax. In this context the exchange, local council tax-documents vs. benefits, is a mechanism of control over Roma voting behaviour (both Romanianized Roma and Caldarars).

During the 2009 presidential elections, Caldarars would come in large numbers to renew their ID cards. In order to renew their ID cards, locals need to get a certificate from the local council proving that they live at a certain address within the

administrative area of the village. Official proof of an address is given on the basis of the property papers for buildings or land used. However, as already stated, Caldarars do not have any property documents and frequently use the affinities between local politics and the local state's administration in order to get new identity papers. As happened frequently during my fieldwork, a Caldarar man, who had no contract for his land and buildings came to the local council to ask to renew his ID card.

M: He has not paid the council tax. Aren't you Romanian? Why don't you pay the council tax? Why do I pay it? They come before elections without ID cards and they say they want to vote and we cannot refuse them.

His office fellow added: We cannot refuse their right to vote. We need to let them vote.

M: Maybe they want to take advantage of the local council's desire to get their votes for the local ruling party in the presidential elections. They are going to see what will happen after these elections! (Engineer Moraru, local council official, Field notes, 27 October 2009).

Inspector Moraru's actions seem to be caught somewhere between enforcing the state's rules and protecting the mayor and local administrator's interests. Local patronage interests have, in Goffmanian terms, a disruptive character for the 'self-conceptions of personality' of state bureaucrats, who are overruled by patronage actors' promises and actions. For these reasons, many times, local council workers feel discredited and lose or even lack authority as bureaucrats who are entitled to apply the state law.

In Moraru's discourse and practice, the difference between local council and local patronage politics is blurred. His statements are interesting as they show how spheres of power (state and politics) communicate and overlap to the point where they can get mixed up in the local council workers' experience. On the other hand, it shows Moraru's discontent with the local patronage politics, which blocks his authority and undermines his role as a state bureaucrat, who needs to enforce the law. He frequently mentioned that Comsa and his followers undermine bureaucratic authority.

When I asked him why they didn't have a system for identifying Caldarars, who do not pay taxes, he replied by saying that he was still waiting for the elections to be over, as before and during the elections Caldarars constantly come to the local

council to claim papers, promising to vote for the local ruling party. He then added that in this way the administrator of the village, PSD representative, Comsa compromises himself. He suggested that Comsa is the person who asks the local bureaucrats to close their eyes and tolerate the Caldarars' non-payment of council taxes.

Most of the time Caldarars' clientelistic expectations are raised before and during elections. They define from the beginning their encounters with state workers as connected to local patronage interests. As Goffman (1956) argues, that is a way "the individual starts to define the situation and starts to build up lines of responsive action." (p.5). Although, as I already mentioned, in general lines, they do follow the game of local patronage, local council workers do not necessarily agree with this definition which undermines their authority as bureaucrats.

A Caldarar man explained to me how he succeeded in getting a new birth certificate from the local council. The local council officers asked for the house construction license and Caldarar man could not provide the document, so he decided instead to threaten them by saying: 'I have many friends and during the elections you will need me!' This proved to be a very good strategy as he received the certificate he needed (*Field notes, 22 October 2009*). Another example comes from a Caldarar woman who wanted to renew his ID card:

Razar [*bulibasa*] told us that we needed to go to the local council and renew our ID cards because we had to vote! And we are afraid of him. We do as all the others do and we vote the same sign [PSD political party logo]. (*Field notes, 18 November 2009*).

The examples show the way common Caldarars exploit the interrelatedness between state and politics, expressed in local patronage politics and are able in this way to threaten the local bureaucrats, when their demands are not met. It also reveals how sometimes Caldarars subordinate their interactions with local council workers to the controllers of these exchanges and interconnections: political brokers. The latter are, most of the time, their informal leaders '*bulibasi*' who perform the brokerage between different political parties and the Caldarar community and open the community's doors to the main local authorities and institutions. Voting is the main mechanism through which Caldarars exploit the boundary of state-politics. In the



next section I show how supported by clientistic relations Caldarars create 'identity fictions' to get access to state welfare.

### **Identity 'fictions' and identity recognition: the difficulties of the local authorities in identifying Caldarars**

Many Caldarars who buy houses from Romanians demolish the old buildings and construct new larger ones without the necessary authorisation. On the other hand, the local council is pressurised by the regional and central institutions to report the payment of state revenue for the areas built on. This is a reason why the Caldarars frequently find themselves in conflict with the local council. Due to these tensions, the local council resorts to the police force to get the precise size and other measurements of the Caldarars' constructions. Usually, when these inspections occur, the Caldarars shut their doors and refuse to speak to or even harass the local council representatives, and that is why police are often considered to be more effective in this form of control over Gypsies' 'identity'. This form of identification, which is enforced by the police does not require recognition from those identified rather it is imposed and established along the lines of general identificatory categories, classified forms of identity, used by the police and state mechanisms of surveillance: residency and official names. Police officers use both formal and informal mechanisms in identifying Caldarars. The former chief officer Racov was able to give me more details about this.

C: Have you ever had problems in identifying the Caldarars?

R: No. I knew them all. Their name, nicknames, their parents, relatives. I know their whole family.

C: How did you get to know them?

R: From my direct contact with their district. I used to go there often and try to get a feel for the area.

R: There are 20 people with the name Mateiescu Ion and 30 others called Mateiescu Maria. I had the names and their pictures and so they couldn't hide from me. It was a way to prove that I knew them and that they didn't need to run from me because they couldn't escape.

C: Where did you have their pictures from?

R: Besides the fiscal files, we had lots of other things for which the Gypsies were investigated...Usually minor things (...)

C: Who was a good informer for you? A *bulibasa* or an ordinary Gypsy [Caldarar]?

R: The ordinary Gypsies. I have never given them [bulibasi] any more attention than they deserved.

C: Were they interested in supporting the police or the community?

R: They played a double game. They were supportive when they could see an advantage for themselves. (Racov, former chief officer, Costesti).

The officer's confidence in being able to identify those Caldarars who have the same names relies on his close experience with the Caldarar community. The relationship does not always need mediation from a Caldarar *bulibasa*, as this would reduce a police officer's control over the Caldarars' actions. Racov suggests that Caldarar *bulibasi* cannot always be trusted as they have multiple interests (personal, communitarian or political) in different circumstances, supporting either the community or the institutions of the state. On the other hand, the connection between police officers and *bulibasa* is still maintained as it provides fast access to the community in urgent situations.

Besides data bases with pictures and biographical details, Racov, as a police officer, used his personal local experience in the village and his carefully cultivated informal relations with members of Caldarar community to identify people by name and residence. In this case, the local police mechanisms of identification are upheld by a well-developed local relational dynamic between police officers and community members. As Migdal (2004) argues, "people can accommodate multiple boundaries and multiple senses of belonging, even ones with radically different principles underlying their practices" (p. 22).

*However, this form of identification made by the local police officers has an external character compared with the negotiated and performative character of interactions between Roma and local council bureaucrats.* Caldarars' profiles are often obtained through databases, which offer details about criminal convictions. Identification is made in a one way direction, by a police officer who may work under cover and who gathers information through daily interactions with members of the Caldarar community. Therefore, the general features of this form of identification made by the local police are externality, unidirectionality and non-performativity.

The other main mechanisms of identification are those used by local council. The cadastral campaigns<sup>101</sup> of the local council are part of the local procedures of collecting taxes on land that has been built on, and constitute one of the main mechanisms for the identification of Caldarars's properties. This could clarify the matter of their addresses, which are often not officially known. However, Caldarars have always tried to avoid the official cadastral service and have always obtained their land through negotiation and built the houses they own.

The address is a well-known state mechanism for identifying individuals and controlling their social activities: "it does involve the ability to locate and take various forms of action, such as blocking, granting access, delivering or picking up, charging, penalizing, rewarding, or apprehending. It answers a 'where' question rather than 'who' question" (Marx 2001: 312). For the case of the Caldarar communities, the state considered the 'where' questions to be more important than the 'who' questions. As the Caldarars used to be nomads without a fixed address, the socialist state was always interested in a clear answer to the 'where' question and in their identification through settlement.

Although these days the Caladarars have settlements, they are still mobile, without official proof of their place of residence. On the other hand, Caldarars have ID cards, but they do not have property papers for the buildings and land they own, which are needed for ID renewals. However, by asking local administrator/patron Sorin Comsa and mayor Sorpaci for help they manage to renew their identification papers without the proof of an official address. (*Field notes, 9 November 2009*).

The lack of documents creates a lot of problems and annoyance for local council employees, who need to close their eyes to the informal local patronage arrangements. Nevertheless, it is intriguing to notice that in their ID cards, their address does not appear. According to local police officers, this seems to be the common procedure for the ID cards issued in rural areas. The name and the location (village, in this case) are the only identification references mentioned in the ID cards.

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<sup>101</sup> Official measurements, sometimes based on GPS coordinates for the registration of property, which include the location, dimensions and general characteristics of the area built or cultivated.

This weak identification procedure together with local patronage politics assist the Caldarars' avoidance of mechanism the state uses for identification. However, all these ambiguities related to their IDs and documents needed for social benefit applications become flexible points of reference in the interactions with local council employees.

During my observation trips, at the social work office, a Caldarar woman wanted to apply for child benefit, but she did not have any proof of her husband's income, which is an important criterion for eligibility.

The Caldarar woman responded to the local council requirements by saying: 'I do not have kids with him [her partner], I don't have anything, and I am not married.' On the other hand, she confirmed that her partner has a business.

Dinica Sotu, the Roma expert at the council, asked her ironically: 'But who did you make the kids with? With your dog?' The Caldarar woman, visibly annoyed, replied: 'With you!' (*Field notes, 18 November 2009*).

After this incident, it was interesting to hear how the Roma expert Dinica Sotu, a Romanianized Roma and the social workers characterised Gypsies, especially the Caldarars. They laughed while saying:

'They are tricksters, liars, opportunists, dirty, noisy, and responsive to what you tell them'.

The Caldarar woman disappeared for a few minutes, then, she came back with her partner asking him declare that he was the father of her child. Her partner replied to the local council employees:

'I have a business but I do not have any marriage papers; what other papers do I need to bring?' and then, a bit irritated, 'This is how things work at this local council. I think this law is made only for Gypsies.'

The social worker replied ironically, for the benefit of myself and her colleagues, 'So they think that they are the only ones who need to bring papers, that no one else has to do that. Look [showing some papers] - she is Romanian and she has all the necessary documents in order to apply for social benefits.'

Then, the Caldarar man contradicting his previous statement replied by saying he had no firm. Another social worker added: 'So why don't you go to the financial office and bring the certificate?' in order to confirm

that he doesn't have a business and that he is eligible for some social benefits (*Field notes, 18 November 2009*).

This short snapshot of interaction between bureaucrats and the Caldarar couple can be analysed through Goffman's analytical conceptualizations of performance and dramaturgy, engaged more or less successfully by the participants. First, the dialogue between the parts misses what Goffman (1956) calls 'tact': "image of disinterested involvement in the problem of the client while the client responds with a show of respect for the competence and integrity of the specialist" (p.4). Local council employees know the Caldarars' expectations, which are considered to undermine their authority as state bureaucrats. For these reasons, they reject the Caldarars' 'definition of the situation' by showing their open disavowal from the beginning. On the other hand, with no alterations in the course of interaction, the Caldarar couple continue to play the 'card' of informality and lack of papers, which, if successful, can source their eligibility for the child benefit.

It also can be seen, from this example that the Caldarar couple was trying to create an identity story and negotiate their eligibility, without success in this case. They created an *identity fiction* in order to avoid state restrictions and control (Cave 1988: 489). The two Caldarar partners devised a combination of identity elements in order to fit the state classificatory categories required for an application for social benefit. It is interesting to observe how they performed their relationship in terms of both togetherness and separateness. They were affirming an intimate relationship to prove they are the parents of the child and at the same time, they showed the lack of an official connection that represented an advantage in accessing the child benefit.

At the beginning of the interaction, the woman performed separately from her partner, attempting to get access to benefits as a single mother. However, her status was informally connected to her partner's through her child. In this case her partner was required to produce a 'performance' of his legal eligibility (the lack of firms or additional sources of income) to secure the child benefit. The man confirmed and denied, at the same time, that he runs a commercial company. Although, his statement looks like a paradox and untruthful statement, it reveals a multidimensional reality. Caldarars are known to set up and run informal businesses

using Romanianized Gypsies' documented identities<sup>102</sup>, which are officially non-existent. On the other hand, Caldarars are not officially married. In this sense, his accounts are evidence of non-formalized relations and practices: a long-term intimate relationship without a marriage certificate, a commercial practice without a legalized status. Caldarars are aware that the informal nature of their intimate relationships and economic practices would give them access to social benefits. In this sense, the couple aimed at performing a disjunction between informal practices/relationships and their legal status. They performed eligibility through an identity 'fiction', a 'story' about their identities, which is not necessarily true or false but corresponds to the informality of their practices which can assist them in getting recognition of the legible status. The 'fictionality' of their performances was mainly connected to the absence of documents, rather than to their actual practices/relationship. In this context, the state workers, who are locals too, challenged their documented identity and not the one they were familiar with in their local informal everyday life practices.

During the encounter and dialogue, they used the 'tease', in Goffmanian terms, as a technique of testing their performing abilities. However, the Gypsy couple's performance was poor, as the local council functionaries were laughing and mocking them in the end, refusing to accept their claims. The contradiction in statements about the father's child, the sudden appearance of the father and the bureaucrats' impolite reactions generated a 'scene' which arise "when team-mates can no longer countenance each other's inept performances and blurt out immediate public criticism of the very individuals with whom they have to be in dramaturgical cooperation" (Goffman 1956: 133). The scene took the form of an ironic quarrel, which as Goffman (1956) argues has the effect "to provide the audience with a backstage view and another is to leave them with the feeling that something is surely suspicious about a performance" (p.134). The Caldarar woman sought to answer at Dinica's ironic question - 'With whom you made your kids? With your dog?'- by

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<sup>102</sup> These informal arrangements between Caldarars and Romanianized Roma are detailed in the chapter on informal economy.

leaving the room and inviting his partner to come and face the bureaucrats. That made available to local council employees a backstage view of the Caldarars' performance. In this new context, the Caldarar couple was pushed to discuss the issue of firm/business ownership, an important criterion of the child benefit eligibility.

During the interaction, the local council employees acted from both positions: as state workers and residents of the locality, neighbours who are familiar with their informal practices. As Das (2004) argues, there is no sharp difference between state functionaries and the community. However, the boundary between the two categories of actors lies with the law and its classificatory categories, which grant or restrict access to welfare and are negotiated and domesticated through performances in daily encounters with the local council workers.

Caldarar couple performed eligibility while simultaneously avoiding documentation. As Caplan and Torpey (2001) suggest, documents are signs that individuals are not always in the control of their identity. For these reasons, the Caldarar couple negotiated the control over their identities in such a way as to have access to state aid and services but to escape restrictions of documents and of belonging to state structures/categories. As the title of this chapter suggests, in their state encounters, the Caldarars have accounts of membership to state institutions, but they avoid belonging to state structures. They are interested in hiding those elements of their identity that would expose them directly to the state mechanisms of control. In this context, Caldarars manage to *navigate state rules* and classifications and play at its margins and often exploit these new intersectionalities between state administration and local politics. *Compared to the identification made by police officers, which is an external, unidirectional performance of law enforcement, identifications made in interactions with state workers are performative and Caldarars are active actors in the negotiation and domestication of the categories of law and state eligibility.*

## **State-politics boundary and patronage politics**

The Roma's performances in relation to local council employees reveals the strong relation between state and local politics as a source for Caldarars' escape from state identification procedures and the Romanianized Roma's escape from discrimination performed by local public institutions. The local patronage politics also mediates Roma access to state welfare. These interpretations are confirmed by observations I made during a regional meeting on Roma issues, organized by the government.

As I described in the previous chapter, the governmental project for the social integration of the Roma involves monthly meetings at both regional and local level with Roma experts (local and regional), informal Roma leaders, Roma experts and mediators, state representatives and public authorities (police officers, lawyers). During a regional meeting in Goteni county, Corina Sotu, regional Roma expert and prefect's councillor on Roma issues, addressed the Roma mediators in the following way:

Corina Sotu : Good relationships with the local authorities entail good results. However, there is still a problem with some mayors who do not understand that.

A Roma representative complained that some local authorities would not vote in favour of important council decisions for the benefit of local Roma communities. In this context, Corina Sotu made a public statement to all the Roma representatives, participants in the meeting:

If I hear that, someone from the Roma community has voted for the mayor's party I will kill you. There is nothing more to say on this matter.  
(*Field notes, 8 July 2010*)

It was an allusion to a specific mayor, present at the meeting, who had refused to release the necessary funding for projects aimed at the local Roma communities. Corina Sotu has also criticized other local mayors, who only seek to please the state employees, part of the mayor's local patronage politics. To her statement, a mayor from a nearby village replied:

Thanks so much to Mrs Corina Sotu, I have the highest regard for her. However, we have our party bosses who control us, we have party responsibilities, and you all have to try to understand this, because we can't always manage these kinds of situations" (Field notes, 8 July 2010).



The vignette shows clearly the way in which mayors, who are, most of the times, the local patrons and give the directions of local patronage politics, mediate good relationships between Roma communities and local councils. The latter seems to be the most important boundary Romanianized Roma and Caldarars need to exploit in order to have access to state welfare. In this context, Roma leaders become the political brokers who mediate between Roma communities and state governance/patronage politics and convince the Roma to vote for the local patronage party in exchange for public services.

The politics/state accommodations and exploitations constitute the back door nature of Roma encounters with the local state and are part of the neopatrimonial context emerged in the transition from a centralized source of power to a decentralized state entangled in its practices with patronage politics.

## **Conclusions**

Under socialism, Romanianized Roma, former members of Sotu family, without necessarily being leaders, were those able to deal with issues of documentation and mediate between Roma community and local state representatives. For Caldarars, the main *bulibasa* Iancu, a collaborator with security services, was the state broker who facilitated the socialist state control over the community, its mobility and its gold. With sedentarization in the 1960s, Caldarars started to be subjected to central state power and control more frequently than they formerly were. Only the *bulibasa* Iancu was the one able to exploit the boundary between the state and community and strengthen his leadership position. In post-socialism *bulibasa* institution suffers a substantial decrease in its legitimacy and *bulibasi* are less recognized by community.

For Romanianized Roma, the Roma expert governmental program and Roma Party need for administrative representation produced an institutionalization and development of forms of leadership, which nonetheless became subordinated to local or regional patronage politics. These new forms leadership received little legitimacy from the Romanianized Roma. On the other hand, local development of the PSD patronage politics (see chapter on local level politics) brought both Romanianized Roma and Caldarars in a direct relation with local patronage/governance actors

(mayor Sorpaci, local patron Comsa) and their followers with whom they were able to negotiate their queries.

*These changes in Roma leadership (both groups) and local level politics produced an individualization of the Roma encounters with the state, a reduction in the group leaders' control but also a direct engagement of Roma in local clientelistic relations with state bureaucrats and patronage actors.* Both Caldarars and Romanianized Roma know that in their interaction with the local council workers, they can claim the expected exchange, votes for social services, as part of the local patronage politics. Many Caldarars spoke of their preference for the individual management of issues of documentation and social benefit applications, and of direct interaction with local state workers and patronage actors with whom they negotiate their identity documentation and access to state welfare.

While under socialism, the state was a threat for the Caldarars, these days the state is an actor they want to negotiate with and use to get access to its services. Caldarars achieved a presence within the local state institutions and started to be interested in accessing the state welfare. For Caldarars, relations with the state mediated through backdoor of local patronage politics are just a new opportunity that they have discovered and want to exploit further. However, the mobile economy remains their primary economic source of existence/affluence and the state welfare serves as an additional external opportunity.

On the other hand, for the informal Romanianized Roma, relations with the state and local patronage are rather one of survival and dependence, and are not actively negotiated. On the contrary, it is strengthened by their leaders (Roma expert Dinica Sotu and loader Candel), who are predominantly political patronage brokers. To sum up, the social change in Roma encounters with the state from socialism to post-socialism was triggered by the development of patronage politics and the decentralization of Caldarar Roma leadership. For Caldarars the new relation with the state did not affect their forms of self-governance, which as I show in the penultimate chapter, are enforced more through religious discursive practices. For Romanianized Roma, relations with the state mediated by local patronage become a main source of survival, which creates a high-level subjection to state welfare provision and local political governance. In the next chapter, I explore the

Romanianized Roma and Caldarars' voting behaviour in the everyday politics and performance of patronage politics during the 2009 presidential elections.

## Chapter 7. Roma and Everyday politics: Patronage, Brokerage and Clientelism

As I showed in the previous chapters, post-socialist intersectionalities between state and politics and the development of the informal economy were important transformations and prerequisites for the emergence of patronage politics, which links political actors and Roma leaders from local to central administrative levels in a complex web of hierarchical exchange relations of favours and obligations.

The chapter on local level politics revealed how the development of two overlapping fields of politics (patronage politics and political patronage) blocked the development of an independent field of Roma politics and undermined its potential to act locally as a force for civic engagement and empowerment of Roma communities. The chapter on Roma leadership showed how *patronage politics* acts through both local (patron, Roma brokers) and central level actors (government representatives, central level politicians –Delu Nistor) and in this context Roma leaders become political brokers, who do not necessarily represent Roma communities but pursue their own political interests and convince the Roma to vote for the main political parties.

The present chapter analysis focuses on the dyadic clientelistic relations (e.g. patron and clients and patron and brokers) performed in everyday politics, which affect the Roma communities in terms of self-governance and subjection to constraining forms of external governance (e.g. patronage, state). Everyday politics is the laboratory, the performing capillarity of power that answers Foucault's essential questions (1980) on how power is practised through relations and how the exercise of power provokes change in relations.

As I showed in the previous chapter on Roma encounters with the state, clientelism is a general characteristic of the post-socialist neopatrimonial state, performed between state representatives and citizen. Clientelistic relations have different functionalities for the two Roma groups. While for Caldarars, local clientelism and PSD patronage are instruments of negotiation and exploitation of state welfare, for the Romanianized Roma they are mainly sources of survival and also of constraining dependence in relation to state and patronage actors. In this

context, I am interested in exploring the degree to which Roma clients and different Roma brokers' actions, in everyday local level politics, can challenge the relations the Roma groups established with the state and local patronage. The questions for the present chapter are the following:

*What is the role of Roma brokers in the democratization of the relationship between patrons and clients?*

*Are Roma brokers from each group able to challenge the already established local patronage and create bases for independent social and political organization for Roma (Caldarars and Romanianized Roma)?*

*Are Roma (Caldarars and Romanianized Roma) clients captive voters in the vote-buying exchanges?*

In the following sections, I explore the everyday local level clientelistic relations between local patrons, Roma brokers and Roma clients in the context of the 2009 presidential elections. The next section is a brief presentation of the main actors in patronage politics: the local patron, his main followers and Roma brokers.

## **Local patron and Roma brokers in Costesti**

As I showed in the previous chapters, the performance of local level politics is strongly connected to local PSD patronage politics and the actors, who follow or interact with this form of politics: local patron Comsa, mayor Sorpaci and their followers and Roma patronage brokers (e.g. Roma expert Dinica Sotu) and power brokers (e.g. Caldara *bulibasi* Razar, Leonard, Sterea).

Everyday politics and local patronage in Costesti is organized around Comsa and his followers. During my fieldwork, I frequently noticed him driving expensive cars to the local council or walking the main roads with a confident, rigid attitude. He is always present in community life and in direct contact with Roma with whom he speaks often and offers them the help needed (see chapter on Roma state encounters) in services or cash. In one of the interviews, Dan Popescu, the president of the local PNL organization discussed this issue. As I showed in the chapter on local level politics, Dan Popescu legitimises Comsa's political experience but not his social and

political monopoly and his newly institutionalized position as administrator of the village.

D: Comsa likes to be seen and he is a ubiquitous presence in the village. He is everywhere, in the market, at the council, on the street, as his interest is to run for village mayor in the upcoming elections and win. Anyway, he has a good perspective on things, experience, and is supported by Delu Nistor (former vice prime-minister, PSD). He was his state secretary in Bucharest. He has a good chance. (Dan Popescu, head of the PNL Costesti).

Many Romanianized Roma and local political leaders I spoke with confirmed his *permanent visible presence* in the village and his *availability* in relation to locals and especially the Romanianized Roma and Caldarars. Comsa's direct support for the Roma provoked feelings of appreciation and attachment for Romanianized Roma leaders and clients. In this sense, his *availability* and *visibility* are essential characteristics of local patronage, which strengthen his position as local patron.

I succeeded in having an informal conversation with him in which he talked about his work in helping the two Roma communities, through governmental projects coordinated by his local PSD team<sup>103</sup>. He was also proud of getting Roma leaders, especially Romanianized Roma, involved in the local party politics. However, Romanianized Roma I talked with presented a twofold picture of Comsa's attitude: arrogant, but often helpful. However, Romanianized Roma leaders, expert Dinica Sotu and the informal leader Ioader Candel, support Comsa.

C: Who would you vote for if local elections took place this autumn?

I: Of course, Comsa - there is no one better than him. To respect a man means to respect yourself. Gypsies go to him and ask for cash. Sometimes he tells me: Ioader, someone came at midnight and asked for 50 RON for his mum in the hospital. Then I found out that his mother was not in hospital. The Gypsy boy [19 years old] gambled the money and lost and I told him give the money back to Comsa. (Ioader Candel, informal Romanianized Roma leader, patronage broker).

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<sup>103</sup> There were local projects funded by government and supported by Comsa: decoration of the school where most Romanianized Roma children study and the development of infrastructure (road, water facilities) in the Romanianized Roma district.

loader Candel, as an informal leader is not as dependent on local patronage as Roma expert Dinica Sotu is. However, beyond his pragmatic and personal interests, he experiences feelings of respect and loyalty in relation to Comsa who directly supported Romanianized Roma and infrastructure development in their area. Most of the Romanianized Roma told me that when they cannot get access to benefits, documents, or when they urgently need money they ask Comsa for help. On the other hand, Caldarars rarely get in direct contact with Comsa. In situations where they are not eligible for social benefits they try to access them by promising they will vote for PSD, the local patronage party. However, Comsa can influence Caldarars' voting behaviour through his direct relation with their *bulibasi*/power brokers (Leonard and Razar), who are the people most able to give directions for voting in their community.

Comsa, through his informal (locally developed relationships) and formal positions (administrator of the village) is an influential person, rather than the possessor of legitimate authority, over Roma leaders and his Roma clients. His patron position has become formalized in later years, as he officially became the main administrator/manager of the village. On the other hand, this institutionalization was not necessarily welcomed or appreciated. With respect to everyday local patronage politics which involves not only the local patron's actions but also PSD councillors', local bureaucrats' and Roma leaders', Roma and locals expressed contradictory feelings :appreciation, friendship, but also discontent.

Romanianized Roma and Caldarars expressed discontent with the way their everyday queries are solved by Roma expert Dinica Sotu and local council workers who support the local PSD patronage team. Dinica Sotu, Roma expert and Romanianized Roma leader, is Comsa's most loyal follower, who mediates between the community and the local council but also convinces Romanianized Roma to vote with PSD.

Both Romanianized Roma and Caldarars consider his actions not so useful and supportive. In many conversations I had with them they portrayed Comsa as the "local council's man" and "the man who works for the local council", who is not able to do too much for the community in practical terms. Many Romanianized Roma told me that they need to approach Comsa or the mayor directly in order to

solve their problems (documentation, social benefit applications). On the other hand, as I showed in the chapter on Roma leadership, Dinica Sotu explained that he feels constrained by his Roma expert position and he cannot act as an activist for Roma queries. He only deals with Roma issues, which can be solved bureaucratically and with the agreement of the local patronage politics.

Locally, Comsa's Roma followers are members of the Sotu family, Romanianized Roma, former fiddlers during socialism. They convince Romanianized Roma to vote for the PSD or organize vote buying during local, presidential and parliamentary elections. On the other hand, council workers at the local council support the PSD but do not fully agree with the support Comsa offers his Roma clients. I give here two examples, which were discussed in previous chapters: engineer Moraru, a council employee who deals with property registration and Rodica Sterea, a social worker who deals with social benefit applications. Although they support the PSD, they expressed critical views about the main actors in the local patronage team (administrator/local patron Sorin Comsa and mayor Sorpaci) who support Roma queries without qualification, especially during elections and thus overrule the existing legal procedures.

The patron's influence and control over the Roma electorate is mediated through Roma brokers: Razar, Leonard and Sterea (Caldarar informal leaders/power brokers), Romanianized Roma expert Dinica Sotu (patronage broker), and informal leader Ioader Candel. Razar, Leonard and Sterea are *bulibasi* who mediate between the Caldarar community, local council and police, support both the PSD and the PDL and encourage Caldarars to vote for either party. However, Caldarars are not influenced that much by their directions with regard to voting, as they usually do not rely on *bulibasi* to solve problems they have at the local council. They are not usually satisfied with their leadership activities, which tend to prioritize political interests. The only mediation Caldarars are content with is that done on their behalf with the local police. In case of scandals and fights, *bulibasi* intervene promptly, call the police and support the members of their community.

On the other hand, Dinica Sotu and Ioader Candel do usually persuade Romanianized Roma to vote for the local patronage party – the PSD. However, while Dinica Sotu in his position of Roma expert is loyal to Comsa, Ioader Candel's



actions cannot be easily classified. He is most of the times Comsa's supporter and he can be considered a *patronage broker*. However, he does not occupy a formal leadership position, but acts across spheres of power as a police mediator (within the state sphere of power), a middleman for informal economic transactions between Caldararas and Romanianized Roma (within the informal economic sphere) and a PSD broker for local patronage.

His informal position allows him more freedom of movement and relative independence in relation to the state and its political actors for which he becomes an advisor in local political games and, from this point of view, he can be seen as a *power broker*. Nevertheless, as I showed in the chapter on Roma leadership, the two categories of brokers (power brokers and patronage brokers) act differently in their relation with political and state actors and have different access to power. *State-patronage brokers*, such as Dinica Sotu and Corina Sotu, act from within local and regional state structures, which are bound up with patronage politics (at local/county level).

On the other hand, *power brokers* operate outside the state, at the boundaries between state and politics (e.g. *bulibasi* Leonard, Razar, and Sterea) and have relative independence compared with local patronage actors (mayor Sorpaci, Comsa, other PSD councillors and supporters). Generally, brokers are the actors who can strengthen, connect or disconnect Roma communities from everyday local patronage politics. In this context, the 2009 presidential elections were a relevant event, which created direct contact between all the actors involved in local patronage politics (local patron, his followers, local political representatives, Roma brokers and Roma clients). In the following section, I discuss theoretically the main concepts and ideas used in this chapter (clientelism, brokerage and patronage) in the context of a Romanian neopatrimonial state.

### **Questions of clientelism, patronage, brokerage and vote buying**

Political clientelism has many meanings, but it is usually defined as the dyadic exchange relationship between two individuals with unequal status (e.g. bureaucrat or state administrator or patron and client) : a person of high status offers goods and

services to a person of low status in exchange for political support, money or labour (Scott 1972).

Authors who studied clientelism (Scott 1972; Graziano 1976; Hilgers 2008, 2011) debated whether the nature of this relationship is coercive or voluntary, a short or long-term relationship, direct or indirect, equal or unequal. Both Graziano (1976) and Gouldner (1977) agree that clientelistic exchanges are not purely instrumental, but grounded in well-developed, long-term relationships that can expand into valuable social bonds like friendship and loyalty (Flynn 1975). Along the same line of thought, Scott (1972) and Hilgers (2008, 2011) note that clientelism, as a long-term personal relationship, involves clients' voluntary participation: "longevity, diffuseness, face-to-face contact and status inequality" (Hilgers 2011: 573). Nevertheless, the balance can sometimes incline towards either the economic aspect of the relationship or the social one.

As I already explained in chapter on 'historical transformations' and as Hilgers (2011) argues, *clientelism* is different from *patronage*, but also from *vote buying*. *Vote-buying* is a "one shot direct exchange" between clients and patrons before or during the elections. Money, goods, services are exchanged for votes (Schaffer 2007; Hilgers 2008). Although there are important differences between *patronage*, *clientelism* and *vote-buying*, they cannot be perceived as being separate and independent from each other. In terms of hierarchical relations, clientelism is the smallest unit of analysis and occurs between state representatives and citizen situated in an unequal informal exchange. In the context of my research, the dynamics of clientelistic relations, patronage, and brokerage performed at different administrative levels as extensions of Romanian post-socialist economic and political transformations form the field of *patronage politics* discussed in the previous chapter on politics.

Another discussion developed around the concept of *clientelism is that of democratic or non-democratic social and political exchanges* where clients might find themselves in coercive or voluntary relationships. Some authors (Flynn 1975; Putnam 1993; Kurer 1993) considered that clientelism develops general negative effects for civil society, restricting "political freedom and participation while perpetuating economic inequality" (Hilgers 2008: 126). This negative approach to

clientelism is based on an external point of view that conceives ideological autonomy as being more important than the social rewards clients receive in exchange (Hellman 1994).

Furthermore, as Scott (1972) argues, subordination and coerciveness are not necessarily sufficient for clientelistic exchanges to occur. They need to be supported through reciprocity and bargaining between the parts. Clients are not always 'captive voters' (Wang and Kurzman 2007) as patrons frequently have to compete for their clients (Hilgers 2011), who are not totally subordinated to their coercive powers. Coercion might be a last option for patrons in the management of their domination and exchange relationship with their clients (Fox 1994; Graziano 1976; Hall 1977; Lemarchand 1981; Wang and Kurzman 2007). Moreover, a clientelistic relation has an indirect relationship with an affectionate base – *diffuseness* - that insures the survival of the relationship in periods of social change and uncertainty. Kinship ties and feelings of loyalty and affection are elements of clientelism's *diffuseness* (Scott 1972). As Hilgers (2011) suggests, clientelism "should be seen as a continuum that may involve repression or relatively participatory exchanges between patrons and clients" (p. 575). Fox (1994) distinguishes between *authoritarian clientelism* and *semi-clientelism*. In the first, the subordination relationship is maintained through coercive means. In the latter, the person with a higher rank maintains his position and control over his clients through strict management of the rules of exchange in which the clients' return is determined by the fulfilment of their promised obligations (e.g. votes).

Furthermore, Graziano (1976) brings light to the relation of personal influence versus authority and democratization. From his perspective, *patrons* cannot obtain *authority or* legitimate power, just *influence*. However, in Romania not only patrons face this problem but also the legal authority of public institutions, which do not always enjoy popular support. Moreover, as in the case of my field research, the patronage can be institutionalized, with the local patron becoming the village administrator/manager (e.g. Sorin Comsa).

Furthermore, as Hilgers (2011) and Graziano (1976) argue, the micro-level politics of clientelism is always connected to larger structures, but the relationship is not simple, unidirectional (from upper to peripheral levels) or contextual (dependent

on the social and political system as a whole). On the contrary, both *national policies applied from above* and *clientelistic relationships practised from below* challenge and shape the status of citizens. In the case of Mexico and other Latin countries, Fox (1994) shows how anti-poverty policies (Mexico's Solidarity program) can be a source for either further civic movements or clientelistic control and maintenance of local patronage through distribution of resources. In this sense, for my case study, it is interesting to explore the contradictory roles and enactments of the Roma expert network program, which aims at supporting Roma citizenship rights but seems to strengthen clientelistic ties and local patronage politics.

Based on the results of the previous chapter on politics, in the next sections I inquire into the performance of local patronage politics and clientelistic simple exchanges during the 2009 presidential elections. I look at local-level presidential elections as an event during which long-term power relations between the patron, Roma brokers, and voters are performed. I am especially interested in the way control is exercised over the Roma electorate before and during the elections.

### **Presidential elections 2009: context**

Due to changes in the country's Constitution, in November–December 2009 for the first time Romanian presidential elections did not occur at the same time as parliamentary ones. It was also the first time when the final results showed only a small difference (less than 1%) in the distribution of votes (Tufis 2012) between the two candidates: Traian Basescu (Liberal Democrat Party - PDL) and Mircea Geoana (Social Democrat Party - PSD). The political campaign was characterized by tensions and a tight battle between the two political organizations.

In the second round, the PSD and the PNL entered into a coalition (USL) against the PDL and its candidate Traian Basescu. During the campaign, all the national surveys singled out Mircea Geoana as the favourite (Gheorghita 2012; Rotariu 2012, Tufis 2012). Surprisingly, the final count confirmed Basescu's victory, with a difference of only 70,000 votes (Rotariu 2012). The main explanation was that Basescu gained a lot of votes from Transylvania (Rotariu 2012) and as Tufis (2012) shows, although the PSD had a stable electorate during elections (60% stable in their

voting intentions from the beginning to the end of elections), Geoana was not able to attract the large proportion of undecided voters (only 33%) in the second round. On the contrary, PDL and Basescu, with a percentage of 47% stable voters, succeeded in attracting 42% new supporters from the undecided camp.

In the 2009 elections, supporters of the two main parties differed in relation to place of residence (urban/rural) and form of employment (public/private) (Tufis 2012). During presidential elections, the PSD had a 56% stable electorate in rural areas and 72% employed in public sector. On the other hand, the PDL had only a 47% stable electorate in rural areas and a proportion of 47% employed in the public sector (Tufis 2012). The public/private gap can be partially and relatively explained through a similar association between public sector and local PSD patronage politics, which sets the main direction of voting. As mentioned in the chapter on historical transformations, journalists identified 65 local 'barons' in the main cities of Romania, out of which 37 were PSD, 17 were PDL, 8 were PNL, 2 were Conservative Party and 1 was Hungarian Democrat Union. The map of local barons is much more extensive in medium and small localities, including Costesti, frequently ruled by PSD mayors/deputy mayors.

Additionally, Tufis (2012), Armeanu (2012) and Fesnic (2012) show that while PSD supporters “are older, have a lower level of education and come from rural areas” (Tufis 2012: 143), the PDL has a large proportion of “supporters who work in the private sector” (Tufis 2012: 143). Who and why people voted in the 2009 presidential elections was another question to which Romanian political scientists answered with models of voting behaviour. Comsa (2012) showed that “the rate of participation was higher for those who identify themselves with a political party (67%)”, those “contacted by a party (69%), those persuaded by someone to vote with a candidate (65%), or those who, during campaign, received a gift from a party/candidate (60%)”<sup>104</sup> (p. 167). Based on a statistical evaluation, Comsa (2012) showed that “men, people around 50-65 years, Roma, people with an average level of education, those who attend church services or who live in Moldavia” (p. 166-7) had higher rates of participation.

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<sup>104</sup>The percentage values describe, separately, the association between participation in election and each of the variables.

It is also well known that Moldavia (Eastern Romanian region) is one of the poorest regions of Romania and the inhabitants give a high level of support to the PSD. In 2008, five of eight county councils in Moldavia, were under the control of the PSD<sup>105</sup>.

In Costesti, village situated in Moldavia, the rate of participation in the presidential elections was 52.48% (for the county, participation was 55.67%, and nationally it was 54.5%<sup>106</sup>). In the presidential elections of 2009, a positive correlation was found between the mayor's political membership and voting decisions of those with no clear attachment to a political party (Gheorghita 2012). As I showed in the previous chapters, the Roma are not interested in the ideological aspects of politics and, normally their voting decision follows the direction of local patronage politics. In Costesti and nearby villages, to which I went on short field trips, aspects of patronage politics can be seen in the number of votes that supported either Geoana or Basescu.

**Table 2** Voting options for presidential elections 2009 in Goteni county

Locality (mayor's party)	Rate of participation (%)	Votes for Geoana (PSD) (%)	Votes for Basescu (PDL) (%)
County	55.67	52.10	47.89
Goteni City	53.66	49.17	50.82
Costesti (mayor PSD)	52.48	58.16	41.84
Liveni (mayor PDL)	50.64	45.37	54.62
Munteni (PNL-USL)	55.30	55.32	44.67

**Source:** Electoral Central Office - second round, 6 December 2009 (BEC, [www.bec2009p.ro](http://www.bec2009p.ro)).

<sup>105</sup> 'Alegeri locale 2012. Rezultate finale: Noua harta politica a Romaniei. Cine a castigat in orasul tau.' [Local elections 2012. Final results: New political map of Romania. Who won in your city], 11.06.2012, Available at : [www.gandul.info](http://www.gandul.info)

<sup>106</sup> BEC- Electoral Central Office - official presidential elections 2009 data. Available at : <http://www.bec2009p.ro/rezultate.html>

The vote count suggests that patronage politics works well during elections. In Costesti, where the PSD is the local ruling party, patronage party, 58% of the electorate voted for Geoana, and only 41.84% for Basescu. In the nearby villages, voting went in the same direction as local patronage. In Liveni, where the mayor is a PDL representative, the highest percentage of votes went to Basescu (54.62%). In Moroieni, where the mayor is a PNL representative, the population voted for the PSD-PNL coalition (USL) against Basescu and gave their support to Geoana to the tune of 55.33%. Finally, the local PSD patronage politics, supported by local patron Comsa and mayor Sorpaci, their followers and brokers can support the high Costesti support for the PSD candidate.

Another explanation comes from the high level of Roma participation in the elections. The Roma count for 10% of Costesti' population (approximately 1000 people are of voting age). Romanianized Roma, the main recipients of patronage politics, participated in large numbers. Many of them were convinced to vote by Roma brokers (Dinica Sotu, Ioader Candela and others) and brought directly to the polling stations. As documented at national level, voters were well informed, deriving their knowledge from conversation (52%), TV shows (71%), radio (26%), newspapers (23%), and internet (6%) (Comsa 2010)<sup>107</sup>.

Nevertheless, in rural areas these rates can be much lower for all media sources. During the campaign of 2009, I noticed that the main source of information and orientation for Roma (groups) was the TV, but also daily conversations with local patron Sorin Comsa and Roma brokers (Dinica Sotu, Ioader Candela and *bulibasi* Leonard, Razar) who were committed to convincing them to vote for the PSD or the PDL candidates. In the next section, I look at the roles Roma brokers (state/patronage/brokers) played during elections, and I describe their local activities (vote barter and buying) and their influence over the Roma voting options.

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<sup>107</sup> The percentages for the means of information (discussions, TV shows, radio, mass-media , Internet) were calculated separately in relation to frequency use (once a week, several times a week, several times during the political campaign, once, not at all, NR).

## Political brokerage: Caldarar power brokers

As developed in the previous chapters, Roma leaders, participate both formally and informally in local and regional meetings organized by the state as part of governmental strategy of social inclusion. In the sphere of politics, Roma experts Dinica Sotu (Costesti) and Corina Sotu (county level) follow the directions of the local or regional patronage actors. Informal Roma leaders, especially the Caldarar *bulibasi* Razar and Leonard support different political parties, play different sides and connect with the upper-level politics.

C: What party you support?

R: The PSD!

C: Have you ever supported the Roma Party?

R :Yes! I go with the PDL too because we go with Basescu.

C: Why have you not gone with the Roma Party?

R : I do not go with the Roma Party because the Gypsies are not united. You live in the village and you need to survive. I go to every council meeting but the majority of poor Roma don't participate. Sometimes, our council does not issue the papers claimed. It is true that there are many who cannot pay their debts [taxes] to the council.

C: If you have, issues to solve where are you going: to the local or to the county council? Which one do you trust more?

R : The local council first, but if we don't trust them we go to the county, or the prefecture.

C: Do you personally know someone at the prefecture?

R: I know the president of the Goteni council. He is from the PSD. I've been going with him for years, and we know each other and I was also very close to Delu Nistor who was a Minister of Interior. We know each other and I supported him whenever he needed votes. So, I could reach a high level (Razar, *bulibasa* in Costesti).

Razar confirms that Roma leaders do not usually give their support to the Roma Party and do not influence Roma voting behaviour in this direction. In the interview, he argues that the lack of an electorate for the Roma Party makes the party a fragmented force. Roma dependence on local patronage is responsible for this sort of fragmentation of political support for the Roma Party. Razar and other Roma leaders, including Romanianized Roma leaders, are aware that relations between the Roma



and the local council or other public institutions are mediated by local patronage actors (e.g. administrator Comsa, mayor Sorpaci).

On the other hand, he is aware that mediation between the community and local authorities, which upholds his leadership position, needs to be performed through patronage politics in order to be successful. He is still important for the community inasmuch as he is able to negotiate with local council representatives on community issues (access to gas facilities, cancellations of fines). He is important for local PSD patronage in so far as he is able to convince Caldarars to vote for PSD. The two relations are interdependent and are the main source of power for his leadership position.

However, Razar is more than an informal Roma leader. He is a power broker, a leader who acts informally in multiple spheres of power (business, politics, state mediator) and frequently aims at convincing the Roma to vote the PDL (national governing party) and sometimes for the PSD (local patronage party). His connections in the sphere of politics are not made directly with the local patron, Comsa, but with various actors in the broad range from the political fields (patronage politics and political patronage) to central government politics.

*Power brokers* like Razar and the informal Romanianized Roma leader Ioader Candel tend to stress their interactions and familiarity with the central-level politicians like the regional PSD representative Delu Nistor, or president Basescu, rather than with the local patrons and other state actors. Interestingly, both Razar (Caldarar bulibasa) and Ioader Candel (informal Romanianized Roma leader) emphasised their connections with Delu Nistor, who held the position of deputy prime minister for a short period. The political leader is invoked as a symbol of access to upper politics. "I reached a high level", as Razar claims. It is also a demonstration of surpassing barriers of local-level politics and positioning themselves in the expanded field of patronage politics where local patrons and central-level politicians are linked through complex webs of power relations. Escaping the confinement Roma experts experience in relation with local state and patronage, *power brokers* like Romanianized Roma leader Ioader Candel and *bulibasi* Razar and Leonard circulate between different levels of power and vary their political support between different political parties. Leonard, Iancu's son (the

former main *bulibasa* during socialism) explains the changes in his political support and brokerage actions (convincing Caldarars to vote with different parties) during the 2009 presidential elections.

C: Politically, what party you support?

L: We decide during elections. Now we cannot say that we will go with one or another.

C: In the last elections [2009 presidential] who did you go with?

L: I can't say that any more. It is not clear now with whom. While me and Sterea [Caldarar *bulibasa*] went with the PDL, Razar (Caldarar *bulibasa*) went with the PSD.

C: Why did you support the PDL?

L: Because Razar took the PSD and we had to choose someone else.

C: Is there any reason when you chose the party?

L: Now to tell you the truth. We went twice to presidential elections – two rounds of voting. For the first, we supported the PSD, and for the second, we went with the PDL.

C: So you don't need to have a definite political opinion right from the beginning?

L: Yes, but Razar goes with many others. He goes to the PSD [the local organization] and tells them he goes with them, and then he goes to the PDL and says "I'll go with you too." He does the same with the PRM [Great Romania Party].

C: What about you? What party you support?

L: I said to myself: let's see: if I am not with the PSD [the local patronage party], what's going to happen. I wanted to show that I have more influence on the Roma and in this locality [as compared with other Caldarar leaders]. (Leonard, *bulibasa* in Costesti).

As *bulibasa* Leonard shows in this fragment, the November 2009 presidential elections set the stage for Caldarar *bulibasi* (power brokers) to demonstrate their influence and strengthen their position in the dynamics of local patronage politics. As already mentioned in previous chapters, after 1989, several Caldarar leaders claimed the position of *bulibasa*: Leonard, Sterea and Razar. From this interview fragment, it is clear that power brokerage does not entail ideological options but rather degrees of influence over the Roma electorate (Caldarars), which will confirm or contest the Roma leadership position. The most influential Caldarar *bulibasa* would be able to convince more Caldarars to vote for one political party or another. Leonard, in competition with the other two Caldarar leaders who claim the same position of

leadership (*bulibasa*), chose a different strategy: to show the local patronage actors including Comsa how much can be lost without his brokerage support for the PSD. The confirmation came through the patron and his followers' ability to count the number of the ballots given to the PSD at each polling station and especially in the districts where most of the Caldarars live. On 22 November 2009, I could notice how both the mayor Sorpaci and the manager/patron of the village (PSD) Comsa checked the number of votes hourly at the polling station in the Caldarars' district.

Nevertheless, these struggles for influence among the Caldarar Roma brokers lessened the local/regional political leaders' trust (Comsa - PSD, Grinea and Dan Popescu - PNL, Rodan - PDL) in the Caldarars' political support. One of the PDL councillors, Dorin, told me that Caldarars who never vote for his party disappoint him. Caldarar *bulibasa* Razar promised him to convince Caldarars to vote, but as Dorin said "Razar plays a double game, he promised to bring 100 people for a meeting organized in support for Basescu and he did nothing". Teacher Grinea, PNL councillor, also showed his distrust in the Caldarar brokers' informal actions because, as he said, they usually change their options during elections and do not keep their promises.

Additionally, it should be also said that while Romanianized Roma follow in large numbers the direction given by the PSD local patronage actors, the Caldarar voters do not follow invariably their leaders' instructions, which are divided anyway between different political parties. While they were split between different *bulibasi*, supporting one or another, they were also aware that individual votes are 'secret' and nobody can control that. They expressed contradictory attitudes but many of their statements showed their personal options. During my fieldwork, especially in the pre-election time, I had many informal conversations with both Romanianized Roma and Caldarars about their voting behaviour. Illustrative in this case is a conversation I had with a middle-income Caldarar man (Fieldnotes, 16 November 2009). I asked him whom he was going to vote for and, at first, he told me the PSD. Then I noticed his orange t-shirt (with the sign and colour of the PDL) and he told me laughing that there are people from the PDL who come to their district and distribute buckets and t-shirts with the party's label. He also mentioned that Razar told them whom to vote for (the PDL). From his first statement, it can be assumed that a different *bulibasa*

(Leonard or Sterea) told them to vote for the PSD too. However, he showed confidence by saying that the vote is anonymous and nobody could find out who his vote was given to. He told me that he would normally vote for Basescu, as for the last years of the PDL's office he had succeeded in making good business. In the last 18 months, he had made 2.5 billion old lei. He also acknowledged that other Caldarars might have different options as their businesses have probably worked better during the Iliescu's regimes (PSD) and for these reasons, they would probably choose to vote PSD

Generally, informal conversations with Caldarar voters confirmed the relationship between voting behaviour and the success of family business. The Caldarars tend to support governing parties that prove to be favourable for the development of their informal economic activities. However, that does not exclude the possibility of influence coming from Caldarar power brokers (*bulibasi*), who often intervened to solve family conflicts and problems. Sometimes, they are also influenced by the local patron Comsa who facilitates their access to public services.

Among the Romanianized Roma, voting behaviour is more homogenous. Although they are frequently in conflict with the patron's attitudes and local governance, they seem to be trapped in a constraining relationship with the local patronage actors, who facilitate access to state welfare and services. Local political actors from the opposition (Grinea and Dan Popescu - PNL, history teacher Bratita and councillor Dorin - PDL) are aware of the PSD's local patronage control mechanisms over the Romanianized Roma community. In interviews, they criticised the monopoly the PSD holds over local governance, especially in feeding Roma dependence in relation to the local council through the exploitative control of local state welfare.

C: How is the PSD represented in the Romanianized Roma community?

G: Dinica Sotu [the Roma expert in the council] is there and forces them to vote. In the whole village, there are more than 400 applications for social benefits [Romanianized Roma are the main recipients]. All of the Romanianized Roma vote with the power, to keep receiving the state's money. That is clear! The mayor and Comsa fooled them and they succeeded [in elections] (Grinea, local PNL councillor, teacher and previous mayor of the village).

From his position as a PNL councillor, Grinea is critical of the patronage actors' techniques of strengthening and locally reproducing their power. He suggests that the local distribution of welfare is the main controlling instrument over the Roma voting options. When he says 'they fooled them' he refers to the limited and short term benefits Roma receive in this form of exchange, which does not produce, in the long term, a basis for social development. Grinea is also very critical of Dinica Sotu's actions of political brokerage made for the PSD patronage actors (mayor, vice-mayor, local patron). As I showed, in previous chapters, Dinica Sotu is a Roma expert and also a *patronage broker*, who feels *obliged to persuade* his community members to vote for the patron's party. His mediation of an exploitative dependence on local political governance reproduces both his own subordination and the Romanianized Roma community's dependence on local patronage.

### **Clientelism and Vote buying/bartering among the Romanianized Roma and the Caldarars**

In the following paragraphs, I give examples of everyday interactions and exchanges the patron has with his Romanianized Roma clients.

Dorina was one of my Romanianized Roma friends I often used to visit. We used to chat about interactions she had with the local institutions. She once told me she was worried that she would not be able to renew her expired ID card, as she had not paid the council tax (200 RON). She considered that the local council's practice of making renewal of her ID card conditional upon her paying her council tax to be unfair. "This is not the law", as she told me. However, her husband renewed his ID just before the 2009 presidential elections. On his first attempt, the local council's employees refused her husband for exactly this reason, non-payment of his council tax. However, the man pursued his application and asked Roma expert Dinica Sotu and administrator Comsa for help. Comsa answered his plea by asking the council employees to renew his ID: "Renew this man's ID, please, because he has to vote", he said. At the time as we had that conversation (May 2010), Dorina was confused about the whole situation and she felt ashamed to ask Comsa to give her similar support (*Fieldnotes, 14 May 2010*).

Another Romanianized Roma woman, Adina, told a similar story. She needed running water in her household. At first, she asked the mayor, who refused her repeatedly. After a while, she went to the local patron/administrator of the village and told him: “Mr. Comsa, please help me, I am a poor woman”. Comsa invited her and other women to his council office. He asked them show their ID’s. Checking their IDs carefully, he told the women, smiling: “I know you voted for me, do not worry - I am going to solve this”. He made a short call and in three days Adina had access to running water. (*Fieldnotes, 14 May 2010*). In the first case, both Romanianized Roma and local patronage actors were interested in renewing the ID cards, which are a necessary condition for voting. The exchange was made on the promise that Roma will vote with the PSD patronage party. However, in this case, Dorina experienced feelings of shame when trying to obtain something, which was in the interest of local patronage too. As many authors of clientelism studies argue, this form of restraint constitutes the very basis of the clientelistic relation, *diffuseness* grounded in developed feelings of trust, loyalty, and even shame (Scott 1972&1977; Graziano 1976; Gouldner 1977; Hilgers 2008, 2011).

In the second example, by checking their IDs<sup>108</sup>, Comsa exercised a direct, face to face form of control and exchange, close to vote buying, which is a one-shot exchange. Often Romanianized Roma are in a direct patron-client relation with Comsa, which does not need mediation from Roma leaders/brokers (Dinica Sotu, loader Candel).

Comsa’s direct clients are usually Romanianized Roma, who experience the poorest conditions in the village and with whom he has developed relationships since he was a child. He was born in their district and lived there for many years. He was a teacher of their children and director of the school where most of them go for their primary education. Many of the Romanianized Roma, now eligible voters, were his pupils in school. In informal conversations, both Comsa and Romanianized Roma confirmed the importance of the relationship as a source of trust and reciprocity in direct exchanges. Comsa also suggested that by getting to know them, he has their trust and can rely on their votes. Nevertheless, Romanianized Roma showed

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<sup>108</sup> In Romania, during elections, voters’ IDs are stamped on the back: ‘Voted’.

contradictory opinions about their local patron, ranging from appreciation to discontent. They appreciated his efforts to help with everyday claims and assist in their relations with representatives of the local state, but disliked his “arrogant attitude” and the distance he displayed in public. It is clear there is not just a simple clientelistic exchange between the local patron and his Roma clients, but, as Hilgers (2011) suggests, “a personal relationship... a series of interactions that play out over time” (p. 573). The Romanianized Roma perceived the relationship with their patron as a continuous source of resort in their everyday life interactions with the local authorities.

Although the classical schema (Scott 1972; Graziano 1976; Gouldner 1977) states that only clients feel obliged to return the service, my research data shows that the local patron is also under pressure to perform, to offer “availability”, to answer and solve the Gypsies’ complaints. Comsa always showed an increased willingness to protect Roma interests (both groups) in the local council or in relation with other local public institutions.

The regional PSD campaign president told me that, as compared with the mayor (PSD representative), Comsa has always been kind and sympathetic to the Gypsies’ problems (Fieldnotes, 8 November 2009). Results were visible during local, presidential and parliamentary elections when a large proportion of the Roma supported the PSD. In an informal conversation we had, Comsa defended the Gypsies’ interests, especially the Caldarars’. He told me that when he was a councillor of the vice prime-minister Delu Nistor, he succeeded in channelling 43 billion old lei to the local budget in Costesti. The latter statement came as a justification of his informal support for the Caldarar community, who do not pay taxes and lack documents, and towards whom the local state employees need to “close their eyes”. I asked him if the local council would be able, after the elections, to collect the council tax from Caldarars. His answer was negative and was connected to his intention to run for the next local council elections. In this context, a local decision to tax the Caldarars’ belongings would work against his own interests. If he forced the Caldarars to pay their dues, they would no longer vote for him in the next elections (Fieldnotes, 9 November 2009). In the meantime, the cancellation of the Caldarars’ penalties for non-payment of council taxes raised many discussions in

the local council meetings<sup>109</sup>. During the presidential elections campaign, three Caldarar families, relatives of Caldarar *bulibasi* asked for the cancellation of fines due for the non-payment of council taxes. The PDL councillors, including Dorin and Rodan rejected the application and were very critical of the PSD local councillors' decision of cancellation.

D : The PSD can promise anything to Caldarars as they have 8 people as members of the council. In a local PDL meeting, Razar [Caldarar informal leader-*bulibasa*] told us 'Why did you not vote for cancelling our fines? You will see that my time will come and I will get rid of you, all of you who are against us [the Caldarars] and only the PSD will remain here.' They think that if the PSD wins, they will pay nothing [no fines]. There were no discussions about them before, but now, because of the elections, they have started to talk about all these issues. Gypsies pressure you until you give them something. (Dorin, PDI councillor-Fieldnotes, 13 November 2009).

By claiming, he will succeed in convincing all Caldarars to vote for the PSD, *bulibasa* Razar threatened opposition local councillors, with withdrawal of his support for any political party different from the local patronage party. However, in the final meeting most of the councillors voted pro the cancellation of their fines. As a power broker, Razar is able to influence Caldarars' voting behaviour in different directions. In this sense, his threat refers to his capacity of convincing Caldarars to vote only for the PSD, which would leave no space for other political representatives (e.g. PDL, PNL) to be elected by the Roma as local councillors or mayors.

In this context, the classical model of clientelistic relation, proposed by Scott (1972), which emphasises the superiority of patrons over clients is challenged. While I agree that clients and patrons do not share a similar status, the latter do not always have control over the relationship. Control was negotiated in this case by Caldarar power brokers. The source of power is in relationships themselves, through which control is negotiated. In many other conversations I had with local governance actors and Roma I noticed that local patronage is always under pressure to perform not only

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<sup>109</sup>During my fieldwork, I used to attend several council meetings in the pre-election month of November 2009.



in terms of *availability*, but also in terms of the *expected exchange* (e.g. votes for fine cancellations) and, sometimes, by showing off pro-Gypsy attitudes. However, the local administrator /patron and the mayor do not entirely manage to retain their self-control and often show arrogance, disrespect or even disdain against Gypsies. Both the Caldarars and Romanianized Roma confessed that often when they go to the local council to ask mayor Sorpaci for help, they face hostility and strong language. However, despite his arrogance, local patron Comsa is always there to give them support.

Caldarar power brokers become more influential in pre-election times when they can raise claims for public services, pose threats or organize meetings with local patronage actors. In November 2009, during the presidential election campaign, I used to visit the local PSD campaign office where local patronage members (mayor, deputy mayor, village administrator/patron), some Roma brokers (Roma expert Dinica Sotu; Marius, *bulibasa* Razar's brother) and PSD supporters met and talked about the elections. I heard many stories during the campaign, which show the flexible relationship the local patron Comsa has with the Caldarar brokers. One evening, there were just a few people around, including the local patron, Comsa, Marius and Marius' business partners. Marius is well known for his informal dealings involving old technology. After some initial pleasantries, chat I asked Marius what his main occupation was. Visibly pleased with the opportunity to answer my question, he smiled and began to play with a thick golden bracelet, which he had taken out of his red, PSD jacket, and he started speaking quickly and with humour about his informal businesses.

After several stories about his business failures, he remembered an incident he had involving the regional police. Whilst driving his Mercedes in the city, the police stopped him. He showed his ID and then he asked the policeman: "What's wrong with you? Don't you see who I am and what my name is? Mateiescu!" Marius related how the police officer suddenly changed his attitude and said, "Sorry, I didn't recognize you this morning". Before leaving, he gave 50 RON to the policeman. Marius explained that this happened after a long evening drinking session and that was the reason for not being recognised by the police officer. Other stories related to the different strategies he uses to convince plant directors by selling them

used pipes from Goteni for high prices. All these stories were told in a very relaxed posture in the presence of the former councillor of the Minister of Interior, Mr. Comsa, the village administrator and local patron. During his story telling, the local patron looked visibly uncomfortable, although pretending he was enjoying the stories. In a way, Comsa had to accept a performance that contested his authority, influence and respectively the importance of his position as the local patron of the village.

The ethnographic snapshot shows the way the patron's power is subjected to the brokers' performances. Although acting in an unequal relationship, the patron does not possess power or influence as Scott (1972) and Graziano (1976) suggest. His influence is always mediated through his clients and power brokers' practices and by a certain discipline, he needs to develop in relationships with all these actors who support with votes his position as patron and local patronage team.

These performances and interactions between Comsa and the Roma power brokers became more visible during the 2009 presidential pre-election process. During my visits to the PSD local office, the campaign staff told me how members of the local governance/local patronage mayor, deputy mayor, administrator/local patron) were invited by *bulibasa* Razar at his house, for dinner. They were impressed to see the house's decorations and the dining room: "The table alone - a deputy's table - might have cost 2-300 million old lei". I had a similar impression when I visited Razar at home for an interview. The room resembled a venue in the Romanian parliament, an interior arrangement in line with Razar's claim to be a president, not a "*bulibasa*", a term that he considered inadequate for his new role and position in the village and Caldara community. In the interview I had with a PNL councillor Grinea, I obtained details about the post-dinner discussions:

G: I understood that Razar gave a dinner for PSD members at his house and a few days later, he went to the local council to ask for a paper, and he made a big scandal: "I invited you in my house to eat and you do not want to give me a paper?" (Grinea, PNL councillor, former mayor of the village).

The dinner at the Razar's place with the main members of the local governance was a demonstration of the broker's control and mediation of local patron's influence

among Caldarars. In addition, it was the expression of an expected exchange between brokers and the local patronage actors. However, as Grinea shows, expectations are not always fulfilled and the exchange is not performed. After the visit at Razar's house, the Caldarar leaders' relatives were exempted from fines but not from the council tax payment. The relation between the Caldarar power brokers and the patron is thus fluid, uncertain and characterized by lack of trust. Caldarar power brokers collaborate with members of the local patronage but they never play just for one side, or from the same position. Similarly, the Caldarar electorate shows loyalty to neither brokers nor the local patron. After the second round of voting in the presidential election, at a dinner in support of the PSD, (the local patron's party) organized by another Caldarar broker, Sterea, one of the participants confirmed the duality of Caldarars' political options:

Here, at this dinner, we are all split between different political parties; some go with Geoana [the PSD candidate in the presidential elections of 2009] and others with Basescu [the PDL candidate], but we do not want to fight here. (Field notes, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2009).

The continuum that runs from coercion to free exchange that is involved in clientelistic relations is dependent on the degree of influence performed by patron Comsa and Roma brokers. While Caldarars are generally influenced by different directions given by Caldarar *bulibasi*/power brokers (Razar, Leonard, Sterea), Romanianized Roma follow Comsa and generally the PSD's local patronage direction. A common coercive practice, used by Comsa and Romanianized Roma brokers (e.g. Dinica Sotu) and followers during elections, acknowledged in the literature on clientelism (Wang and Kurzman 2007, Fox 1994; Hilgers 2011), was the transportation of citizens to the polls. In Costesti, Comsa's followers organised transport for Romanianized Roma for both the 1st and 2nd rounds of presidential elections.

The day before the second round of presidential elections, I visited the Romanianized Roma, PSD local councillor who had invited me to his house, visibly one of the largest in the Romanianized Roma district, the poorest area of the village. I found out that he was preparing for the busy Election Day. He was the person

assigned by Comsa to organize the transport for Romanianized Roma voters to get to the polls. I asked him why he was so sure that the Romanianized Roma were going to vote for the PSD. Avoiding a straight answer, he told me that he himself was an important person in the village. He has a construction company and he was able to provide temporary, seasonal jobs to most of the Romanianized Roma who are now unemployed and he claimed: "These Gypsies have the obligation to vote as I say. They will always vote PSD". However, from this discussion and others I had with many Romanianized Roma, I found out that few of them were actually working for his construction business. The PSD councillor's expectations were higher than the practical exchange offered to his Romanianized Roma clients.

However, patronage followers and brokers (Roma expert Dinica Sotu and PSD councillors) were confident about the Romanianized Roma voting. The explanation of this trust in the exchange can be partly attributed to the Romanianized Roma's dependency on the local state provision of welfare, jobs and exchange arrangements during elections, such as the organized transport to the polls. Moreover, the Romanianized Roma brokers (members of Sotu family) are for most of the time, loyal followers of the local patronage who aim at convincing the Roma to vote for the PSD. On the other hand, in order to raise the turnout, Comsa directly buys votes from the Roma. Many of Romanianized Roma I talked to confirmed the practice. In the last elections, they used to receive both food and money, directly or indirectly, from Comsa.

### **Election days, 22 November and 6 December 2009**

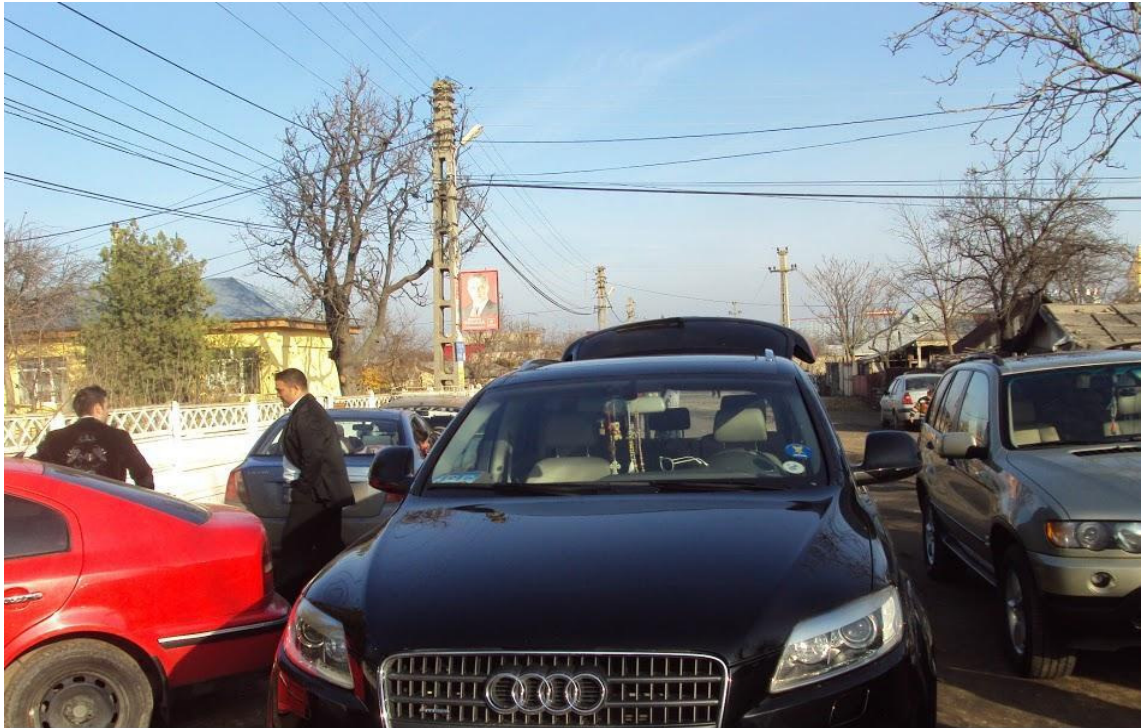
On the election days (1st and 2nd round), I had numerous informal discussions with Roma voters (both Romanianized Roma and Caldarars) in their district and at the polls. A Romanianized Roma woman confessed that she was confused and she did not know who to vote for as no one helped her. She told me that Comsa gave cash to people and that he gave 100 RON to one of her friends, but just 20 RON to her. However, she did not feel she wanted to vote and was not sure whether she was going to do it or not. Disappointed, she related how she leaves her ID card as credit at the local stores in order to be able to get food until she gets her next state benefit's payment.

On the same day, in the middle of a chat I had with some Romanianized Roma, Dinica Sotu, the Roma expert at the local council - patronage broker - came by car and picked up the Romanianized Roma to take them to the polls. Interestingly, after getting out of the polls, Romanianized Roma whom I knew to live in harsh housing conditions were proud to show me their stamped ID's<sup>110</sup>. In the context of their everyday marginalization, practised by local authorities, voting was an opportunity for an individualized experience and an assumption of social importance in relation to the local governance and patronage. Nevertheless, the controlled character of clientelism during elections, through vote-buying and arranged transport to the polls, stimulated criticism and reflection among Romanianized Roma, which was revealed in the conversations we had. However, vote-buying as "one shot direct exchange" (Schaffer 2007; Hilgers 2008) was complemented by the *diffuse* relationship established between local patron Comsa and his Roma clients, who succeeded in reaching the necessary voting level among Romanianized Roma.

In the Caldarars' district, at the poll station (the district school), rich Caldarars made an overwhelming parade of their wealth by wearing fashionable suits, sun glasses and driving expensive cars. Razar, one of the main Caldarar power brokers, was in the courtyard of the polling station for most of the time, pretending to supervise the proceedings. However, due to official restrictions governing polling stations, the local police asked all Caldarars to move their cars 200 metres away from the school (polling station) and Razar to leave the courtyard. Contrary to restrictions, the members of the local patronage (mayor, manager, deputy mayor) regularly visited the polling station to check the number of votes. It is also relevant that common Caldarars were not transported by car by their brokers/*bulibasi*, but came in person to vote and none of them told of vote buying.

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<sup>110</sup>In Romania, the ID cards are stamped on the back to ensure that holders do not vote twice.



**Figure 23** Caldarars with their cars on the Election Day 2009 in front of the polling station (Caldarars' local school), Photo taken by the author 2009.



**Figure 24** On the Election Day, Caldarar man with his driver, close to his Mercedes, in front of the polling station, Photo taken by the author 2009.

## **Are the two Roma groups captive voters in the local level elections?**

Through vote-buying exchanges and controlled voting, the Romanianized Roma seem to get trapped in coerciveness. Nevertheless, the exchanges of votes for social services and cash, are frequently performed on the basis of a long-term relationship developed with the local patron Comsa, for whom Romanianized Roma experience feelings of respect and loyalty. Contrary to the classical definition of clientelism as a non-democratic exchange, but in agreement with Fox's (1994) arguments for the case of Mexican clientelism, the patron-client relationship between Comsa, his followers and the Romanianized Roma can be seen as an alternative to citizenship rights through which they can get access to state welfare and services. In this context exchanges often are issues of *vote barter*, rather than *vote buying*. Nevertheless, the long-term reliance on state social benefits make Romanianized Roma the subjects of a *strong clientelistic relation* with the local patronage actors and confine their possibilities for socio-economic improvement to the local patronage politics able to channel resources and services.

On the other hand, the Caldarars do not seem to be captive voters at all. As Wang and Kurzman (2007) argue for Taiwan, clients can avoid the trap of total subordination in a context where numerous actors act as patrons. In my research, the Caldarar power brokers – the *bulibasi* - create the possibility of alienation from local patronage politics and a random distribution of votes. The multiplicity of brokerage and their divergent directions leave space for Caldarars' personal options, which are often connected to their perception of interdependencies between politics and informal economic practices (ruling parties facilitating their businesses). On the other hand, Caldarars successfully involved in the informal economy are interested in hiding their property, avoiding paying council taxes and at the same time getting access to state welfare and ID renewals. All these interests bring them into a *semi-clientelistic* relation with the PSD local patronage actors mediated by *bulibasi* brokers.

Clientelistic relations between local patron, Roma brokers and Roma clients challenge the Roma expert program coordinated by the central government. In



Costesti, the Roma expert is a Romanianized Roma whose main interest is to convince members of his community to vote for the local patronage party. In this context, Roma experts are *patronage brokers* in a relationship of direct subordination with the local patronage, required to follow political interests and almost unable to promote Roma interests. The whole Roma expert program is mediated locally by the dynamics of patronage politics (distribution of resources by a local team supporting a political party) and direct clientelistic relations with local patronage actors and followers which, as I showed, are not always inefficient or unhelpful in solving the Gypsies' problems.

## **Conclusions**

In every day local level politics, clientelism proved not to be a one-way relationship of subordination and thus challenged the classical definition of clientelism (Scott 1972; Hilgers 2008), which implies a subordinated relation between two partners. In Costesti, the local patron Comsa does not always control his Roma clients' political options, as far as Caldarar power brokers put pressure on the local patronage actors' actions. The local patron acts in relation with the Roma power brokers, who do not always fulfil the expected exchange (number of votes expected).

In the following sentences, I summarize the answer to the main question of my Ph.D. thesis and show how the performed power relations at local- level politics intersect with the differentiated socio-economic configuration of the two Roma communities.

The multiplicity of power brokers, their duality and divergence leave space for democratization of voting behaviour among Caldarars and a relative independence in relation to the politics of local patronage. In terms of constraints or opportunities for socio-economic improvement, Caldarars are able to act outside of local direct clientelistic relations and patronage politics, or at its boundaries, and to preserve a relatively independent form of action, organization and expression of their political options.

More importantly, in this context, they exploit their relative independence from local patronage and from power brokers' actions and they are able to keep searching for and to constitute new forms of self-governance around new discursive



practices (e.g. Pentecostal religious discursive practices discussed in previous chapter).

For the Romanianized Roma the clientelistic relations are established by direct contact with the main local patronage actors (administrator Comsa, deputy mayor Sorpaci). Moreover, the informal Romanianized Roma leader Ioader Candel, who generally follows the lines of local patronage, and Roma expert Dinica Sotu who acts as a patronage broker, reproduce the clientelistic relations between local patron Comsa and Romanianized Roma. In this context, Romanianized Roma are not politically represented by leaders at the local council meetings and their individual struggles for economic opportunities and access to state welfare are always mediated through patronage politics. Taking into account the conclusions of the chapter on informal economy and local level politics, Romanianized Roma's economic practices are confined to limited local economic possibilities. Moreover, the Romanianized Roma's struggles for representation and participation in decision-making processes (politics) are captured by local clientelistic relations and patronage politics. For these reasons, they are almost unable to develop forms of self-governance to counteract the ubiquitous force of patronage politics and resulted clientelism, within which they act and are constituted as subjects of local governance politics.

Lack of genuine Romani politics and representation, lack of forms of social and political organization and a local approach to social relations and economic practices, which is unable to go beyond the structure of local patronage politics serve to block an improvement of their socio-economic condition.

The chapter also reveals the necessity that, whilst exploring modes of empowerment in a neopatrimonial system, one should pay special attention to both patronage brokers who reproduce patronage structures and power brokers who challenge patronage politics and leave space for the circulation of power and the development of forms of self-governance as in the case of Caldarars.

## **Chapter 8.Caldarars' Pentecostalism: Empowerment and Subjection to Power**

### **Religious foundations in Costesti and associated attitudes**

Under socialism, both Roma communities in Costesti used to be Orthodox believers. There are two Orthodox churches in the village where both Romanians and Roma used to attend services. As the priest and many locals suggested, the central church was always overcrowded during the key religious feasts (Christmas and Easter), when peasants, Caldarars and Romanianized Roma used to come in large numbers. However, congestion was not the main reason for setting up a Pentecostal church.

Cristian Diaconu, the first Pentecostal preacher, told me the story of how the Pentecostal church came to be in Costesti. He is a Romanian Pentecostal believer, who wanted to establish a single church for Romanianized Roma and started to preach informally at his house. He came from a different region and settled in Costesti after his marriage to a Romanianized Roma woman. He was a Pentecostal convert from the beginning and he decided to bring Pentecostalism first to the Romanianized Roma and Caldarars and then to the whole village.

In the beginning, in order to make the Pentecostal gathering more attractive to the Romanianized Roma, at each religious service he used to provide food and packages to poor families. As he complained, the Romanianized Roma were regular attendees as long as food and material help were provided. When he was no longer able to obtain funding for his charitable gifts, he decided to invite, attract and convince Caldarars to convert to Pentecostalism. As he told me, Caldarars were not just interested in conversion, but were also very receptive to the Pentecostal preaching and prayer. He portrayed them as superstitious and worried about the future of their finances and informal businesses. He has been quite happy to give private religious services to Caladarar families experiencing conflicts or just worried about their informal economic activities.

At one point, the preacher Cristian Diaconu received financial support from Caldarars to redecorate the room where the religious meetings took place. His

initiatives were often challenged or even thwarted by the Orthodox priest of the central church and by the Romanianized Roma Dinica Sotu, the Roma expert, who attempted to put pressure on the local authorities and the population to reject the Pentecostal church project (Fieldnotes, 9 November 2009). Both the Orthodox priest and the Roma expert explained their aggressive refusal in terms of worries they had about an imminent loss of control over Romanianized Roma. In their views, fewer Romanianized Roma would have attended the Orthodox Church service and listened to their Roma leader and expert, Dinica Sotu.

In the meantime, Caldarars decided to have their own building for church services and prayer. In the years that followed, they struggled to find the money to buy the land and pay for the construction of the church. In 2008, the building was erected, and the Caldarar believers, as well as some new ones who had joined the congregation, started to attend church services at the new venue, built in the Caldarars' district. At the beginning, Cristian Diaconu, the Romanianized Roma founder of the local Pentecostal union, was invited to be the main preacher but, in time, a rich Caldarar with medium level of education, Mateiescu Doru, who had attended some religious training sessions, replaced him and started to preach the gospel in the Romani language to the Caldarar converts. He is one of the few Caldarars with sufficient formal education to enable him to read and interpret the Bible. Many of the Caldarar families either lack formal education or have no more than four years of schooling.

This change was beneficial for the Caldarar converts interested in a Caldarar preacher who could preach in their language and come closer to their cultural needs. On the other hand, Mateiescu Doru worked to maintain his informal position as prophet and provided private religious services for Caldarars, who considered him to be endowed with divine powers and able to solve their family problems. However, since then no Romanianized Roma have attended church services and the Pentecostal church in Costesti has become the Caldarars' church. That happened for two principal reasons. First, Caldarars maintain a caste boundary with the Romanianized Roma, who are considered impure, poor and not real Gypsies. Most of the time Romanianized Roma are rejected or marginalized by Caldarars and this creates a reciprocal avoidance and mutual rejection leading to unwillingness to share

a common social space<sup>111</sup>. In this context, the Romanianized Roma are not welcomed and are not interested in Caldarars' Pentecostal church. Secondly, they lacked a specific interest in Pentecostal religion and were more interested in getting economic support from the church, which was not longer provided.

According to Mateiescu Doru's estimate, in 2008 there were only 45 Caldarar converts. By 2010, their number had reached 135, which shows an increased level of conversion among Caldarars. Interestingly, in an interview I had with Doru, Cristian Diaconu's initiative was barely mentioned and generally downplayed.

C: How did those from Costesti hear about the Pentecostal church?

D: We heard about it in Sibiu, where they have a Pentecostal church.

C: Did the project started among the Romanianized Roma?

D: No, there were so many poor people there. There were too many of us, so we needed our own church. Brother Daniel Mateiescu went to Cluj and found someone who wanted to fund our project. (Interview with Mateiescu Doru, Caldarar Pentecostal preacher).

Mateiescu Doru gives a different explanation and claims the foundation of the Pentecostal church in Costesti. He suggests that the Christian Roma Centre organized by the self-entitled 'president of the Roma' Miron Codrea, himself a Pentecostal minister, supported the construction of the Costesti Pentecostal church.

Both Doru Mateiescu and Daniel Mateiescu, members of the church administration, considered that the advice of president of the Roma, Miron Codrea, was much more important for the local Pentecostal church than Cristian Diaconu's initial local project. The local religious initiative of bringing together both groups of Roma failed from the start. While poor Romanianized Roma were mainly interested in material benefits, the Caldarars wanted to differentiate themselves from other Gypsies and build their own cultural environment with a new local congregation: preaching in Romani, having a Caldarar preacher, enjoying a dramatic style of praying on themes of general interest to Caldarars, such as overcoming troubles with their informal economic practices.

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<sup>111</sup> Romanianized Roma day laborers in Caldarars' households are not allowed to enter their houses, touch their objects, drink or eat from the same glasses, plates. They are not greeted and they are usually approached as subordinates.

Pentecostalism brought changes in the interactions between Caldarar believers, Romanian and Roma non-converts. All converts claimed to have renounced bad habits (alcohol consumption, fighting, partying) and that there was a strengthened sense of cohesion and egalitarian values. Locals confirmed the change in behaviour and said there had been a general decrease in alcohol-related violence and aggressiveness. However, not all Caldarars converted to Pentecostalism. Some of the believers told me that only ‘the poorer’ Caldarars joined the church, those who hoped for more equality and community cohesion. It is well known locally that rich Caldarars despise the poor and they maintain an almost a caste-like boundary with both the Romanianized Roma and the less wealthy Caldarars. They do not even greet or talk to them in public. In this context, the Pentecostal church offers a new possibility to the poorer Caldarar families, a transformation from an unequal form of social organization to a more egalitarian one.

Moreover, the Pentecostal conversion brought changes in the way the Caldarar approach the local authorities and in their form of leadership, *bulibasa*. It was also an opportunity for several formerly rich Caldarars who had been unsuccessful in business to become socially important and get prestige in the eyes of Caldarars converts. In Moroieni, a neighbouring village where Caldarars are much poorer than those from Costesti, Ionel Torea (a *bulibasa*’s son) who became a Roma expert set up the Pentecostal church. It was an attempt on his part to strengthen his authority over the Caldarars community. In this sense, it can be claimed that Pentecostal conversion has led to both continuities and changes in the Caldarars’ local social structure and hierarchy.

In an article<sup>112</sup> in *The Economist* it is suggested that the conversion to Pentecostalism brought changes in Roma lifestyle: fewer Roma pupils drop out of school, young married girls continue to attend school, and violence, criminality and alcohol consumption are significantly reduced.

In Costesti the general feeling about the role of the Pentecostal church is similar to that presented in the mass media. Both Romanians and Roma claim that Caldarars fight less and they have left their drinking and aggressive habits behind.

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<sup>112</sup> ‘Religion in Romania. Romania’s evangelical Romanies’, *The Economist*, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Available at: [http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2011/01/religion\\_romania](http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2011/01/religion_romania)

Many Caldarars I have talked to emphasised this change, and the different lifestyle they need to follow -‘Godly ways’- which mark a significant distinction between themselves and the rest.

Caldarar converts rhetoric about a new lifestyle is promoted by Pentecostal doctrine which encourages a symbolic detachment from the past and a rebirth into a new life purified of bad habits (drinking, crime, domestic violence, entertainment and partying) (Brodwin 2003; Wacker 2001). However, as acknowledged by scholars of Pentecostalism, the ethics is ‘profoundly localized’ (De Bernardi 1999: 77), “addressing local issues in locally comprehensible terms” (Robbins 2004: 129). In this sense, Caldarars’ conversion to Pentecostalism did not bring important changes in many other aspects considered wrong by the state. Early marriages and informal economic practices (the non-payment of state taxes) continue to play an important role in Caldarars’ everyday lives.

Interdictions and changes to ways of living vary from one congregation to another and are able to create the basis for empowerment and cultural revival (Peljmans, Vate, and Falge 2005). As Wanner (2007) suggests for the case of Ukrainian believers, Pentecostal conversion does not bring a complete rupture with the past, but a reformulation of the self in interaction with the Other, a possible transfer from one subjection to another.

In this context, it is interesting to explore in which ways *Caldarars’ conversion to Pentecostalism becomes a form of empowerment or rather a new form of subjection to power, submission to religious doctrine*. Furthermore, I am interested in understanding *how religious conversion changed the discursive practices and power relations into a new language of power*.

*Does this new language of power differ from state projects of empowerment (Roma expert and mediators program) and challenge the existing forms of authority?*

*Can Caldarars’ conversion to Pentecostalism be seen as a form of self-governance?*

In the following section, I present alternative theoretical explanations for conversion to Pentecostalism in Eastern Europe, which I explore for my case study.

## **Conversion to Pentecostalism: alternative explanations**

The religious revivalism in Eastern Europe has often been explained as a reaction to repressive socialist measures against religion<sup>113</sup>. In socialist Romania and generally in Eastern Europe religions were repressed but religious practice was informally tolerated.

Pelkmans (2009) suggests that, in the Soviet bloc, socialist modernization involved transformations in religious meanings and practices and, generally, an objectification of religion. Religious identities were attached to ethno-national categories and in this way became manageable by the state and instruments of power (Bratosin, Ionescu 2009).

Similarly, in Romania, the Orthodox Church was subordinated to socialist national ideologies and mechanisms of control (Fozto 2006; Cioroianu 2007). Religious belonging constituted an ethnic marker for those ethnic minorities for whom the rights of cultural expression were restricted. However, the religious identities of the Roma, have not necessarily been specific (Achim 2004). Different Roma groups were Orthodox, Catholics or Protestant believers corresponding to the historical regions of Romania<sup>114</sup>. In their case, the socialist repression was oriented primarily towards their ethnic identity, which was largely subsumed by the socialist state within that of Romanian and socialist proletarian identity.

After 1989, Romanians and Eastern Europeans were free to choose and practice their religions. At the same time, post-socialism opened the doors for global religious movements, especially neo-protestant, such as Pentecostalism, to develop locally in Eastern European societies (Clark 2009, Horton 1971, 1975a, 1975b; Lankauskas 2009; Steinberg and Wanner 2008). Some groups of Roma adopted Pentecostalism. An explanation was that Gypsies looked for their own ethnic-religious category to offer a distinct identity (Fosztó 2006). If being a Hungarian means being Catholic or Protestant, being a Romanian means being Orthodox, it is

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<sup>113</sup>See Pelkmans, Vate, Falge (2005), Pine and Pina -Cabral (2008), Vallikivi (2003), Vate (2009), Werth (2000).

<sup>114</sup>While in Walachia and Moldavia Orthodox religion is the predominant one, in Transylvania there is a religious mix between Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant religions and Neo-Protestant cults.

likely that being a Gypsy could mean being Pentecostal. However, this explanation seems far too general. The religious landscape looks more complex and highly particularized locally. For instance, in my research case study, while the Romanianized Roma were not interested in conversion, Caldarars were very receptive to these new religious practices and built their own Pentecostal church. These differences can be rather explained by looking at the interactions of each Roma group with the transformations from socialism to post-socialism.

On the other hand, the post-1990 religious revival has sometimes been associated with low/moderate economic performance and political instability, plus a decreased sense of life security (Norris and Inglehart 2004). However, the transformation seems much more complex and Pippa and Inglehart's arguments probably do not suffice to explain the continuous process of Roma conversion to Pentecostalism during the last 20 years. In the article from *The Economist* devoted to Romanian Roma religious belonging, Ilie Dinica, president of the National Agency for the Roma, stated that the Romanian Gypsies' conversion to Pentecostalism is steadily increasing. The statement came as a confirmation of research conducted by the Roma Education Fund, which "suggests that a fifth of the country's Roma may now belong to smaller religious denominations, mostly Pentecostal, but also to Catholic and Islamic sects." In the same article, a Roma expert gives a rough estimation of the growing rate of Protestant conversion among Roma in Romania: "6% a year compared to less than 1% for Romania's non-Roma".

The religious revival among the Roma in Romania is not necessarily a sign of a 'traditional' practice or strategy of survival but, on the contrary, may represent the expression of a non-secular modernising process that might bring alternative forms of modernization (e.g. understanding and reading the Bible as a form of literacy) (Meyer 1996, Werth 2000). It has been shown that, for example, in the case of Lithuania, Pentecostal religious practice and belief are part of an alternative modernising discourse that brings authority directly to believers and Bible is considered a modern writing (Lankauskas 2009).

Social scientists offered multiple alternative explanations for conversion (Hefner 1993). I consider that an important explanation for Roma conversion to Pentecostalism is related to the way Pentecostalism as a religious practice is



organized locally (De Bernardi 1999, Gerlach and Hine 1970; Robbins 2004). Pentecostal churches are organized in small congregations and they do not always merely reproduce the main doctrines but adapt themselves to local understandings and practices. In Costesti, all preachers and believers are Caldarars, who stress in their preaching, during the church services, issues related to community life and the experience of informal economic activities. In this sense, as Ries (2007) argues for the case of a different community of Caldarars in Romania, the Pentecostal church integrates these religious and social meanings into a community of common values (Ries 2004, Slavkova 2003), which are nonetheless subject to the religious doctrine.

Other examples come from Siberia and Kazakhstan, where indigenous groups who used to live under the Soviet rule accepted, after 1991, their conversion to neo-protestant Christianity (Vate 2009; Clark 2009). The emergent religious belief was the result of a process of contextualization and domestication of new Christian values which were conflated with local non-Christian local cultural elements (Clark 2009; Pelkmans 2009). In this sense, it could be claimed that conversion to Pentecostalism is neither a totally atomistic experience, nor a discourse entirely colonizing the individuals' consciousness (Pelkmans 2009) and involves both the adoption and domestication of new meanings.

Moreover, Pentecostalism often served as a form of empowerment or resistance to state power for those groups, whose culture was suppressed by the state power. In the case of the Chuckchi of Siberia and other ethnic groups of Siberia, Pentecostal conversion brought opportunities for empowerment (Peljmans, Vate, Falge 2005; Vate 2009) and cultural revival. Conversion was interpreted "as an attempt to regain agency" (Vate 2009: 41), previously captured by the Soviet state, and to challenge the accepted Russian Orthodox status that frequently opposed their 'pagan' religion. Vallikivi (2003) asserts that the Nenents of Siberia easily accepted conversion to Baptism as they considered Baptists "less harmful and more trustworthy partners than other Russians" (p. 60). In this context, conversion became a form of resistance to the state's forms of control.

However, conversion to Pentecostalism does not bring a total rupture with the cultural past. Wanner (2007) argues that Ukrainian converts experienced a transformation of their selves and life meanings "by forming bridge from one's

former Soviet self to a new form of subjectivity” (p. 158-9). Conversion can bring about an individual’s disconnection from various forms of authority and a reformulation of self-authority through objectification (Vallikivi 2003) and the transition from one form of power to another. Individuals can simultaneously adopt alternative narratives, which can be “hegemonic” - reproducing the existing structures of power - or “subversive” challenging different layers of power (Ewick and Silbey 1995). For the Ukrainian Pentecostal believers, Wanner (2007) argues that the conversion narratives contain both “subversive” and “hegemonic” elements.

In the case of Caldarar believers, discursive entanglements between politics, religious practices and new forms of leadership may acquire forms of resistance and subversion. In this sense, conversion to Pentecostalism can cast new meanings upon “cultural categories such as agency and power, familiar and foreign, space and time” (Wanner 2007: 167) as well as upon old and new forms of leadership. In the following sections, I explore local religious domestications and the way in which conversion to Pentecostalism brings changes in Caldarars’ discursive practices, understandings of leadership, politics and authority.

### **Pentecostalism: local domestications**

As already mentioned, many poorer Caldarars joined the new Pentecostal church, forming almost a separate cultural group from the rest of community, with different values and norms. Most of them looked for a different form of identity, in opposition to that imposed by the rich Caldarars who usually stigmatize them. The latter consider them inferior, dirty, and marginal.

As already documented, in the post-soviet space (Vate 2009; Clark 2009), Pentecostalism is not a discourse imposed from above, but is usually adapted to local needs, and gets expression in cultural domestications performed by both believers and preachers. On the other hand, Pentecostalism promotes an egalitarian doctrine and offers equal opportunities to believers with different levels of education and financial resources (McGuire 1975, Noll 2001, Willems 1967, Wilson and Clow 1981) to experience God as inspirational authority (Corten 1997, Cucchiari 1990, Ireland 1991) and self-expression (Voiculescu 2012).

The Pentecostal church in Costesti follows this model of a small congregation that does not reproduce a rigid doctrine but, on the contrary, incorporates or negotiates local cultural norms and the Caldarars' experiences and expectations. For several months, I carried out participant observation and I attended church services, witnessed songs, testimonies and speeches performed by preachers and believers, which revealed the way cultural meanings about poverty, the informal economy and education are presented and negotiated in religious discourses. In general, the atmosphere during the Caldarar church services is quite different from that in a Romanian Pentecostal church, where believers follow pastor's directions and listen in silence to his prayers, sing in the choir and pray in a moderate tone. In the Caldarars' church believers pray loudly, speak in tongues and do not seem to follow a program initiated by the preacher.

Mateiescu Doru, a rich Caldarar, is the preacher at the Caldarars' Pentecostal church. He is a charismatic leader who uses a strong intonation to give powerful speeches and to convey religious examples connected to the problems of everyday life for Caldarars. In his preaching he often called for the dissolution of differences between rich and poor Caldarars. At one church service, a young woman performed a song, a call for the rich Caldarars to give money to the poor. In exchange for their good actions, the rich would receive rewards from God.

On a different day, a different Caldarar woman on her way to the church contemplated the rich Caldarar 'palaces' and told me that their wealth means nothing in God's eyes. (Fieldnotes, 15 November 2009, around the Pentecostal church). These discursive practices draw attention to the way belief in God can blur the boundaries between the poor and the rich. It also serves as a pure normative statement or suggestive of a plan for local social change. Moreover, it seems that the preacher and the members of the church administration (rich Caldarars) do not necessarily agree with a clear-cut division between rich and the poor, which from their point of view would generate conflicts among Caldarars. In the light of this, the church set up has been vehemently opposed by *bulibasa* Leonard, who was afraid of losing control over the Caldarar community, and made a short aggressive intrusion into the church and, since then, both preachers and believers have shown more caution.

It is also interesting to notice how discourses about the role of belief and religion vary in relation to the preachers' identities. Irrespective of their cultural or ethnic background, pastors from other Pentecostal churches are often invited to preach at the Caldarars' church. On one of these occasions, a Romanian pastor, Teodosie, from a nearby village, was invited. His discourse was different from Doru's, and followed the logic of controlled governance imposed from above. He mentioned in his speech that Caldarars should avoid doing informal commerce. He gave as an example an illiterate woman who used to cheat at the market and, after she became a Pentecostal believer, without being able to read the bible, she received the Holy Spirit and gave up cheating.

However, Teodosie's discourse was not very well received. His preaching was rather didactic, with questions from bible to which no one knew the answers. Many of the Caldarar believers either started laughing or left the church. At the end of the service pastor Teodosie informed me about his views on the Pentecostal religious practice, which he saw as a form of education, literacy and promoting the reduction of criminality among Roma in general. He indirectly confirmed that his preaching aimed at producing a similar effect. It was a different way of approaching Pentecostal religious practice, as a form of teaching and modernization imposed from above, to be accepted by Roma believers.

However, Caldarar preachers and administrators of the church follow the local, contextualized, character of Pentecostalism, and predicate a softer version of change which does not exclude the so-called "traditions" (early marriages, informal economic practices). Domesticated religious practices are documented by other case studies on Gypsy Pentecostalism in Western and Eastern Europe (Slakova 2003, Ries 2004, Delgado 2010) which confirm that local religious practices underpin "ethnic reaffirmation by means of cultural reinvention" (Delgado 2010:256).

Mateiescu Doru, the Caldarar preacher in Costesti, confirmed he follows the rules of the Caldarar community, and thus marries his children at young ages. In this context, Pentecostalism does not necessarily produce the expected modernization (changes in cultural practice, integration in state structures) but rather encourages self-transformation and the domestication of religious practices. It is also a discourse of power, which imposes new values and meanings on the converts' lives. In the next

section, I concentrate attention on transformations brought by Pentecostal ethics and practice in Caldarars' understandings of power, authority and leadership.



**Figure 25** Caldarars' prayer inside the Pentecostal church, Photo taken by the author 2009.

### **From *Bulibasa* to God: changes in the language of power and leadership**

In many informal conversations about leadership, Caldarar believers claimed they do not 'listen' to *bulibasa* or *bulibasi* any more, as far as their roles are limited to mediation between community and police, when needed. The presence of God became more important and even replaced the leading role of *bulibasa* in their everyday lives. As I have already shown in the chapter on Roma leadership, after 1990, *bulibasa* as a leadership institution has gradually lost credibility and authority over Caldarars. The enrichment of Caldarars and decentralization and multiplication of leadership was another stage in this sense and Pentecostalism was a further step that actually severed the authority of *bulibasi* over Caldarar believers. Many believers claimed that their ultimate *bulibasa* is God. In a conversation I had with

one of the church administrators, Mateiescu Daniel, the transfer of authority between *bulibasa* and God was clearly stated.

C: Do they [Caldarars] still listen to *bulibasa*?

D: Who listens to *bulibasa* today? He does not matter anymore. We listen to God. Why should I listen to *bulibasa*? Does he give us anything?

C: Who gives you support? *Bulibasa* or God?

D: Long before, *bulibasa* helped us. Now it is finished with *bulibasa* [as an institution].

C: What he does now?

D: He handles police claims or intervenes when there are fights amongst us, and that is all.

C: Do you have other bosses?

D: No. We just listen to God.

C: Why are they *bulibasi* then ?

D: It is just that they consider themselves *bulibasi*.

C: What role they have in relation to you?

D: They have no role... Instead of helping the poor they tell everything to police. (Interview with Mateiescu Daniel, Pentecostal church administrator)

As with many other Caldarars I talked to, Mateiescu Dumitru explained that the Caldarar *bulibasi* are self-appointed and are part of the self-interested rich community who play almost no beneficial role and lack authority among the poorer Caldarars. Mediation with the police is again mentioned as the single role customary leaders still play. On the other hand, Pentecostalism as practice and belief seems to blur the division between rich and poor and generate a transfer of authority from *bulibasa* to God and, finally, to the Caldarar themselves. It gives to individuals a sense of empowerment, and they are no longer in a relation of dependence upon an external source of authority.

Mateiescu Dumitru is a Caldarar believer from a moderately wealth family, who was involved in the pipe business for several years. After a while, he experienced a decline in his informal dealings and had to re-orientate towards much simpler informal economic activities, like roof painting and manufacturing copper and steel products. He is one of the Caldarar Pentecostal believers who claimed that Jesus, or God, is the new *bulibasa* and the only leader in his life.

C: But who is *bulibasa* now?

D: Everyone is his/her own master. Bulibasa deals with police issues only. It is just a word: *bulibasa*. They are *bulibasi*, but not our masters - we have Jesus.

C: Do you fear him [*bulibasa*]?

D: We feel fear because he is our *bulibasa*, but we have no issues with him. If they [*bulibasi*] help you, they ask for money. It is better to manage yourself. If you are weak and don't know what to do - you still go to him [*bulibasa*]. He sometimes says - come to me, if you do not come, I'll beat you. We have our *bulibasa*, that is, Jesus.

C: Can you still have a *bulibasa* here, or is Jesus the new *bulibasa*?

D: *Bulibasa* is a name, but we are masters of ourselves. If someone comes to me to harm me, I go directly to the police and complain, I'll go to courts and ask for his arrest. (Interview Mateiescu Dumitru, Pentecostal believer)

Similarly to many other Caldarars, when referring to the roles and importance of *bulibasa* for the Caladarar community, Dumitru's statements are contradictory: "we feel fear because he is our *bulibasa*" vs. "they are *bulibasi* but not our masters". The distinction indicates that *bulibasa* is no longer an authority but just a source of fear and control for those 'weak' people who ask for his mediation services in relation with the local authorities. The Caldarar believers' strength in their relation with external forms of control comes through self-mastery and a private relationship with God. In this sense, Dumitru's statements become very relevant: "*Everyone is his/her own master*" and "*We are masters for ourselves*". As documented in my article on Pentecostal Gypsy Travellers' religious experience (Voiculescu 2012) believers tend not to differentiate between divine authority (God, Jesus) and themselves and claim to be both masters of themselves and have Jesus or God as master of their private lives. This seems to be a common feature of neoprottestant cults which imply that "the supreme spiritual authority can be the inner self or some form of 'divine within', or both." (Lambert 1999: 322).

Dumitru's remarks suggest the way the new Pentecostal belief and relation with divine authority brings personal independence and autonomy in relation to the customary leadership and other external authorities or forms of control. In this context, the religious partnership with God is a "process of 'self-mastery' [or 'self-mediation'] through which believers get control over themselves and over relations with Others." (Voiculescu 2012: 6.1). By using God as an interface and everyday life

intimate partner, the Caldarar believer gets ‘power over himself’ (Wilson, Clow 1981). Caldarars gain individual authority through the personal relationships they develop with God.

In this context, empowerment is made through religious practice, commitment and adaptation to a religious ethic and cultivation of self-control. Compared to state projects of integration (e.g. state education, Roma experts and mediators) religious *empowerment is made from within self and community through local religious organization and self-mastery*. Conversion implies both affirmation of self in decision-making and submission to the Pentecostal religious doctrine. The double process of religious experience as empowerment through submission is explored in an interesting ethnographic study concerning women’s mosque movement in Egypt (Mahmood 2001), which emerged as a reaction to the newly secularized understandings of Islam, mainly produced by the liberal state. Mahmood (2001) argues that women who decided to teach, transmit Islamic doctrine and practice, piety, ethics, perform agency and show resistance to state secularization and objectivation of Islam culture. Mahmood (2001) considers that the direction of religious acts, like piety, should be disconnected from the liberal understandings of subordination. They should be rather explored in their subjective meanings connected to “desires, motivations, commitments, and aspirations of the people to whom these practices are important” (p.255). In the context of my research, Caldarar believers use the Pentecostal religious experience to exercise individual authority and to challenge external forms of authority. Conversion to Pentecostalism changed the locus of authority, from external actors (leaders-*bulibasi*) to the self and community, and generated a form of empowerment from within.

It is interesting that Dumitru and other Caldarar believers consider they do not need *bulibasa* as mediators or representatives. In other words, a form of self-governance gained through the new religious Pentecostal experience and partnership with God, replaced leaders’ mediation of their everyday problems. Pentecostal conversion becomes a form of near-genuine empowerment, yet mediated by religious doctrine, which needs to be internalized. However, as Lambert (1999) argues, in the case of neo-protestant religions, beliefs and norms are not directly incorporated into



the social life of the believer, but “they must be legitimated through personal experience” (p. 322)

On the other hand, the transfer of the locus of control and authority to an inner religious self brings Caldarars into a much closer relation and interaction with local authorities (police, local council). Many of them claimed they can approach state institutions directly and solve their problems with no help from *bulibasi*. The change in the Caldarars’ approach to state institutions is also a result of a whole process of decentralization of Roma leadership in the transition from a repressive centralized society to a neopatrimonial one, which was documented in detail in the chapter on Roma leadership.

### **Voting and religion**

The new local cult is not disconnected from the sphere of politics. Although they gain authority over others and locate control in their private relations with God and themselves, Caldarar Pentecostal believers are still influenced in their voting options by the preacher and church administrators who have their own political interests. When asked, many Caldarar Pentecostal believers avoided to give a clear answer whether their voting option is influenced by others or not, and they mainly claimed that they do not ‘listen’ to others. In the same interview I had with Mateiescu Dumitru, I tried to find out his voting intentions for the presidential elections and his explanation for his choice.

C: If Daniel Mateiescu [administrator of the church] told you who to vote for, would you follow his advice?

D: Yes, we could do that. If they told us good things, that wouldn't be a bad lesson.

C: Did Mateiescu Daniel tell you with whom to vote?

D: It is a secret - I cannot tell you that. (Mateiescu Dumitru, Pentecostal believer)

Dumitru Mateiescu avoided telling me clearly whether Daniel Mateiescu, one of the administrators of the Pentecostal church, influenced him in his voting options, but admitted that in certain matters he would listen to the administrators of the church and accept their advice. In this sense, Pentecostal conversion does not bring a total

exclusion of external sources of influence or control (informal leaders, state representatives), but makes a substantial change in the locus of authority for the Caldarar believer who situates his options in the intimate sphere of private relations with God, which ultimately might hide the influence of others in the decision-making process. However, in an interview, Daniel Mateiescu, one of the church administrators, showed his newly emerging influence on the Caldarars' voting options.

C: What kind of connections you have with Miron Codrea [the king's son]?

D: We have no connections. We only went to his church. He has never visited us.

C: Do you recognize him as the President of the Roma?

D: Yes, he is, and he is with Basescu [actual president, and former PDL – democrat-liberal - leader].

C: I know that Gypsies voted PSD [Social-Democrats].

D: No. All of us from the church voted with Basescu. He [Miron Codrea] helped us with the church registration. (Interview with Mateiescu Daniel, Pentecostal church administrator)

Daniel explains why Caldarar believers voted with the PDL and not with the PSD, the local patronage party. The influence, in this case, arose from a source different from local patronage. The self-entitled Roma President Miron Codrea, founder of the Christian Roma Centre, who supported the founding of the Pentecostal church in Costesti is an important reference here. From Daniel's statement, it seems that Caldarar believers followed his direction, given by Miron Codrea's political preferences, and voted for the PDL in the November 2009 elections. On the other hand, it is interesting to notice that Daniel claims that there are no direct links between Miron Codrea and the Caldarar community of Costesti. His statement is something of a paradox: Caldarar believers and administrators of the church are influenced by Miron Codrea's political options, but have in almost no personal links with him. The relation between Miron Codrea and administrators of the Pentecostal church is a clientelistic relation, but in a loose sense, as the parts are not in direct contact with each other. Daniel's statement also implies that Caldarar believers followed the administrators of the church in their voting choices, confirming that a total transfer of authority from leaders to religious self has not been made, and that

clientelistic relations had changed and developed in a different way, in the realm of religion.

What seems to serve as the intersection between the spatial crossovers of state, politics, and religion, is the domain of patron-client relations. However, for Caldarar believers, Pentecostal conversion does not primarily bring a change of patrons and brokers, but instead a significant change in the language of power and their understanding of authority, which is primarily located in the private sphere of relations with God. As documented in my article on Pentecostal Gypsy Traveller believers' religious reflexivity, the privatization of relations with God becomes a source for individual authority and contestation of normativity, without excluding the pastor's external influence (Voiculescu 2012). In Costesti, many Caldarar believers confessed they did not follow church administrators' advice, but neither did they deny the preacher's influence upon their voting choices. Therefore, the relation between God (or self) and believer receives priority compared to other forms of relationality, which are nonetheless not necessarily excluded from being influential in the everyday forms of social existence. This hierarchy of relational significance (self/divine authority and then Others) leaves space for contestations and individual authority among Caldarar believers.

### **Discussion: Pentecostalism discourse of empowerment and power**

Many Caldarars claimed they gave up drinking, partying, and fights. Interestingly, peasant neighbours and pastors, or non-Pentecostals, in general, interpreted this form of religious discipline as 'normalization', and a form of 'education' for Caldarars, who, from their point of view, had created so many problems in the village's past (fights, aggressive behaviour). The media also seems to propagate the same discourse about Pentecostalism as a successful social 'taming', a substitute for state programs of integration, which helps to produce submissive Roma<sup>115</sup>. Moreover, experts in

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<sup>115</sup> "1000 de Tigani urland din toti bojocii:"Glorie, osana, marire!". Cum s-au facut mielusei sectanti cei mai fiorosi oameni din vogaunile Moldovei" [How the most angry people form the outskirts of Moldavia become lambish sectants] Radu Tutuianu, Evenimentul zilei, 05 June 2012 Available at [www.evz.ro](http://www.evz.ro); "Toflea, usa de biserica", [Toflea church door] Viata Libera Goteni , 4 April 2011. Available at: <http://www.ziare.com/galati/stiri-actulitate/toflea-usa-de-biserica-2108187>

minority and Roma issues have strengthened and institutionalized this distortion by translating the Roma religious initiative into the state language of integration<sup>116</sup>. In an interview offered to newspaper 'Adevarul', sociologist Horvath Istvan<sup>117</sup> claims:

If we refer to the change of behaviour in these communities, and the forms of coexistence with the others, then we can say that the church, especially the neoprotestant one, has succeeded in integrating them into society (...) We cannot compare what the state does with what the church has succeeded in doing for them.

The interview fragment suggests that state officials translate the form of *empowerment from within* (religious Pentecostal practice) into the classic discourse of *social integration from above* exercised primarily by state actors. The analysis of these meanings assigned to the Roma Pentecostal conversion raises challenges for the legitimacy of the state program of integration that could be considered an unsuccessful project of 'social taming', pursuing instrumental rationality, rather than a program of genuine empowerment.

On the other hand, Pentecostalism produces an individualization of the space of decision, which is not in any sense a space of responsabilisation or an expression of 'reflexive modernization' (Beck, Giddens, Lash 1994) that can easily be translated into the liberal understanding of 'free will'. As documented in my article on Gypsy Travellers' religious reflexivity, responsibility becomes rather blurred in the private relation with God, which becomes the source of both right and wrong decisions. Individual decisions are not the expression of a 'free will' but, on the contrary, decisions considered wrong by the state and the proxy Other are transferred to the responsibility of God – 'what God speaks' - the uncontested authority which cannot be challenged from within the religious discourse, pervasive and incorporated in their everyday social lives (Voiculescu 2012). In this sense, by claiming the supreme

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<sup>116</sup> Cluj: VIDEO Minunile din Biserica Tiganilor [Cluj VIDEO. Wonders from the Gypsy church], Adevarul- News from Cluj-Napoca, 15 November 2009. Available at : [http://www.adevarul.ro/locale/cluj-napoca/VIDEO-Minunile-tiganilor-biserica-din\\_0\\_153584987.html](http://www.adevarul.ro/locale/cluj-napoca/VIDEO-Minunile-tiganilor-biserica-din_0_153584987.html).

<sup>117</sup> Istvan Horvath is a director of the Institute for the Study of National Minorities and Reader in the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work at Babes –Bolyai University, Cluj- Napoca, Romania.

authority of God, Caldarars feel more able to manage the relation with external forms of authority and control and manipulate discourses on wrong and right, good and bad, which are normally structured by state power through institutions, norms and laws.

Furthermore, as already stated, Caldarar Pentecostal believers no longer submit to their leaders but instead transfer the locus of authority to the private space of relations with God. Yet, Pentecostalism as a form of empowerment from within the community and believer's self produces a partial subjection to religious doctrine. The latter imposes a change in the daily habits (alcohol consumption, partying), and a form of internal discipline or, in Foucault's (1990) terms, a form of self-mastery through which individuals control their desires to build their individual authority (see Voiculescu 2012).

The relation between Pentecostal believers and God is an expression of self-reflexivity and control in which God and self are not clearly distinguished (Voiculescu 2012). It is part of a process of *subjectivation* discussed by Foucault (1997) through which the individual is both a subject endowed with power and constituted by power, enable to resist some norms and adopt others. Therefore, on one hand Caldarars endorse a domesticated Pentecostal ethic and on the other expand their private decisional space over the interactions and relations with external sources of authority (state, leaders), which ultimately are mediated by the religious self. These new understandings pose challenges to state forms of integration, which are largely devised to be implemented with the help of Roma leaders (informal, Roma experts), who, nonetheless, are no longer 'authorities' among the Roma Pentecostal believers.

Pentecostal believers consider that God is their new *bulibasa* and that they are now *masters<sup>118</sup> of themselves* able to negotiate access to state services in direct interaction with local authorities. Therefore, while the relation with God (religious ethic, moral self) is strengthened, that with *bulibasi* is minimized. On the other hand, direct contact with local state authorities is encouraged.

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<sup>118</sup> It is worth to mention that Caldarars used alternatively expressions like : "we are our own masters" and "God is our bulibasa".

Through new forms of religious reflexivity, Caldarars became more confident in negotiating relations with the state and play at its boundaries claiming membership and rejecting belonging. Aspects of membership claims/ accounts with no belonging are discussed in the chapter on state encounters. Therefore, through religious self-mastery Caldarar Pentecostal converts succeeded in escaping the double subordination trap: state and customary leaders (*bulibasi*). In the power triangle, Caldarar believers, *bulibasi* and the state, God is the “symbolic interface and signifier who can delegate authority to believers” (Voiculescu 2012), “a relational partner in a process of self-mastery through which believers gain control over themselves and relations with others” (p.6.1). In this way, Caldarar Pentecostal believers are more able to negotiate their interactions with leaders and state institutions, play at the boundaries of the state in their own interest and escape submission to institutional or leadership power.

Furthermore, localized Pentecostal practice and forms of organization leave space for the domestication of religious doctrine, which does not entail the submission expected by state actors but rather a release from its control and empowerment *from within self and community*. The latter can be translated into *self-governance* in which the religious self-situates itself in an external negotiated relationship with state and *bulibasi* and in a collaborative and equally shared relationship with God (religious self). Pentecostal religious discursive practice strengthens and internalizes the centre of individual decision making, in relation to God, which informs the moral self and underpins the expropriation of other forms of authority (state institutions, *bulibasi*) in their everyday life. Therefore the *agential power* is more than *performative* (Butler: 1997), it is predominantly relational, sourced by shared, negotiated or domesticated relations with relevant Others, including divine authority.

*For the purposes of my thesis*, religion as a discursive practice *brings substantial changes among Caldarars* and lowers grades of subjection to external forms of power. It constructs a new form of self-governance aimed at healing and replacing the trauma caused by the violent intrusions of the socialist state into their leadership and forms of social and political organization. It provides opportunities for Caldarars to become active in interactions with state authorities and negotiate the

relation in their own interests. It provides a foundation for those oppressed by former *bulibasi* and the state, to consolidate new grounds for a long-term social and economic autonomy, which does not rely on formal employment and state organized forms of social existence (e.g. formal education). That also explains why Caldarars were more receptive to Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism restored their self-expression and authority cultivated by their mobile life style, which was subject to a considerable degree of repression by the socialist state.

On the other hand, *Romanianized Roma* felt less attracted to Pentecostalism as a religious practice and were less receptive to its forms of self-expression and empowerment. The Romanianized Roma are Orthodox, and often receive help from the local priest<sup>119</sup>. At the beginning, enticed by the humanitarian aid offered, some of the Romanianized Roma agreed to participate in Pentecostal religious services given by preacher Christian Diaconu. One explanation for their lack of interest in Pentecostalism is given by their attachment to and dependence on state forms of governance, which engender expectations in relation to external sources of support. Since socialism and even before, their lives have been organized by the state, which appears in their language as a paternal figure governing their survival and shaping their lives. There is a sharp contrast between the statements coming from the two Roma groups about the role of the state in their life: “The state should help us, we had jobs during socialism” (Romanianized Roma) vs. “The state did not do anything for us, on the contrary they beat us and took our gold, why we should do anything for the state?”.

*The differential relation with the state indicates a differential relation of the individual with an external authority, which is strongly challenged by Caldarars and appropriated and incorporated by Romanianized Roma in their world views and socio-economic existence.* Romanianized Roma, in a continuous search for a paternal source of support and reliance in their daily existence, could not be fulfilled by Pentecostal religious practice, which generally promotes self-expression and locates

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<sup>119</sup> Local orthodox priest from the central church praised his personal social assistance actions and he related how he helps Romanianized Roma with cash, food or exemptions for registration fees for marriages or christenings. He also offers informal scholarships for Romanianized Roma children to study at faith schools.

the believer's authority in the relation with God/religious self. These explanations can be connected to the mobile/sedentary distinction, which plays an important role in explaining flexible or rigid projections of the self in relation to the state and higher authorities, and are discussed at length in the chapter on the informal economy.

To sum up, while for Caldarars, Pentecostal religious discursive practices brought new opportunities of self-governance to those altered by the socialist state, appropriate to their world views (mobility and independence in relation with external authorities and the state), for Romanianized Roma, Pentecostalism was an almost unknown language, at odds with their ways of seeing themselves in relation to external forms of Other /authority.



## Chapter 9. Conclusions: To Speak Truth to Power

My thesis inquired comparatively into the historical life trajectories of two Roma groups - Romanianized Roma and Caldarars - with strikingly opposite socio-economic conditions of existence and revealed complex mechanisms of power relations which challenge the general discourse of 'social integration' promoted by national and transnational forms of governance (the World Bank, the UNDP, the OSCE, EU institutions) and extended into academic social research<sup>120</sup>. The state and all the other transnational organizations seem to bring under the same discourse of governance different Roma populations who experience different social/ economic conditions, leadership and forms of social and political organization. In their policy oriented research, they use fixed categories of identification as categories of governance - 'the poor', 'the vulnerable', 'the marginalized', 'the excluded' (European Commission 2012, UNDP 2003a, 2006, WB 2005). These are expressions of 'symbolic power', in Bourdieu's terms (1989, 1991), which place the Roma in a position of subordination in relation to other European populations and external forms of governance. They act, in what Rose (1999) terms, as '*regimes of enunciations*', which participate in the constitution of what Foucault (1980) called 'regimes of truth', in a logic of governmentality which hardly becomes contested.

*Social integration* is this kind of problematization of governance, which acts both as a regime of 'enunciation' and as a 'regime of truth'. It carries the characteristics of development programs produced by neoliberal governance, which have been heavily criticised for following an economic rationality and reproducing the *status quo* and not necessarily empowering the 'marginalized' (Ferguson 1994, Harris 2001, Inglis 1997, Miraftab 2004). It produces a relation of subordination and 'suspension' in which Roma are left in waiting in an endless process of integration, experiencing a "liminal unprocessed identity" (Voiculescu 2012:1.4). From the position of 'marginalized' and 'excluded', the Roma cannot receive the empowerment promised but only a continuous engagement in an 'imagined' struggle

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<sup>120</sup>Barany 1995, 2001, 2004; Cretan and Turnock 2008; Gabel 2009; Guy 2001; Ladanyi & Szelenyi 2003, 2006; Ruzicka 2012; Stewart 1997.

for an equal status, which preserves their status quo. Furthermore, categories of governance for the Roma (e.g. 'poverty', 'marginalization', 'vulnerability') and the key terms of neoliberal governmentality are easily and un-reflexively taken for granted as objects of study in the Romani studies research. In this context, my thesis followed the opposite route of governance and policy research and mainly constitutes itself as a critique of the social integration as a problematization of governance for the Roma.

Throughout my thesis I explored the history of power relations and discursive practices of two Roma groups (Romanianized Roma, Caldarars). It was a historical ethnography of Roma relations and interactions with relevant others (state institutions, Roma leaders and state representatives) in different spheres of power (economy, politics, state, religion) from socialism to post-socialism. These relations either constrained or facilitated their access to socio-economic opportunities. In my analysis, I followed both the movement of individuals' trajectories, their discursive practices and relations, and the transformation of these spheres of power struggles. In this sense, I considered the *relational dynamic* and their interaction with the continuous movement of power spheres (economy, politics, state, religion) the main source and *agent of transformations* in their lives.

In the following section, I follow the main patterns of transformation, which affected the trajectories of the two Roma groups in terms of relations and discursive practices from inside and across spheres of power struggles, from socialism to post-socialism. In the last section I express the main points I have challenged throughout my thesis and seek to answer the question: how do all those producing knowledge about Roma can speak truth to power and challenge the current neoliberal mentality of governance for the Roma populations in Europe.

## **9.1 Patterns of historical change among the two Roma groups**

State projects of assimilation and integration, though inefficient and repressive, affected the two Roma groups differently. Besides being repressive, the socialist state modernisation projects were, in Scott's terms (1998), 'state simplifications'/'state

mappings' with a narrow perspective on the complex cultural and social reality of the groups targeted. They excluded the Caldarars' approach to sociocultural existence and generally ignored their individual/group mappings. During socialism, state maps acted as "technologies of power", representations of a simplified reality which imposed "a layer of apparent coherence laid over alternative voices by the dominant power" (Massey 2005: 110). Nevertheless, as I showed in the chapter on the informal economy, the Caldarars developed in post-socialism their own 'tentative mappings' as orientations in an uncertain environment. They used their *practical knowledge* (trading and manufacturing abilities) as a flexible reference, which supported the management of continuously self-transforming social, economic and political spheres which, as Massey (2005) suggests, are both the product and the source of *on-going histories*.

On the other hand, Romanianized Roma, being already sedentarized, were more subject to state projects of integration. They used to work as unskilled labourers for state farms, cooperatives, factories, and had minimum state education. Most of the Romanianized Roma were not permanently employed, but were seasonal workers for state farms which, from their viewpoint, offered the best possible earnings given their qualifications and educational level. However, state control over socio-economic life pushed Romanianized Roma into a direct relation with state institutions and apparatuses of control.

Being settled or mobile made a significant difference to the way different groups of Roma were subject to the centralized state and connected to the socialist economy. While Romanianized Roma, as identifiable subjects and unskilled workers, acted at the margins of the state socialist economy, the Caldarars, almost unidentifiable, struggled to stay outside the state formal economy and used their mobile approach and a different understanding of economic practice to *navigate* opportunities in the socialist 'second economy'.

In post-socialism, large scale processes like state decentralization and the retreat from the economy, de-industrialization, the privatization of property and a lack of institutional control led to the development of a large informal economy sector accessed both by business opportunists and those affected by poverty.

The informal economy was the most uncertain sphere of relations, which very quickly made winners and losers. Many Caldarar families who got rich in the 1990s lost what they earned and went back to 'traditional' occupations or mixed them with 'modern' ones. This instability of the informal economy did not create clear positions for Roma groups and individuals, but complex social relations between groups and individuals prepared to collaborate and exploit the irregularities of the new markets. However, it seems that while many Caldarar families from Costesti were more able to exploit the opportunities of the new informal markets, Romanianized Roma were confined to local informal economic practices with low returns.

Although the gold Caldarars received back from the state was an important resource for investing in further business, not all Caldarars succeeded. In different locations (Moroieni, Veresti – other locations in Moldova) Caldarars experience poorer economic and living conditions (Radu 2007). Therefore, resources accumulated under socialism are not the main explanation for Caldarars' enrichment and their adaptation to the post-socialist market. The mobile and independent approach in relation to the socialist state and economy and the fast transformation of the post-socialist economic sphere can be considered to be a more adequate explanation. In this sense, I conceptualized the unsettled movement of the newly emergent informal economy as a sphere of relations encompassing fields of opportunities and possibilities, which were accessed differently by the two Roma groups. I also summarized the relations the two groups have had with the socialist state and the ways they acted in both socialist and post-socialist economies in two types of interaction with the economic sphere. As I already mentioned throughout my thesis, these two patterns do not correspond absolutely to all Caldarar groups and Romanianized Roma in Romania.

*The mobility approach and limited subjection to the state in the economic sphere* corresponds mainly to the former nomad Gypsy groups, especially Caldarars and Gabors in Transylvania (Voiculescu 2004a, 2004b, Radu 2007a, b) but also to Romanianized Roma fiddlers, who acted within the socialist second economy. Both had a mobile understanding of their economic practice, which enabled them to exist in permanent communication with the relational dynamics, opportunities, and

transformations of the economic sphere. On the other hand, the mobility approach was opposed to the sedentarist ideology of the socialist state, which imposed itself through repressive mechanisms of control. For the Caldarars, relations with the state were always ones of avoidance. State acted and was perceived as a repressive external actor. Acting from inside the state structures and being mobile were fundamentally contradictory. On the other hand, the sedentary approach entails settlement, identification, control and subjection to state forms of power. Mobile interaction within the economic sphere refers to a more complex movement, which involves both imaginary and territorial movement. The imaginary aspect of mobility is very well expressed in the Caldarars' idiom '*invention*', which indicates fast management and envisioning of successful solutions in the unsettled and uncertain environment that usually characterizes the informal economy and unstable social and political spheres.

Although Caldarars did not succeed in acting completely outside state control and its programs (identification, sedentarization), they continued to have a mobile approach in their economic practices and in their interactions with the economic sphere. Mobility and associated creative *tentative mappings* offered them access to the field of opportunities provided by the contingency of the relational dynamic of the post-socialist informal economy situated at the intersectionality with others spheres of power (politics/state - neopatrimonial context). In this context, *mobility is a cultivated form of interaction with the socio-economic sphere, called in my thesis self-governance*. Mobility acts as a '*verb*' which characterizes their *existence on the move*, relatively detached from the fixity of state institutions and structures and expressed in their translocal entrepreneurial economy and world views on self-management in a fast transforming environment.

***The sedentarist approach*** is in opposition to mobility. Romanianized Roma interactions with the economic sphere were expressions of a sedentarist approach, dependence and subjection to state institutions and social services developed in different historical regimes. The direct relation of subjection to the state limited their access to opportunities offered by the transformation of the economic sphere. Local and sedentarist interaction with the informal economy confined their actions to the

limited *field of possibilities generated by those able to access opportunities* in an unsettled and self-transforming economic sphere (Caldarars, patrons, leaders). However, as argued in the chapter on informal economy, the settled local approach does not involve a total inertia but a *navigation of a limited field of possibilities*<sup>121</sup> *within the local labyrinth*, which reveals the Romanianized Roma's active engagement with the socio-economic transformations.

*Opportunities* released by transition from socialism to post-socialism were affected by large scale socio-economic processes, which triggered either limitation or expansion of the fields of possibility. In the case of the two Roma groups discussed, the *field of opportunities* was mainly a result of the process of deindustrialization/dismantling of old enterprises, which followed the route of clientelistic relations. In the 1990s, many Caladarars from Costesti who were able to make informal transactions with state enterprises became wealthy enough to build their big 'palaces' for which they needed a local labour force. Romanianized Roma were those who fulfilled this need and thus accessed the economic possibilities offered locally. However, in early 2000s, the privatization of former state factories produced a drastic fall in the informal transactions in second-hand materials and technology, which led to contractions in the field of opportunities, accessed by Caldarars and consequently in the field of local possibilities accessed by Romanianized Roma. These two patterns clearly point out two forms of movement: 1) movement/transformation of the economic sphere and 2) Roma interaction with the socio-economic transformation.

*These two patterns of interaction with continuous socio-economic transformation correspond to two forms of governance and constitute the key answer to the major question of my thesis. "How can the significant gap in living conditions between the Romanianized Roma and the Caldarars be explained?" While Caldarars' mobile interaction with the socio-economic sphere is an expression of self-governance, Romanianized Roma's sedentary, locally confined navigation of economic possibilities is the historical product of high levels of subjection to state governance. The latter was the source of fixed references inconsistent with an*

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*uncertain, unstable post-socialist environment in continuous transformation. It indirectly brought about low levels of adaptation and perpetuated poor conditions of living.*

### **Transformation of Roma leadership and the state: brokerage and fields of politics**

To have a comprehensive and complete understanding of power relations I paid special attention to the transformation of Roma forms of leadership. In the Romanian neopatrimonial context discussed in the chapter on local level politics, Roma leaders are not necessarily representatives of their communities but political brokers for local/regional political parties and patronage politics. This contextualization substantially challenges the depoliticised equation and language of development<sup>122</sup> and empowerment of the Roma devised by the state and transnational organizations. Most of the time Roma leaders are involved in implementation of programs of inclusion and development, which aim at raising the level of participation in civil society, and represent the Roma communities in local and regional meetings. Nonetheless, Roma leaders' actions are defined by the neopatrimonial context and confined to local/regional patronage politics. These features characteristic of the Romanian political sphere and Eastern Europe in general seem to be ignored or silenced by transnational neoliberal actors in development (European Commission 2012, UNDP 2003a, 2006, WB 2005) which continue to use a depoliticised language to hide structural inequalities of power (clientelism, patronage) and qualitative differences relating to the historical paths of transformations among the Roma.

Forms of leadership were perhaps the most affected aspects of Roma socio-political organization in the transformation of state and politics from socialism to post-socialism. Compared to Romanianized Roma who developed forms of leadership later in post-socialism, the Caldarar groups had their own customary leaders called *bulibasi*, responsible for the mediation between Caldarars and local

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<sup>122</sup>The act of 'depoliticising' practiced by neoliberal development organizations and state was defined and discussed in the frame of post-developmental studies (Escobar 1995, 2000; Ferguson 1994, Harris 2001, Miraftab 2004).

authorities in matters of camping, trade and other economic activities. From the 1960s onwards, when the sedentarization was enforced by the socialist state, one *bulibasa* became the collaborator with the state surveillance services and the controller of Caldarars' economic practices and gold possessions.

One of the most coercive measures enforced by the state apparatuses of control (Securitatea) was the *transformation of the Caldarars' customary leadership into a mechanism of control, surveillance, and gold seizure*. The main *bulibasa* became the *broker* of the repressive state surveillance service, 'empowered' to deal with community problems and negotiate the gold seizure demanded by the state. However, different other *bulibasi* with limited responsibilities continued to organize and represent small travelling groups in their relations with local authorities. Therefore, while subjection to state mechanisms of control came through the main *bulibasi*, collaborators with the security services, relative independence was perpetuated through the mobile groups organized by *bulibasi* with limited mediation responsibilities. Yet, the empowerment of the main leader made by the socialist state progressively destroyed one important feature of their form of self-governance – the institution of *bulibasa* - and subjected Caldarars to violent state control. I called this process and violent intrusion of the state, *destructive empowerment*.

After 1989, the decentralization of the state and the emergence of multiple spheres of power outside its direct control (informal economy, politics, religion) brought important additional transformations to the Roma leadership, especially the Caldarars'. *The bulibasa 'institution' of the settled community was no longer supported by apparatuses of control and lost part of its authority and legitimacy among Caldarars*. On the other hand, the emergence and development of the informal economy and its intersectionalities with the neighbouring spheres - state and politics - created fields of opportunities mainly exploited by Caldarars. As a result, the position of *bulibasa* was claimed by some of the newly enriched Caldarar families, but this was often contested by the rest of community. Therefore, the main transformation for Caldarars' leadership from socialism to post-socialism can be described as *decentralization, multiplication, and role limitation* (limited only to mediation with the police) *and loss of authority*.



On the other hand, the *post-socialist development of the sphere of politics* brought a whole struggle for power, which created opportunities for the new *bulibasi* to source their power in local patronage politics, get involved and convince community members to vote for one party or another and become *power brokers*. However, *state brokerage* was not completely dissolved, but recreated by post-1989 governmental strategies for Roma inclusion, which organized a complex multi-level governance for the Roma. At both regional and local levels, informal Roma leaders were invited to participate as Roma experts and state representatives. While one of the Romanianized Roma in Costesti became Roma expert, most of the Caldara *bulibasi* decided to collaborate informally with state structures of governance and participate in their meetings. These changes in forms of state governance generated two types of brokerage.

**a. State/patronage brokers** are all those informal leaders (both Caldara and Romanianized Roma) who became Roma experts and, consequently, state employees, mainly under the control of both central and local state governance). The Roma expert network was created as a parallel structure of governance of the Roma aiming to strengthen the state presence and its bureaucratic expansion into its peripheral areas of governance and local communities situated at its margins of control (involvement in informal economy, lack of identity documents, property papers). Empowerment by state structures meant a direct exposure and subjection to local patronage politics, expression of intersectionality between politics and state (neopatrimonial context). In this context, Roma experts are not only *state brokers* but also *patronage brokers* who follow the political interests of the local or regional patronage politics (mayor/ deputy mayors, prefects etc.). They convince Gypsies to vote with the patronage party and they are one-sided players during the elections. Those who decided to become Roma experts are usually informal Roma leaders with low financial resources and minimum access to the economic opportunities.

*State/patronage brokers'* practices are circumscribed to what I call *tight webs of power produced* by state structures of governance and patronage politics. Within these webs, Roma experts are expected to follow multiple contradictory interests in relation to the state, local and regional patronage teams. All these indirectly implied

responsibilities and forms of subordination overshadow or even expropriate them of the capacity to represent the interests of their own communities.

**b. Power brokers** are those Roma leaders (both Romanianized and Caldarars) who decide to remain informal and convince the Roma to vote for different political parties including the patronage party. They are under the control of neither patronage politics nor state institutions but maintain contact and collaboration with main actors (patrons, politicians, state representatives) through what I call *loose power webs*. As power brokers, they are able to support any political party and withdraw their allegiance whenever they feel it is necessary to do so for the political actions they want to initiate. During elections, they play multiple sides and promise Roma's votes simultaneously to different local politicians/local patrons. They participate in local and regional meetings organized by the government and mediate with the local police. The navigation of these overlapping(s) between politics and state and their connection with important local and regional and national politicians and state representatives gives them 'permission' to deal or act as intermediaries in informal economic activities<sup>123</sup> with high returns without sanctions.

This typology of brokers brings the political aspect back in the understandings of Roma leadership and reveals the inequalities of power, constrains of action and representation (e.g. Roma experts as patronage brokers) and leaders' personal political interests nourished by patronage politics (e.g power brokers). In a depoliticised language of development, Roma brokers are purely informal/formal leaders considered to represent the interests of community. However, my ethnographical analysis shows that patronage politics in its local dynamics impedes and substantially alters the main function of Roma leadership: community representation.

In this context of neopatrimonial transformations of state and politics, new political processes (field politics) with relevance for Roma governance have been developed. In an anthropological understanding, these are fields of politics (Swartz 1968), spatial and temporal understandings of political/power relations, which are not localized and include actors who act at different levels of power (local, regional

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<sup>123</sup> For example, *bulibasa* Razar, successful in pipe businesses, informal Romanianized Roma leader loader Candel-middleman in the transfer of Caldarar firms to Romanianized Roma.

state, and political representatives). I identified two major fields of politics of direct relevance to political activity of Roma brokers: *patronage politics* and *political patronage*.

***The field of patronage politics*** is mainly a product of establishment of local and regional patronage teams, in contact with high level party members and state officials, which support a parliamentary party and have control over the local distribution of resources and positions. Within this field, *state/patronage brokers* (Roma experts) are expected to follow the ruling party patronage interests (e.g PSD or PDL), which vary according to the mayor's or prefect's party membership and might be different for each administrative level. For *power brokers* and Caldarars involved successfully in businesses, the *field of patronage politics* can represent a *field of opportunities* to support different parties and patrons in exchange of relations and influence. For Romanianized Roma *clientelistic relations involved in local patronage politics*, sometimes based on vote buying and vote barter, are part of the *local field of possibilities*, which give them access to local state services and welfare.

***The field of political patronage*** is generated by the political alliance between the Roma Party and the Social Democrat Party, which expects political support in elections from Roma representatives, who might be Roma experts (state/patronage brokers) or informal Roma power brokers. Most of the Roma experts are Roma Party representatives who, during elections, find themselves in the delicate position of supporting the PSD rather than their own Roma Party. In this way, the *field of political patronage* blocks the development of Roma ethnic politics and the sense of civic activism.

The transition from *restitution politics* to *political patronage* and *local or regional patronage politics* prevented the development of a genuine field of Romani politics, which was captured into this double structure of patronage. In this sense, the *Roma experts* (patronage brokers) are expected to follow both directions (patronage politics and political patronage) and are, in this sense, the most affected in their representation actions. Furthermore, the instrumentalized character of the Roma expert position reveals the main interests and workings of the Roma expert state program, which acts as a deterrent to the development of forms of self-governance and civic engagement among the Roma. Patronage politics, entangled with the

workings of state governance, hampers the active participation of Roma experts and Roma communities (especially Roma groups) in the local decision making process. Moreover, it prevents the Roma from giving political support to their main political formation – the Roma Party.

Moreover, Romanianized Roma seem to be the most affected by patronage politics. They are directly involved in clientelistic exchanges with the local patron and in a relation of dependence with local patronage actors. *Therefore, local patronage politics and the presence of patronage brokers from inside their community expropriate them of forms of political and social agency and deprive them of foundational references for a progression into a community specific form of self-governance able to improve their socio-economic conditions of existence. On the other hand, the multiplicity of power brokers leaves more space for action and generates a democratization of voting behaviour among Caldarars. It facilitates the preservation of forms of autonomy cultivated through their mobile economic practices since socialism.*

Overlapping(s) between fields of politics engender a social dynamic that can be portrayed as an *interactive map of power relations*. The main intersectionality developed within the post-socialist neopatrimonial context is that between the spheres of state and politics (e.g field of patronage politics). Both Romanianized Roma and Caldarars exploited state-politics boundaries, which created possibilities for the first and opportunities for the second. Voting was the main mechanism of exploiting the new *state-politics boundary*. While Caldarars made use of local clientelistic relations involved in the local patronage politics to set up informal businesses and avoid identification and legal documentation of belongings, Romanianized Roma used simple clientelistic relations, with the local patron and bureaucrats, to access state services and benefits.

Similarly the interrelatedness between other spheres of power struggle (state-politics- religion) are explored by Caldarars and exploited by preachers/administrators of the Pentecostal church. For the Caldarar Pentecostal believers (especially the poorer ones), privatization of the relation with God, brings disengagement with external sources of authority: state representatives, Roma experts and *bulibasi* (power brokers) who are no longer authorized to impose their

voting options. Caldarar believers succeed in individualising their voting decisions and follow suggestions from preachers/pastors only with reluctance, if at all.

In terms of *discursive practices* and how they participate in the differential transformation of the two Roma communities religion is an important reference. Pentecostalism is a discourse of power and empowerment, which brings different practical enactments and opportunities for action. As I already mentioned, the socialist state destroyed the Caldarars' main element of self-governance: the institution of *bulibasa*, which used to uphold their mobile economic practices. The solution came from Pentecostalism, which as a discursive practice, changed the locus of authority from leaders to the relation with God/self through which believers became 'masters of themselves', able to negotiate directly their relations with the Other, including state institutions. It is a form of empowerment from within the self and the community, which produces an individualization of the space of decision making, and strengthens and reinvents new form of self-governance. It opens new opportunities for self-expression and underpins the independent management of Caldarars' socio-economic practices in interaction with an unstable economic sphere.

## **9.2. Questioning the question: from governmentalized knowledge to reflexive governmentality**

My analysis of power relations and discursive practices offers a relational understanding of power, a bottom-up analysis following individuals' practices into the large transformations and policies of governance aimed at social integration. It has the capacity to analyse power without reproducing the language of governance, which carries the characteristics of 'symbolic violence' ('the poor', 'the vulnerable', 'the marginalized') (Bourdieu 1991) and imposes fixed identities, in terms of conditions of living, values, on a diversified population, deprived of the right to define themselves and have their own forms of governance.

In this sense, Roma *are governed through unilaterally constructed identities* ('the poor', 'the marginalized', 'the vulnerable' of Europe) which assign a specific direction of governance (social integration). Roma as 'the poor' are not governed from a position of equality, like any other European ethnic minority, but from a position of 'subalterns'. In this context, the neoliberal discourse of governance for

the Roma equals governing 'the poor', 'the marginalized' and 'the vulnerable' of Europe and governing 'the subalterns'. These discursive practices and symbolic categories or projected identities are instruments of governance, part of the larger problematization of neoliberal governance which reproduces the status quo of Roma as the 'marginalized' and 'the excluded' of Europe. It also reveals what Foucault (1991, 2010) has argued, that government and thought are constitutive in the act of governance.

The discourses of governance about Roma 'marginalization' and 'poverty', 'social integration' are often approached as forms of 'absolute knowledge' and sometimes as an uncontested 'truths' in social science production of knowledge (see also discussion in Introduction), which in this sense becomes heavily *governmentalized*. Foucault's (1991, 2003, 2010) generally conceptualized governmentality as the 'conduct of conduct' and 'art of government' manifested both in institutional and discursive practices with the power to constitute themselves as 'regimes of truth'. These 'regimes of truths' generate what I call *governmentalized knowledge*, a process through which categories of governance are transferred un-reflexively into academic knowledge and social research. In this sense, the field of Romani studies (see many citations in the Introduction) seems to treat objectively and answer to questions already defined by the existing mentality of governance (marginalization/exclusion/social integration) and thus it is *governmentalized*, in broad terms. The categories of 'marginalized' and 'poor' are taken for granted and considered 'realities', 'problems' which need to be studied and solved, rather than "regimes of enunciations" (Rose 1999), part of larger 'problematizations' of governance, which can be challenged and changed for more effective social intervention.

In this sense, my thesis questions the object of Romani studies, which is often influenced by the neoliberal agenda of social development, its symbolic categories of governance able to constitute Roma as subaltern subjects. It deconstructs a polarized manufactured discourse of governance which portrays and *identifies Roma as defeatable powerless* ('poor', 'marginalized', 'excluded' Roma) in a continuous struggle to achieve an equal status in relation with invincible omnipotencies (majorities, governing bodies).

Therefore, my thesis distances itself from all studies that follow and are defined by the current neoliberal discourse of governance. It has intentionally a different object of studies (power relations) and different lens through which it makes available a comprehensive, reflexive (Roma meanings about their own histories), holistic view of power relations and discursive practice among Roma in a historical processual understanding, which aims at challenging and changing these flawed neoliberal mentalities of governance for the Roma. *It suggests that poverty vs. affluence among Roma are connected to presence/development or lack/weakness of forms of self-governance rather than degrees of social integration which constitute the main focus of current neoliberal problematization of development for the Roma.* Empowerment should be recreated from inside Roma communities through forms of local organization in which all those Roma experiencing poverty, who proved to be very active but confined to local informal economy and patronage, to get fully involved in social and political life as both Roma ethnics and Romanian citizen.

In practical, concrete terms, forms of self-governance and local organization of Roma, were advanced as a Hungarian governmental project aimed at increasing the Romani political participation but also to provide neighbouring countries with a model for their Hungarian minority populations. The programs started “in 1993 as part of the Act regarding the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities...[and] allows for any Hungary’s 13 recognized minority communities to establish local, regional, and national self-governments.” (NDI 2006: 5). The elected self-governmental bodies are permitted to take decisions “in the areas of local education, language use in public institutions, printed and electronic media, and the protection of their traditions and culture” (NDI 2006: 5). In my view, these institutionalized forms of self-government give sense to and a context for ‘citizenship participation’ and ‘political struggle’ against dominant external discourses which place Roma culture and world views in opposition to the state, market and majority. It can reawaken and enhance Roma community representation, which, in Romania, is reduced to patronage politics and state programs of bureaucratic expansion (e.g. the Roma expert network program).

Therefore, without starting from pre-defined categories of identification (‘Roma the poor and vulnerable of Europe’) and settled problematization of

poverty/marginalization as social problem, my thesis is a reflexive way of understanding how different Roma populations (and other populations highly subjected to power as governance) can be empowered and how their forms of self-governance can be strengthened. It also challenges the whole problematization of governance as 'social integration' and answers to a broader question that stands at the core of my thesis : how do we (academics, policy makers, practitioners and all those who produce knowledge about Roma) speak truth to power of neoliberal governance of Roma as 'social integration of the marginalized and the poor'?

### **9.3 To speak truth to power: tentative answers**

I consider that contestations developed from within the current mentality of governance, through resistance and activism cannot bring about major changes in the effects produced by the problematization of social integration as van Baar (2011) claims. An important change in the status quo becomes possible only through a reflexive process that needs to involve at least three main aspects.

1. The most important aspect that challenges the omnipotent capacity of 'governmental power' *is the history of everyday power relations*, which brings the political aspect of struggles and contextualisation back into the understanding of social reality. It enables a view from below, from within Roma communities, where power is not a stable reference point, but circulates through relations, and it is both transformed and transforming. Moreover, by understanding the history of power relations and discursive practices among different Roma groups, the definition of the problem of governance can be challenged, questioned, and reformulated in order to reconceptualise or support the existing genuine forms of empowerment (e.g. Pentecostalism, mobile economic organization).

Without reflexive accounts of the social history of the different Roma groups, the problem of governance of Roma has moved within the same paradigm - from 'assimilation' to 'social integration' and has failed to create a genuine base for empowerment.

2. Another solution to this matter is to create a *space for reflexive governmentalities* in which *problematizations of governance* are compared,



discussed and challenged. Different populations in the world (Jews in Europe, Blacks in Americas, Mapuche in Chile, Maori in New Zealand, Ciukci in Russia) experienced the authority of assimilationist, integrationist policies and state interventions through their forms of social and political organization. A *reflexive governmentality* approach recommends a communication between different governmentalities in order to avoid the indigenization of populations' problems and challenge the existent "regimes of truth" and give way to genuine forms of empowerment. On the other hand, this reflexive communication can bring about an awareness of the exchanges and borrowing of concepts, categories of identification performed between academic knowledge and governance (e.g. social capital use by the World Bank), which are constitutive to *discourses of power*.

3. The third new aspect I would like to suggest is that of *study of translation*. The World Bank (2005) showed how governance research has pretences of reflexivity, which are partly legitimated through qualitative case studies, but affected by subtle forms of 'depoliticisation', 'closure' and, what I call here, *translation*. The latter shows the way complex realities are reinterpreted and individuals/groups' interpretations of their own actions are translated into a pre-defined problematic of governance. In my thesis, I also showed how state representatives and important actors in policy research translate Pentecostalism, the Caldarrars' new form of self-governance, into the state discourse of social integration ('social taming'). Sociological work could explore and draw attention to these forms of *translations* exercised by governance.

All these three points offer some answers to the question '*how do we speak truth to power*'. The question is mainly inspired by Scheper Hughes's (1995) discussion of militant anthropology and about the role of social researcher in '*speaking truth to power*' by acknowledging suffering and becoming actively involved in finding solutions for the 'weak' and 'powerless'. Following this understanding we can ask ourselves whether treating people as 'weak' and 'marginalized' would actually help them. In addition, before starting any form of activism we need to reflect on the *problematization of governance* from within which we act and write, and on the '*regimes of enunciations*' involved. It would be unproductive to follow un-reflexively a dominant discourse of governance which

reproduces '*relations of force*' and '*preserves the status quo*' criticised by authors of post-developmental studies (e.g. Escobar 1995, 2000, Ferguson 1994, 2009, Li 1999, 2007) and it would not be useful to those studied.

As Foucault (1991, 2003, 2010) and Rose (1999) suggested, governmentality is not only an effect of governance research but the product of discourses produced by multiple and different institutions and actors, among which are sociologists, who have access to the mechanisms of 'symbolic power', in Bourdieu's terms (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). Sociologists have the capacity to categorize and speak on behalf of others and, to participate in the "*struggle over the truth*" and "*establish models of reality*" (p. 58).

Therefore, if we have this power to "*define what the social world is*" (p. 58) then we can use it to challenge *mentalities of governance* and the pre-existing governmentalized *knowledge*, which reproduces the power inequalities. A comparative history of power relations opens up the study of the contextualized dynamics of power relations and meanings formulated by the governed, and provide the opportunity for comparative research of different populations who faced similar problems in relation to the state and dominant forms of governance. In this way, it directly supports the project of a *reflexive governmentality approach*.

In this sense, my thesis challenges the whole paradigm/mentality of governance of social integration and proposes to speak instead about *Roma autonomy or self-governance*, a model inspired by Caldarars' successful form of self-governance.

As I showed throughout my thesis, the Caldarars resisted state intervention and mechanisms of control and preferred to stick to their own models of self-governance. Less 'integrated' in the state structures and at large in the mainstream society, they kept their distinctive world view (practical knowledge, wealth, mobility, entrepreneurship and independence). They successfully managed through their mobile approach to the fast transforming economic sphere to become wealthy. On the other hand, Romanianized Roma, who experienced the sedentarist model and were relatively socially 'integrated' during socialism, albeit at the margins of the system, became dependent on external forms of governance and these days experience poor living conditions. Therefore, the question that could be raised with

regard to the neoliberal direction of governance is the following: why do the Roma need to follow the 'social integration' model in so far as it has proved to have the negative/opposite effects and produce poverty, isolation and dependence on external intervention? And why is the Caldarar' self-governance/autonomy model, as a successful alternative to 'social integration' vision of governance, proposed by national and transnational neoliberal governance, discounted?

From my viewpoint *self-governance can represent a much better model/framing of governance which presumes an equal starting point*, from which Roma groups can ask for more powers (social, economic, cultural) to separate from external discourses of governance, sometimes expressed in the same terms of 'exclusion', 'stigmatization' and 'marginalization'. It creates both the conditions for human development and detachment from the dominance of the state and transnational governance.

Therefore, my thesis research raises further questions for all those who participate in the constitution of the existing problematization of governance of the Roma - members of transnational governing bodies, state/NGO representatives, social scientists - who mainly promote the discourse of 'social integration'. Do the Roma always need external governance or their own forms of self-governance? Does the problematization of governance need to be framed in terms of 'social integration of the marginalized and the poor' or, as I suggested, in terms of self-governance? I will leave these questions open for further study. This problematic of governance and governmentality for the Roma in Europe is an area I would wish to continue to explore in future research projects.

In conclusion, my thesis showed that the 'sedentarist' and the 'mobile model' of Roma historical life trajectories are essential features for understanding Roma socio-economic conditions of existence, which can inform a genuine reflexive governance and re-evaluation of the existing problematization of 'social integration' for the Roma populations in Europe.

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