



LUND UNIVERSITY

”Maybe one day, the spark will ignite.”

A Cultural Analysis of the Historical and Contemporary Living Conditions of Roma People in Sweden

Johanna Rundgren

Master of Applied Cultural Analysis
Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences
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Supervisor: Lizette Gradén

Abstract

“Maybe one day, the spark will ignite.” - A Cultural Analysis of the Historical and Contemporary Living Conditions of Roma People in Sweden.

Johanna Rundgren

For over five hundred years, the Roma people have been a part of Swedish society. During these five centuries their subsistence has been subjected to oppression, both institutional and civil. Despite the endeavours to improve the lives of the Roma, and governmental attempts to combat stereotypes, the discursive antiziganism is still prevailing in Sweden today.

The guiding question throughout the project has been: “Why does the discrimination against Roma people still prevails in Swedish society, despite the governmental endeavours to counteract it?” The question guided through winding trails of the subject, and my investigation touched upon various aspects of invisible making, stigmatisation, and levels of discrimination. The material was collected by conducting interviews, through surveys, observations, archival and newspapers studies, and the material was analysed through concepts such as recognition, stigma, stereotypes & prejudice, and narrative theory.

The presentation of my findings is structured around a cognitive framework, a metaphoric loop that can serve as an explanation why the prejudice and stereotypes are still prevailing.

The concept can be applied to other minorities in Swedish society, as well as Europe and the rest of the world.

Keywords:

‘Roma ethnicity;’ ‘discursive antiziganism;’ ‘recognition;’ ‘stigma;’ ‘myths;’ ‘legends;’ ‘prejudice and stereotypes;’ ‘discrimination;’ ‘national minorities’

Abstract (Swedish)

“Maybe one day, the spark will ignite.” - A Cultural Analysis of the Historical and Contemporary Living Conditions of Roma People in Sweden.

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I över fem hundra år har romer levt i Sverige. Under denna tid har deras tillvaro präglats av förtryck – både på institutionell och individuell nivå. Trots statliga ansträngningar att förbättra romernas livsvillkor och försök att motverka stereotyper, så råder fortfarande diskursiv antiziganism i Sverige idag.

Den vägledande frågeställningen genom detta forskningsprojekt har varit: ”Varför fortsätter diskrimineringen av romer i Sverige, trots de statliga ansträngningarna att motverka den?” Frågeställningen har lotsat mig genom en krokig väg, och min studie har vidrört flera aspekter av osynliggörande, stigmatisering, och en strävan efter erkännande. Materialet till studien samlades in genom intervjuer, enkäter, observationer, arkiv- och tidningsstudier, och analyserades sedan genom teoretiska koncept så som erkännande, stereotyper, fördomar och narrativ teori.

Presentationen av mina upptäckter är strukturerade kring ett kognitivt ramverk, i form av en metaforisk loop, som kan fungera som en förklaring till varför fördomarna reproduceras. Konceptet kan appliceras på andra minoritetsgrupper i Sverige, Europa och i världen.

Keywords:

'Romsk etnicitet; 'diskursiv antiziganism; 'erkännande; 'stigma; 'myter; 'sägner; 'fördomar och stereotyper; 'diskriminering; 'nationella minoriteter'

Acknowledgments

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Lund, May 2023

Johanna Rundgren

Explanation of Terms

A number of specific terms will be frequently mentioned throughout the thesis. To clarify what they imply, and how I will use them, they will be explained here.

Antiziganism/antigypsyism. This term will be used throughout the thesis when talking about the discrimination Roma people have been (and still are) subjected to. According to the Swedish commission against antiziganism, the term is defined as:

a permanent, latent structure of conceptions hostile towards Roma people as a collective, which on the individual level are manifested as attitudes and culturally as myths, ideology, vernacular traditions and imagery, and in actions - social or legal discrimination, political mobilisation against the Roma people and collective or governmental violence - which results in and/or aims to alienate, dispel or annihilate the Roma people for no other reason than being Roma. (SOU 2010:55 :166).

Discursive antiziganism/antigypsyism. When mentioning discursive antiziganism/antigypsyism, I mean the way the discrimination is displayed every day in interhuman relations, by gestures, attitudes, and actions between common people in everyday situations.

Roma. The ethnic group which is the focus of my study has throughout history been denominated by others with various slurs and derogatory terms. Therefore, the term Roma will be used in this thesis, which is a term chosen by the group itself. ‘Roma’ means ‘human’ in Romani chib. (Institutet för mediastudier 2015 :21).

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1. Introduction

I sit in a small canvas upholstered armchair. A one-hour long interview has just ended, and my recorder is turned off. The interview is the final one of the project and marks the completion of my eight-week fieldwork. The room that I sit in is a small office, with two armchairs, a bookshelf, and a desk with a computer on top. The walls are painted in a calm, light grey hue. A group of people I do not recognise, kindly look down on me from a black and white photograph on the wall. The white painted modestly ornate woodwork around the doorway indicates architectural heritage from around the 1920's. The large windows let daylight fill the room, and the shadow of the windows' wooden trims creates a cross-like pattern on the linoleum floor. It is a mild autumn day, and the leaves on the trees outside the window are turning yellow, as firmly compelled by the season.

In the chair opposite of mine, my interviewee Joseph sits. He is about ten years my senior and some of his traits resembles that of a young version of my grandfather, who I remember as a man of intelligence, pride, and integrity, mixed with a warm, loving and a bit quirky sense of humour.

The interview revolved around abstract large and small circumstances of the world, philosophical concept about humanity, inequalities and why and how stereotypes and prejudice are constructed and manifested. Our conversation has been, as always, a heartfelt and genuine exchange of reflections to process different perspectives on both worldly and cognitive phenomena.

As a novice interviewer, I still had the feeling of awkwardness about the interview situation, due to the impact the recorder, prewritten questions, and the imbalance between the observer and the observee have on the dialogue.

Before we parted, something happened that would transform the structure of the interview situation. Joseph asked me a question for which I was not prepared. He said: “Johanna, when I first met you, it struck me how open and broad-minded you are. How come you, being a part of the majority society, are not racist?”

The question transformed the dynamics of the interview, as I, the observer became the observee, and as such the object of interest in the situation.

But the question also revealed to me a new insight. Let me explain.

In my experience, a person with Joseph's, - and my grandfather's - attributes, such as gender, professional position, and age, would automatically gain superiority over me. But the question he asked revealed that he had been subjected to discrimination due to the same inequalities, stereotypes, and prejudice, as our conversation had revolved around for the last hour. Something that my grandfather probably never had to experience. The insight became palpable and concrete: the social hierarchical ladder is not universal.

1.1 Historical Background

For more than five hundred years, the Roma people have been living in Sweden (SOU 2010:55). During these five centuries they have been subjected to oppression - both institutional and civic. Among other things, the group have been registered on racial biological terms, and they have experienced exclusion from the labour- and housing market as well as the school system (Regeringskansliet Ds 2014:8).

Through the leverage of Roma activists during the 20th century, some changes were made in society that improved the lives of the Roma. For example, they were acknowledged as a national minority in Sweden in 1999, which implies that the preservation of their language and the right to keep and develop their culture in Sweden is protected by the law (SFS 2009:724 §4) and that they should have influence over societal matters concerning themselves (SFS 2009:724 §5).

However, despite the government's endeavours to improve the lives of the Roma, they are “probably the most discriminated minority in Sweden,” according to Diplomat Maria Leissner (Delegationen för romska frågor) as discursive antiziganism still prevails in Swedish society today. Roma people's collective biographic narrative is underrepresented in history books, and their traditions and cultural expressions are next to invisible in the institutions of Swedish cultural heritage.

Although the structural antiziganism appears to be decreasing, due to the extended institutional rights that are implemented, the discursive antiziganism is still prevailing. An opinion poll

made by YouGov in 2015 shows that 45% of Swedish citizens have negative impressions of Roma people, and several Roma persons testifies to being discriminated against and subjected to hate because of their descent.

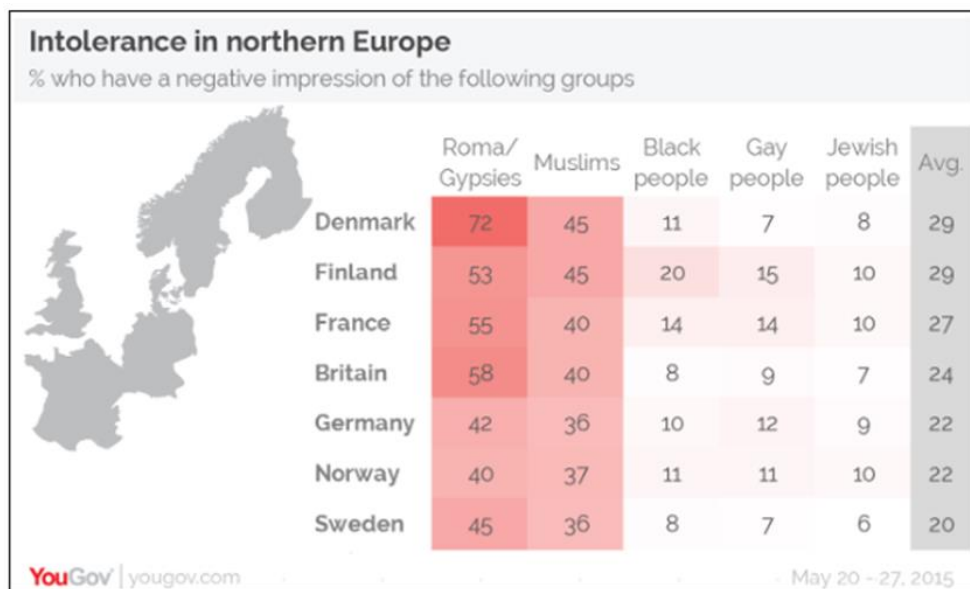


Table 1. Intolerance in Northern Europe (yougov.co.uk)

1.2 The Field

The host for my work placement, RIKC (Roma Information and Knowledge Centre), Malmö, is a municipal organisation that aims to facilitate Roma inclusion in Swedish society. They are a part of the Cultural Department of Malmö Stad and have six employees.

RIKC’s mission is twofold. On the one hand, they offer help and support to anyone who needs it, by booked appointments or spontaneous visits. The matters could be about somebody who needs help to assess the implication of a letter from the government or the municipality, or other documents that need to be interpreted in Romani chib or other varieties of the Roma language.

On the other hand, RIKC’s mission is to educate the majority society about the minority law, discrimination, and Roma history, plus other projects that includes other parts of the municipality.

Hence, their overall mission is to function as a bridge builder between the Roma community and the majority society and to contribute to a more inclusive society ([malmo.se/Romskt-informations--och-kunskapscenter/Om RIKC.html](http://malmo.se/Romskt-informations--och-kunskapscenter/Om_RIKC.html)).

1.3 Aim, Purpose, and Research Question

My aim with this thesis is to understand the production and reproduction of the prejudice and stereotypes towards Roma people that are still prevailing in Sweden. Despite several institutional efforts to counteract prejudice and stereotypes, they remain widespread and accepted here.

Hence, the main question for this thesis is:

- Why does the discrimination against Roma people still prevails in Swedish society, despite the governmental endeavours to counteract it?

I will present the main finding of my project in the structure of a loop, which could serve as an explanation to the research question.

1.4 Disposition

This thesis started with a historical background of the topic, namely Roma people's living conditions in Sweden, and an introduction to the field. Then the aim, purpose and research question were presented, followed by a section about methods, material and reflexivity and ethics in the field. The following sections are processing previous research and theoretical framework, for example the central term 'recognition,' which has a cohesive role in this thesis, is addressed and further explained.

In chapter 5 the analysis part takes place, and the findings will be structured around a cognitive framework, which is in this thesis termed 'The Loop of Stigma and Enigma' (Rundgren 2023:7) and consists of three main parts. They will be further explained throughout the text. I will use the loop to illustrate how my findings are intertwined and connected. The findings will be analysed through theoretical concepts such as recognition, stigma, stereotypes & prejudice, and narrative theory.

The thesis ends with a section of conclusion and discussion, processing my findings and problematising them in a discussive way. The structure, with its three components are explained.

At the very end, the reader is encouraged to reflect upon which other historical or contemporary situations my findings can be applied.

2. Methods and Empirical Material

In this section I will present the material I collected during my fieldwork, and the methods that were used collecting them. I will reflect upon the benefits and weaknesses of the different material and methods and problematize my choices of methods. I will also describe how my material interplayed between themselves, and how the different segments of empirical material interacted with my reading of academic literature and the analytical writing process. The collected material will be presented in a graph for giving a simple overview. In the graph, most of the material is categorized as ‘input,’ meaning information that I have gained throughout the process. Some of the material is presented as ‘output,’ and this is the new material that was rendered throughout the analytical process. This material was in many ways a basis for new insights and analyses, and therefore I chose to include it in the scope of this thesis.

input/output	Activity	Topic	Participants/scope
input	Interview (double)	Racism, covert identity	Roma Female '79, Roma Male '91
input	Interview	Exhibition 'Vi är Romer' 2014	Roma Male '71
input	Interview	Living under protected identity	Non Roma Female '79
input	Interview	Discursive anti-ziganism	Roma Male '68
input	Interview	Roma history and Swedish circus	Roma Male '55
input	Observation	Folk Music Festival	Representants from Swedish national minorities, students from Musikhögskolan Malmö, open to the public.
input	Observation/participation	Meetings at RIKC	Appx 5 hrs
input	Archival material	Historical attitudes towards Roma	70 answers to a questionnaire, about 250 pages
input	Survey	About Swedish cultural heritage/Roma history in Sweden	8 responses
input	Short interview x 2	About Swedish cultural heritage/Roma history in Sweden	Non Roma Female '46
input	Short interview x 2	About Swedish cultural heritage/Roma history in Sweden	Non Roma Female '53
input	Short interview x 2	About Swedish cultural heritage/Roma history in Sweden	Non Roma Female '87
input	Short interview x 2	About Swedish cultural heritage/Roma history in Sweden	Non Roma Female '76
input	Short interview x 2	About Swedish cultural heritage/Roma history in Sweden	Non Roma Male '76
input	Short interview x 2	About Swedish cultural heritage/Roma history in Sweden	Non Roma Male '78
input	Short interview x 2	About Swedish cultural heritage/Roma history in Sweden	Non Roma Female '73
input	Short interview x 2	About Swedish cultural heritage/Roma history in Sweden	Non Roma Female '77
input	Field diary	Observations, analytical considerations, associations	7 pp
input	Study of historical newspaper articles	Follow the historical discourse about Roma	25 articles
input + output	Translation of a speech	About Roma people's significance to popular music.	2 pp
output + input	Presentation for client	Insights from fieldwork	1 hr presentation with discussion
output	Report for client	Insights from fieldwork	15 pp
output	Photos	For documentation	10 photos
output	Short film	About Swedish Cultural Heritage	3,5 min

Table 2. Empirical material collected during fieldwork.

2.1 Ethics and Reflexivity

As social anthropologist Charlotte Aull Davies (2008) suggests in her book *Reflexive Ethnography*, ethics in any ethnographic work is essential. The degree of importance can however vary depending on the level of sensitivity of the current project. For this project, the level of ethics had a high importance, due to the historical context. Therefore, my ethical awareness was ubiquitous throughout every step of the process.

Ethics in ethnographic research can be divided into two major parts. The first one is of an operational nature and consists of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), anonymizing informants, and the collection of documented informed consents. All my informants have been anonymized when quoted. Interviewees have been anonymized with made up names, and respondents of the archival questionnaire are denominated with their accession number.

The categorization of informants in the chart can naturally be problematized. To categorize people after their ethnicity is ethically disputable, especially in this context. However, as I wanted to illustrate the range of opinions rendered by Roma-people, respectively non-Roma people, acknowledging the knowledge and level about Roma culture and perception of Swedish cultural heritage among informants from the majority society, I chose to categorize my informants in this way.

The other part is about reflexivity and the position of oneself as a researcher, acknowledging the power imbalance which inevitably occurs when someone is interested in and studying someone else. Minorities have historically been interpreted and studied from the perspective of the majority society (Edström & Hyltén-Cavallius: 2011), and they have been subjected to the colonial bias of western science, and the “god trick” (Haraway 1988), which is explained as a “conquering gaze from nowhere” (Haraway 1988: 586).

I came across another dilemma in the process of drafting this thesis, and that dilemma revolved around the identity of my interviewees. To give the reader a clear view of who my informants are, and to create a proximity between the reader and the interviewee, I wanted to describe them in an as detailed way as possible. To portray the interviewees in detail is also a way of paying respect to them and to make them come alive in the text. However, the more a person is described, the more recognisable they become, hence their anonymity becomes jeopardized. Hence, I made the assessment that the importance of anonymity was more important than facilitating the reading for the thesis’ audience. Therefore, I decided to not describe my interviewees in a detailed way, but just summarize the quoted participants in the beginning of the current chapter and leave it at that.

Reflexivity about power imbalance and the position between informant and researcher is essential when collaborating with humans. However, I experienced that the reflexivity almost

took over and became a hindrance in my process, as I started to doubt whether the project should be conducted at all. After some further thought, I realized that the humanistic benefits of doing the study surpassed the disadvantages, and so I continued, with the problematic position and the historical ordeals in mind, and focused on my approach and intentions, which were always benign. I can never escape the fact that observation of another person implies othering (Haraway 1988), which puts the observer in the centre and the observed person in the periphery, creating a power imbalance between the two. Therefore, I cannot escape the inequality my study implies, but I can still be aware, actively contemplating my every choice and how I articulate my findings. In that way I can instead conduct *reflexive* othering.

2.2 Interviews

The material collected from spoken interactions were rendered through both short and long interviews. The two different methods were deliberately used to capture various parts of the perception of the world.

The long interviews rendered in-depth insights and elicited new questions to pose to the field. They also worked as a way of building up trust and creating new relationships. The long interviews were conducted with informants of self-identified Roma descent and the topics revolved around their own experienced situations about discrimination and racism.

One of my interviewees, the one who I call Joseph in this text, had a significant impact on my work and taught me a lot about the topic. All my interviewees taught me a lot, but his contribution to the project was an example of co-creation, as sociologist Richard Sennett (2012) describes in his book *Together: the rituals, pleasures, and politics of cooperation*. Our conversations were of a dialogic (Sennett: 2012:14) nature, which is a dynamic interplay and a mutual learning process, which creates new knowledge rather than a forced consensus, and I have Joseph's knowledge and experience to thank for the many distinct aspects that were rendered throughout the project.

The method of conducting quick and short interviews was used when I wanted the interviewee to reveal their 'top of mind' perception about a topic, and it showed to be effective. The topic that the short interviews revolved around was how they imagined Swedish heritage, and my point was to investigate the first thing that comes to mind when the phrase "Swedish cultural

heritage” is uttered. The question that was raised here was: how could these associations, real or imagined, be understood?

2.3 Translation of a Speech

As a task requested by my client, I translated a speech from Swedish to English. The speech was written for and held at a Folk Music Festival, at Musikhögskolan in Malmö. The festival’s focus was music from Swedish national minorities, and the speech was about Roma people’s historical and contemporary significance to pop music and other music genres.

The act of translation turned out to teach me a lot about cultural meaning. The analytical act of twisting and turning terms and cultural concepts around, striving for finding the most suitable English word for a global phenomenon described in Swedish, gave me in-depth knowledge of cultural nuances and significance. One example of finding cultural knowledge through the aspiration to find the accurate word was when I was going to find a correct English translation for the Swedish phrase *svarta toner*, literally translated into English as *black tunes* when describing a melodic style called *duende*. Duende refers to an artistic melodic expression that implies grief, suffering, passion, melancholy, but also with the nerve of invigorating hopefulness. In Swedish, the word *svarta toner* works to describe the phenomenon, since it is used in the same way in other contexts with similar connotations. In English, I was not sure about the translation, and to pinpoint the whole concept in just one English word was not easy, since I thought that the phrase *black tunes* probably would be associated with African American music which is obviously not what was intended.

Translation is described by philosopher Walter Benjamin (1997) as a “mode” (Rendall 1997: 152), or an artistic act rather than a mechanic. I learned that a text cannot be translated verbatim, or face-value, without the cultural and contextual content and meaning being taken into consideration. I became aware of the agency the translator has, in terms of framing the reader’s perception of what the original text was about.

For example, at one point I was forced to translate a word that through the translation got a weaker meaning in English than the original Swedish word. The Swedish word ‘murrivaren’ (meaning the one who tears down walls) could not be fairly translated to English. In lack of a better word, I translated the word to ‘bridge builder’ which has a weaker and more modest

meaning. I was not content with this translation, but due to lack of other options, this word would have to suffice as a translation.

2.4 Archival Material

The studied archival material was written responses to a questionnaire called *Tattare* from 1989. The material contains responses from about seventy people, and the scope is about 250 pages (Svensson 1993: 63). The questionnaire was created by ethnologist Birgitta Svensson and was used as a source of analysis for her dissertation *Bortom all ära och redlighet - Tattarnas spel med rättvisan* from 1993. The informants' responses concerned in most cases the 1930's and 1940's, and they were encouraged to talk about their memories from 'back in the days' and childhood memories.

The reliability, or the level of accurate representation that the archival material mirrors can be problematized in various levels. The first issue is about the target group. Based on the statements, all the respondents were members of the majority society. This makes the topic foreign for them and the group that the questions are about, will therefore be othered. All of them were also elderly, most of them in their eighties, and the stories were from the respondents' childhood (mostly the 1910's-1940's), hence their memory might have become obscured by other stories and experiences.

The second issue is about the questions asked by the author of the questionnaire. They are distinctively leading and associative, and would direct the respondent towards particular topics, and frame their perception about what is expected of them to respond. For example, the question “Did you ever hear that they would steal children?” would of course lead a person to remember and reproduce stories about abducted children. A question such as “Were the women distinguished by a seductive beauty, which would imply a dangerous desire? And were the men considered to be virile tricksters with a dangerous dark twinkle in the eye?” would certainly evoke some associations as special memories among most respondents. However, it is understandable that the leading questions are there, to help the respondent to remember. But if the questionnaire were to be sent out today, I think that the questions would look a little different. Another difficulty with the material is that most of the responses are handwritten in cursive, and therefore there is room for misinterpretations and misunderstandings by the reader, me in this case.

The questionnaire was distributed by the Folklife Archive (Folklivsarkivet) in Lund, which is a respected institution for cultural heritage and a part of Lund University. Therefore, I also reflect upon the impact the legitimacy of the institution might have on a respondent when they were approached with the questionnaire. Did they feel an urge to respond to the questions in a certain way, due to the position of the sender of the questionnaire?

The aim to study this material was to get a sense of historical attitudes about Roma, and the method I used to analyse the material was close reading, a method that Henriksson (2007) uses in her book *Var trogen i allt: den goda kvinnan som konstruktion i svenska och finslandssvenska böcker 1800-1890*. The method, according to Henriksson (2007) is when the researcher approaches the material without any preconceived hypothesis or any theory in mind beforehand. Instead, the investigator reads the material with what Birckbak (2015) refers to as “critical proximity” (p. 267) which implies not to distance oneself from the material by jumping to conclusions too quickly, but rather let oneself be immersed in the material and let it show you what it wants to show you. This method demands a particular sensibility from the researcher. As Henriksson (2007) further suggests, questions to pose to the material to elicit cultural meaning could be: What does this mean? Why are the informants responding like this? What are they not giving away? Why are they reluctant to respond? What does this represent?

After I had finished studying the material, categories started to form, and once again I used Henriksson’s (2007) method to guide me. She uses different terms (*theme* and *motive*) for categorising different statements and expressions. The *theme* that appeared in my material were ‘opinions about Roma people’ and the *motive* was the value of the opinion, (whether it was positive, negative, or neutral). These themes and motives were interesting to quantify, and I started to look for patterns to analyse.

After further close reading, I found another layer that I could use in the analysis of the material, namely the position of the informant. The stories were either 1st-hand information, or 2nd- (and sometimes 3rd-) hand information, and I discovered that the position of the informant played a role in the value of their statements. To illustrate the relation and magnitude of the use of different themes, I created a pie chart in chapter 5. The pie chart should not be seen as an attempt to validate my findings using positivistic quantitative methods, but rather to point out tendencies among the respondents.

2.5 Survey

The survey was created to support a presentation my client was going to give during The Human Rights Day in Örebro in November 2022. The aim with the survey was twofold. The first objective was to investigate how non-Roma persons perceive Swedish cultural heritage, and what objects and phenomena they would associate with the term. The other aim with the survey was to find out about their knowledge of Roma culture, cultural heritage and if they were familiar with any Roma person.

The approached group consisted of thirteen non-Roma Swedish and international students between 23-53 years old, of which eight responded.

The questions were:

- If you hear the words 'Swedish Cultural Heritage': what is the first thing that comes to mind?
- Name or describe any monuments, statues, or memorial sites you know in Sweden.
- What do you know about the Roma community in Sweden or elsewhere? (For example, do you know anybody personally who is of Roma descent, or a famous person who is? Or do you know of any Roma traditions, films, music et c connected to Roma culture?)
- Do you know about any Roma monuments or memorial sights in Sweden or elsewhere?

The selection of respondents was crucial for the outcome. I only made the survey available for a group where I knew every member, and therefore I think, the ones who responded wanted to help me out with my study. Although I did not get many responses from the survey, every response was rich in content.

To conduct a survey is a good complement to interviews, since people tend to be more willing to be honest due to the anonymity the survey implies. However, through the survey it is not possible to gain deep knowledge, you cannot ask follow-up questions, and you cannot elicit further information by asking questions that are thought provoking.

2.6 The Spontaneity of a Bricolage

During the process of investigating the matter, the phenomenon called “bricolage” (Löfgren 2014:79) emerged. This implies that the different building blocks that the fieldwork consists of interplay and affect the content and focus of the others. Reading an academic text about the topic, or writing a passage of analysis, creates new insights that might change the meaning of the findings and calls for new investigations with the same sources.

For example, the survey and the short interviews interplayed. I started with the short interviews and just asked the question: “What does Swedish cultural heritage mean to you?” When I did my survey, I realised that it would be interesting also to see what the informants knew about Roma history, people and community and I added questions about that. Then I went back and posed this question as well, to the people I already had interviewed.

It would be interesting to expand the scope of informants for this investigation, but I think the decision to limit the target group and only approach people I know, had its advantages, since by that I have knowledge of - not who responded - but who was invited to take the survey. That is beneficial because it means that I obtain knowledge about the response-rate and can analyse how to increase it in the future. I learned that knowing who your target group includes, (as opposed to just sending out a survey in an open forum on social media for example), made it possible to calculate how many of the requested respondents did respond, and how many who did not. I also know that none of my respondents were of Roma descent, and I wanted the responses to come from non-Roma sources since it was that perspective that was interesting in this case.

3. Previous research

In this section, scholars who have conducted research connected to my study will be presented, divided into categories based on the various parts this thesis consists of. The categories are:

- Roma History and Antiziganism
- Representation of Roma people in Cultural Heritage
- Problematizing Swedish Cultural Heritage

3.1 Roma History and Antiziganism

Linguist, Romani scholar and political advocate Ian Hancock has conducted extensive research about Roma history, language and antigypsyism. The book *We are the Romani people* (2003) aimed towards teachers, social workers or any other profession that would be interacting with Roma people and, have for my background research provided a broad background of the subject, illuminating the different injustices that Roma people have been subjected to historically. Historian Jan Selling have authored several books and articles about antiziganism. The book *Antiziganism - What's in a Word* (2015) edited by Selling, has provided useful insights and facts about antiziganism from around the world. Also, his dissertation *Svensk antiziganism : fördomens kontinuitet och förändringens förutsättningar* (2014) have served as a source of knowledge. Ethnologist Charlotte Hyltén-Cavallius and archaeologist Lotta Fernstål have in the book *Romska liv och platser* (2019) traced and described how Roma people have been manoeuvring their subsidence in Swedish in relation to outer conditions.

Besides the above-mentioned scholars' contribution, governmental investigations about the historical situation of Roma people in Sweden have provided information for the work with background research for this thesis. Especially useful was the Swedish Government's *White papers* (SOU Regeringskansliet Ds 2014:8) that were created as a settlement to admit, recognise, and acknowledge the atrocities that the Swedish government have exposed Roma people to throughout the last century. Principal areas acknowledged in the report are ethnic mapping and registrations of Roma people, sterilizations and forced custody-taking of children, entry-bans and regulations of immigration, and Roma people's accessibility to housing, education, and work.

3.2 Representation of Roma people in Cultural Heritage

Docent and lecturer at Centre for Critical Studies of Cultural Heritage (Gothenburg University) Ingrid Martins-Holmberg illuminate in the book *Vägskälens kulturarv - kulturarv vid vägskäl Om att skapa plats för romer och resande i kulturarvet* (2014) the importance of studying Roma cultural heritage, since it strengthens the notion that Swedish historical representation should be considered multifaceted and heterogenous. Social anthropologist Nina Edström and ethnologist Charlotte Hyltén-Cavallius have studied the representation of national minorities within the cultural sphere in the report *Osmos - inkluderingsprocesser i kulturlivet* (2011).

3.3 Problematizing Swedish Cultural Heritage

Professor of Heritage and Museums Studies Laurajane Smith's book *Uses of Heritage* (2006) provides a full-bodied discussion about the norms that surround heritage and the hegemonic discourse of how cultural heritage frames how we think, talk, and write about heritage. And how public remembrance is connected to our self-image. Ethnologist Ove Ronström has conducted research about the perception and manifestation of cultural heritage expressions and for this thesis his book *Kulturarvspolitik Visby. Från sliten småstad till medeltidsikon* (2008), has served as a useful source, especially its discussion about what the consequences are of preserving material culture, and the relationship between preservation and development. Ethnologists Lizette Gradén and Tom O'Dell's book *Kulturarv i förändring* (2020) has provided an overview over the origin and academic discussion about the concept of cultural heritage and what it has meant in different contexts throughout the last century.

All the scholars have provided important research and insights about the various parts of the metaphoric loop used in this thesis. What this thesis contributes to the field, is the loop itself, and the difficulty to break loose from it for anyone who is trapped.

4. Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will explain the main theories that will be used as an overall framework, when analysing the essential components of the topic. Examples of this is the relation between the majority- /minority society and the relation between the common perception of normalcy and deviance. The theories overlap and have plenty of touchpoints and similarities, what unites them is that they all touch upon people’s conscious or unconscious tendency of othering and making distinction between me/you or us/them.

Although they are related, they will be defined below as individual theories. They are:

- Recognition as a fundamental human need.
- Stigma as a metaphoric label of someone who is perceived as deviant.
- Prejudice and stereotypes as cognitive frameworks.
- Folklore as a means to make the world comprehensible.

Other theories will be used throughout the thesis, when analysing my findings in detail.

4.1 Recognition

When studying the contemporary and historical living conditions of Roma people, one important notion to consider is the concept of recognition, or rather the shortage thereof - disregard. Lack of recognition constitutes a fundamental part of antiziganism both on the individual and the institutional level. For many of my interviewees, the lack of recognition is a large part of what constitutes their discomfort in interactions with the majority society.

Sociologist Carl-Göran Heidegren (2009) describes recognition as a social mechanism that is “a way of relating to another person” (Heidegren 2009:8), and that it both renders and maintains social integration among humans. In every society, according to Heidegren, there is an order of recognition, and this hierarchy can be seen in various levels of that society. From a macro-level within the institutionalized practices, to a micro level, which shows itself as gestures and attitudes in everyday situations.

Philosopher, critical theorist, and feminist Nancy Fraser (2003) describes the notion of recognition as a fundamental human need and a prerequisite for the creation of self-respect and integrity.

She also suggests that the world's injustice can be divided into two parts (although closely intertwined): economic, respectively cultural injustice. Recognition, or the lacking thereof, according to Fraser, constitutes a part of the latter, when used as a means for dominance. It can be manifested through invisible-making, interpretation of someone else's narrative, or claiming the right to use stereotypical representations of someone else.

4.2 Stigma

The notion of stigma is also central in this context. As sociologist Erving Goffman (2011) explains, a stigmatized person is subjected to discrimination or other negative social sanctions based on visual attributes that are perceived by the surrounding people as significant for certain character traits. The etymology behind the word stigma derives from ancient Greece, where some people would get a sign branded or carved into their skin to manifest their moral status. The aim for this treatment was to alert others who to avoid. The term is used today as a metaphor when a person's physical or social circumstances such as a handicap, an illness, ethnicity, or social status implies that others are reducing the bearer to solely what they perceive the attribute to represent.

Another associated concept, also by Goffman (1956) is the metaphor of social life being like a theatrical set in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. With terms such as performance, front stage, backstage and off stage, Goffman (1956) compares everyday social situations to a stage. In this metaphor, some of us are actors, interacting according to preconceived rules, and the rest are spectators. He makes a distinction of behaviour whether the 'actors' are front-stage (where one way of behaviour is expected and accepted) and when they are back-stage (and are allowed to act in another way, which is more aligned with their 'true' self). This theoretical concept is useful on the topic of this thesis, although it also can be problematized, since it assumes that there is some kind of 'essence' in every human, a 'true self' that is buried deep down inside us, a concept that have been discussed within social sciences. However, as will be explained later, the theory is applicable in this context.

4.3 Prejudice and Stereotypes

“Perhaps the briefest of all definitions of prejudice is: thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant.” (Stangor 2000 :22)

Professor in social psychology Charles Stangor (2000) suggests that categorizing the environment is essential for humans to comprehend and navigate in their social world. We need to assess quickly and rationally what is good for us and what is not, and to simplify this assessment, we assort our environment in categories. Instead of assessing each object or person we encounter one by one, we bundle them up together and assess them based on their category, which is based on our expectations. Stangor (2000) suggests that this practice of assorting our surroundings is a natural part of everyday life and essential in every human, but he also makes distinction between this practice and what he calls “overcategorizing” (Stangor 2000 :18). Overcategorizing, he claims, is when the categorization becomes irrational and resistant to change. Overcategorization occurs when “the demands upon us for practical judgements so great, that we cannot let our ignorance detain us in our daily transactions. [...] Rough and ready rubrics, however coarse and broad, have to suffice.” (Stangor 2000 :23). In other words, there are situations when people need to quickly assess the level of risk each object or person they encounter implies. Our categories are then not as calibrated as they should, and we settle with roughly and broadly defined groups.

Stangor (2000) describes prejudice as being acted out stereotypes, meaning that the stereotypes are the categories that we assort by, and prejudice the way the stereotypical beliefs are expressed to others. Those expressions contribute to the stereotypes being internalised, and hence become self-fulfilling prophecies, and the stereotypes are therefore maintained (Stangor 2000 :210).

4.4 Folklore/Narrative Theory

“Some stories are establishing order in the world. Other stories are fortifying the existing order; they build upon preconceived norms and existing institutions.” (Johansson 2005 :99)

Every society has their models of explanations and members of every human group existing in the world are transmitting cultural knowledge through oral narratives (Henriksson 2012). Stories, tales, legends, and myths function to make the world comprehensible when events occur that are hard to grasp or when science has not yet given an explanation to matters that have significance to people’s lives.

In this thesis, I will use the term ‘legend’ which is a translation of the Swedish word ‘sägen’ that Henriksson (2012) uses. She explains that a ‘sägen’ is a story that “wants to be believed” (Henriksson 2012: 15) and communicates shared norms and values, which behaviours are accepted and not within the social world, which social laws that should be obeyed and what could happen to those who break them. In this way, the stories foster the members of the society into eligible behaviour. They can also teach us what or who to beware of, either if it is a mythical being or a foreign person (Henriksson 2012:15). Some stories speak louder to certain people, based on what that person is dreading to most, and the urge for knowledge and explanation fuels further distribution of them.

5. The Loop of Stigma and Enigma

During the strive for understanding the complexity of the social living conditions of Roma people in Sweden, I spent quite some time thinking about and questioning *why* the Roma people are subjected to the level of discrimination they are, and why there is no strong opposition movement against antiziganism in Sweden.

During this process, I identified a structure, or a mechanism that may serve as an explanation, or at least a model for arranging my perceptions of the issue and experiences in the field. The mechanism seems to work as a loop, or a catch 22, that includes three main components. The loop seems difficult to break for anyone who is trapped in it, and the existence of the three components of the loop are prerequisites of the other two's existence. The symbiosis of the three consequently perpetuates the phenomenon. With examples from empirical material, strengthened by discoveries and theories by previous scholars, I will argue for the loop's validity.

What I mean by using the metaphor 'loop' is that it is an unbroken eternal circuit with an end that connects to its starting point. Not to be confused with a spiral, which gradually moves in one more dimension, for example upwards or downwards.

The three components of the loop are:

5.1 Inside/Out & Outside/In Invisible making

5.2 The Legends, the Enigma, and the Myths

5.3 Reproduction of the Stereotypes

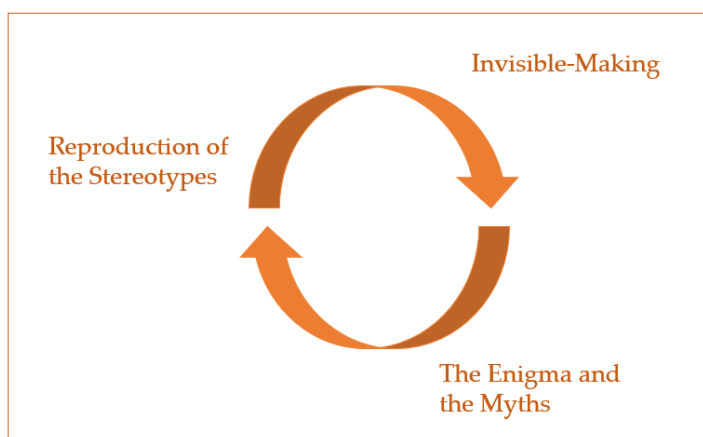


Figure 1. The three components of the loop.

5.1 ‘Inside→ Out & Outside→ In’ Invisible making

The first component in the loop is the invisible making of the Roma ethnicity, both from an ‘inside→ out’ and ‘outside→ in’ perspective. The objective of this chapter is to illustrate, with empirical examples from my fieldwork, how Roma people experience this invisible making. The chapter contains excerpts from interviews with two self-identified Roma persons who I have chosen to call Joseph and Anna-Maria.

The first aspect of the invisible making (inside→ out) is that many, if not most, Roma people are reluctant to reveal their ethnic identity when meeting new people. This results in that the ethnicity becomes face-less for the majority society. Since many Roma people use the transformative term of ‘coming out’ when describing the act of revealing their ethnicity to others, parallels can be drawn to the hbtqi-movement and theories from the field of queer and gender studies will therefore be used in this chapter.

The second aspect of the invisible-making is that the Roma history has been excluded from history-books and how the Roma cultural heritage is not represented in cultural institutions or in material shapes such as monuments or other remembrance sites. For this section, theories from cultural heritage studies will be used, as described in the Previous Research section.

From one of my interviewees (Joseph) I have learned that young Roma children learn to assess when it is safe – legally and socially - to ‘come out’ as Roma, due to the risk of being discriminated against. In some cases, the children’s parents have formulated a desire that their children must be careful about when and to whom their ethnic identity can be revealed safely. In other cases, the children learn organically - through their own experience of comments and subtly expressed attitudes - when they are in a safe place, and their identity is not an implication of uneasiness or threat, and when it is best to leave their ethnicity out of the social equation. I also learned from my interviewees that it is common for self-identified Roma persons to have two first names – a Swedish – official – name, and a Roma name that is used in more private situations.

The act of revealing the ethnicity is often referred to as to ‘come out’ as Roma, which is a term also often used by gay people who reveals their sexual orientation. As historian George A. Chauncey (1994 :8) writes, the metaphor of ‘coming out’ have been used in the gay world since

the 1920s but have changed its meaning a couple of times ever since. From the 1970s, the term has been used to indicate a gay person’s revelation of their sexual identity to the straight world, and the transition from metaphorically stepping out of a closet, which physically is a cramped and small room, and that symbolises the isolation and limitations of a person’s living space when forced to not fully act out the entirety of their identity. In the same way, I imagine that the secrecy of hiding your identity might imply a similar feeling of limitations.

One of my interviewees, Anna Maria, told me stories about her own experience about deliberately hiding her descent. She told me that she lies about her heritage when she meets new people, and she describes this act as being something of an automatic impulse, that she is not fully aware of doing. One example that she told me about was when she started to work out at a gym where she met a group of women that she became friends with. They started to go to work out classes together, and after a while they started to hang out in other contexts as well. One evening, they had dinner together and started to get to know each other better. The other women asked her about her heritage, and without even giving it a second’s afterthought she replied, “I’m Polish” instead of “I’m Roma.” She described to me that she was surprised by her own response, and she spent some time afterwards pondering about why she responded like she did. Her surprise stems from the fact that she, within her professional scope, comfortably educates large audiences from the majority society about Roma history and prejudice. She should, according to herself, logically and due to her profession, be able to be truthful about her heritage. The explanation she came up with was that her instincts, created in her childhood, took over. She was as many other Roma children taught to be careful about where and in front of whom you are safe, socially, or legally being Roma. This experience is what led her to act the way she did, whereas her sense and logical thinking should have led her to act differently.

After this event, Anna-Maria is trying to inspire her own children to be more open about their ethnicity in official contexts. For example, when her daughter was applying for a job, Anna Maria read her professional resumé. She noticed that her daughter had not included her proficiency in Romani chib, and she asked her daughter why, and that she should do that. Her daughter looked at her and said: “Are you crazy? I want a job - of course I won’t include that!” Never have I heard about someone who consider language skills to be disqualifying.

Regarding the above examples and knowing that there are numerous similar testimonies about people being stigmatized and discriminated against for no other reason than for their ethnicity,

the hesitation about revealing the ethnical identity as a Roma is understandable. The prejudice about the ethnicity along with the historical events also creates a disbelief towards the administration and majority society, and the hesitation about revealing your ethnical identity is created.

As anthropologist Thomas Hylland-Eriksen (2004 :71) claims, identity and belonging is contextual, and the definition of who you are depends on the situation and on the expectations from the environment that you are currently in. The level of importance of defining ethnicity also changes with the situation, and in some situations, it might not be important at all. And on the other hand, being the only Swede in a room filled with American people, and since identity is a plastic condition rather than a static, and a Roma person can pass as many different ethnicities, compared to other groups with more visible traits, for example someone who have a different colour of the skin than the surrounding persons. The closer you look, and the more you learn, the more nuanced the picture becomes, and depending on what you compare with various aspects of a person’s identity will be more prominent, be it gender, ethnicity, social status, or ability.

As Goffman (1956) suggests, social life can be imagined as a theatrical set, with various stages that allows us to act in different ways. When we are on frontstage, we behave in a way that is expected and accepted, whilst when we are backstage, we are freer to act the way we want, that is in a more ‘true to self’ way. As I have seen at the centre (RIKC), the self-identified Roma persons are in a safe place there. It is like a haven where they can perform their identity in a secure environment. For example, they talk about their descent in a humoristic way, make jokes about their physical appearance, and they are addressed with their Roma name.

This section has focused on the individual aspect of invisibility-making of Roma people. The next section will process the same phenomenon on an institutional level.

5.1.1 The Hegemonic Discourse of Heritage

As a part of an assignment for RIKC, I was asked to collect knowledge and attitudes about Swedish cultural heritage among ethnic Swedes. The material collected from the investigation was going to be used for a presentation during ‘The Human Rights Days’ in Örebro in November of 2022. I interviewed eight persons of Swedish descent from my network about

their view on cultural heritage, and the method I used was to conduct deliberately short and quick interviews. The reason behind conducting quick interviews with a short amount of time for the interviewees to respond, was to elicit and capture the first things that comes to mind when the informant is asked to associate freely about what Swedish cultural heritage means to them and what they knew about Roma culture and history. As Smith (2006) argues “there is rather a hegemonic discourse about heritage, which acts to constitute the way we think, talk and write about heritage.” (Smith 2006: 11). Also, Ronström (2007) writes about a cognitive framework that consists of collective agreements about how the world is supposed to be interpreted. The frame, as well as Goffman’s (1956) theory of social situations can be compared to a theatrical stage, according to Ronström, “are struck by numerous small signals and signs that provide instructions about how a certain context is to be understood.” (Ronström 2007 :232). This implies that our conscience is framed by a common perception about what cultural heritage is and what counts in terms of preservation, and that the norms work against any alternative ideas of what heritage can imply. These are the theories that I wanted to try out by conducting interviews in this quick way.

What I saw during the interviews correlated with and confirmed the above theories (by Smith (2006), Ronström (2007) and Goffman (1956). For example, the interviewees responses were certainly consistent with what is commonly perceived as Swedishness and Swedish cultural heritage. Objects and concepts that were mentioned was for example ‘Dalarna,’ ‘Fermented herring,’ ‘Open-air museums,’ ‘Lucia and ‘Crayfish parties,’ ‘Meatballs’ and ‘Midsummer.’ These concepts are what Smith (2006) calls “the usual suspects” (Smith 2006 :11) which implies the naturalized and taken for granted examples of what is to be safeguarded and passed onto future generations.

If I instead had deepened the interviews, and asked questions about the respondent’s own family’s traditions, I might have seen other tendencies and deviations from the traditional image of what a holiday should include. I decided to do an experiment, with myself as a test person. I wrote down the first thing that came to mind when thinking about Christmas, and what I wrote down was the television show *Donald Duck and his Friends* (Walt Disney Productions) that has been a returning element on Swedish television at 3 pm on Christmas eve since the 1960’s. The concept of Christmas for me is hence influenced by this specific TV-show. But then I thought of the last time I sat down with my family and watched it, I concluded that it was when I was around 10 years old, which is about 30 years ago. In the same way, I

imagine that my interviewees also have their own unique stories about individual deviations from the norms and general perceptions about Christmas and other traditions, which might bring nuances and paint a truer picture of how Swedes celebrate their holidays and what Swedishness is.

The second part of each interview was about their knowledge about Roma cultural heritage in Sweden, and if they knew anyone or of Roma descent. All my interviewees had to think about the question for a while, and then some of them mentioned the human rights activist and author Katarina Taikon and her books about the Roma girl Katitzi. Other than that, the responses were scarce. Most of my interviewees responded that they knew nothing about the subject.

I also made a survey about the topic, and my target group were thirteen international non-Roma students in Lund, from which eight responded. The difference between conducting interviews and sending out a survey is that during the interviews I could adjust the pace of the conversation, and by body language and behaviour affect the respondents' reflection period and incite them to give me a quick answer. Doing the survey did not give me that opportunity.

The responses were however similar to the ones obtained from the interviews. In general, my respondents could name numerous Swedish monuments and other cultural heritage sites, but not much, if anything, about Roma culture and history in Sweden.

5.1.2 Historical Amnesia

The one who controls the cultural heritage has an important tool for defining who 'we' are [...] Cultural heritage work is not about reproducing a static story of how something once was. It largely consists of running a discussion about how we understand ourselves in the present time. (Bernsand & Narvselius 2018:85)

As Historian Pierre Nora (1988) suggests, monuments and other memorial sites are framing a community's perception of itself. He describes that eminent monuments, statues, and other memorial sites serves as “les lieux de mémoire,” which can be further described as a crystallization, or concretisation of memory.

Nora distinguishes memory from history and suggests that the two concepts are in fundamental opposition to each other. Memory, according to Nora (1988), is personal, reshapable, unprotected and dynamic, and that memories are eternally created and recreated by people's

tendencies to distort and scramble their narratives when they are mediated to others, and also let their stories get stained by new experiences and other people’s mediated memories of the same event.

History, on the other hand, is the problematic and incomplete reconstructed summary of previous events. To regard “lieux de mémoire” as a medium, using concepts from the book *Media Effects* (Potter 2012), which among other things points out that media shapes the people’s beliefs about what is important in society and affects the interpretation of their memory, shows the power of culture institutions have over the discourse.

Also, Ronström (2007) writes about the level of power cultural heritage institutions have over the discourse of who’s narrative is to be a representation of a national identity. He dissects the phrase ‘cultural heritage’ and analyses what the two words (‘cultural’ and ‘heritage’) “do” to each other when they are combined and created into a concept. He suggests that ‘culture’ makes the ‘heritage’ collective as opposed to the traditional sense of the word, which implies something that is individually transferred from one person to another. ‘Heritage’ on the other hand, materialises culture and anchors it in the past. He points out that what the label of cultural heritage ‘does’ to an object, is that it increases the value of the object, beyond its face value, and gives it the ability to communicate to its spectators: “Look at me! I’m important!” (Ronström 2007 :109).

Looking at “lieux de mémoire” through the lens of Heidegren’s (2009) notion on recognition, another dimension of the concept appears, namely the historical dimension of expressed recognition of who’s cultural heritage is to be remembered, and thereby an indication on who counts and who does not. A phenomenon that is described as ‘historical amnesia’ (Clarke 2012 :153), can be claimed to be at play here. The phenomenon implies the act of deleting or omitting parts of history which are considered inconvenient or undesirable. By not having any institutional monuments or memorial makes the Roma people’s history and heritage invisible, inessential, and undervalued. And as Ronström claims “the production of monuments and memorial sites is not neutral but renders great areas of amnesia” (Ronström 2007 :27) and that “cultural heritage does not only tell what it is, but also what it is not. Because of this, one needs to search for what is excluded, subordinated, disregarded, and forgotten.” (Ronström 2007 :27).

“The review of the position of the Roma cultural heritage shows that it is scattered, unexplored, uncatalogued, undocumented, and inaccessible not least for the Roma themselves, who almost without exception lack influence over their own cultural heritage.” (SOU 2010:55 :488).

The above quote is telling when one wants to understand the consequences historical amnesia implies, both to the current underrepresented group as well as the society. On an individual level, historical and cultural recognition is important to develop a positive self-image, and for the society it is important to preserve the minorities’ culture, language, and traditions since they are a part of the development of the society, and therefore it concerns the entire population.

The historical amnesia and the hegemonic discursive of heritage explain why none of my interviewees could name any Roma monuments, memorial sites, statues, traditions, role models or acquaintances in Sweden, when they quite flowingly could name an abundance of Swedish equivalents.

The secrecy that follows the covert identity, the historical amnesia and the lack of visible Roma role models inevitably leads to an enigma about the ethnicity. An ‘enigma,’ according to the Merriam Webster dictionary is something – or someone – that is a bit of a mystery and is difficult to understand (www.merriam-webster.com).

The consequences of this enigma will be further explained in the next section.

5.2 The Legends, the Enigma, and the Myths

In this chapter, my aim is to explain how the second component of the loop, which is the enigma that surrounds the Roma ethnicity (due to the twofold invisible making explained in the previous chapter) is manifested in a historical and contemporary context, and to describe the consequences of the secrecy about the ethnicity.

To investigate the historical attitudes and knowledge about the Roma community, I turned to the Folklife Archive in Lund (Folklivsarkivet), who among other things have the mission of collecting and distributing attitudes, experiences, and opinions about diverse topics from the public to the academic world, among others.

The material that I investigated for this thesis is a questionnaire from 1989, called “Tattare”, and the questions asked were about people’s general perception of Roma people.

I approached the material by using the method of close reading (Henriksson 2007) as explained in the section called ‘Methods & Empirical Material’. The findings will be presented according to the categories that formed after studying the material, namely:

- Theme: the respondents’ opinion about Roma people
- Motive: the way the opinion is expressed (positive/negative/indifferent)
- Position: the relation the respondent had with Roma people (1st -/2nd hand information)

The position was determined after statements as:

“I have never met one myself, but my parents told me [...]” or “The ones I met myself were [...]”

Overall, some words were returning in almost every response in the studied responses to the questionnaire (LUF 183:1989), for example “dark,” “dishonest,” “mystical,” “dangerous,” “knives,” “tattered,” “blatant”, “rowdy”, and “untidy”, and there were plenty of stories about Roma people who have been involved in violent events of various kinds.

However, it became apparent to me during the investigation that the *position* of the respondent correlated with the value of their opinions. Most of the stories were told from a 2nd hand source, and these stories were mostly negative. The assessment of the position of the informant were information such as: “I don’t have any personal experience, but our parents told us [...]” (20693) “We were warned about them” (20692) “Didn’t know anyone myself, but I’ve heard that they lived in the neighbouring village” (20697) “This is information is what our parents told us about how their parents experienced them” (20693).

5.2.1 Second Hand Information

As mentioned earlier, most of the respondents’ stories were of negative nature, and they were told from a 2nd hand perspective. The negative descriptions were for example:

“They were dark, agile, quick, whimsical and dangerous” (20692) “They were dangerous and eager to reach for the knife” (20691)

or warnings connected to the Roma:

“In a region where tinkers lives, one should be careful of leaving the laundry out overnight, otherwise it might get stolen.” (20719)

These statements from a 2nd hand perspective, (the ones that were mostly negative), seem to function as warnings, or a way to communicate to others who or what to beware about, as Henriksson (2012) suggested were one of the functions of the legends.

The next section will process the statements and descriptions that were told from a 1st hand perspective, namely when the giver of the testimony themselves had done the encounter with the subject of the description.

5.2.2 First Hand Information

The stories that were told from a 1st hand perspective were few, but most of them were of positive nature, telling stories about friendly and constructive encounters. Some stories revolved around events when the respondents and their families helped travelling people when they needed it, for example if they needed some place to stay for the night. Many of the respondents seem to have been behaving nicely towards the Roma and that the nice behaviour was mutual. Among other things, many Roma people seem to have been appreciated as partners in trading and dealing, and that they could be helpful when it came to help with medical treatments or for their skills in craftsmanship.

However, since the stories from a 1st hand perspective were quite scarce, they constituted only a small part of the entire material. What can be said about the 1st hand encounters though, is that they were mostly experienced as positive, or in some cases indifferent or a bit pitiful and sometimes a bit intrigued – but rarely negative.

Examples from the 1st hand respondents are:

“They were well-behaved and tidy. I felt a bit bad for them.” (20703) “Personally, we never had any trouble with them” (20714), “They have always provided for themselves and never been a burden on society. They are friendly and honest” (20707), “They were my children’s best playmates!” (20704), “He was a persistent salesman, nice-looking, not sloppy, on the contrary, he was quite well-dressed.” (20720), “She came to the island about two times a year,

dressed in a scarf or a kerchief, long (and many) skirts and brought a big wicker basket with a lid, very interesting for a child. When she opened the basket, there were laces, ribbons, needles, head cloths and other knick-knack, underwear.” (20740), “She evoked some sensation because she smoked a pipe. There was a fairy-tale-shimmer about ‘Little Mrs!’” (20607) “As a child I had my own opinion about them. They were alluring and lived freely” (20705).

Position	Value (neg.)	Value (pos.)
1st hand information	4	19
2nd hand information	60	4

Table 3. Distribution of valued opinions due to the position of the informant.

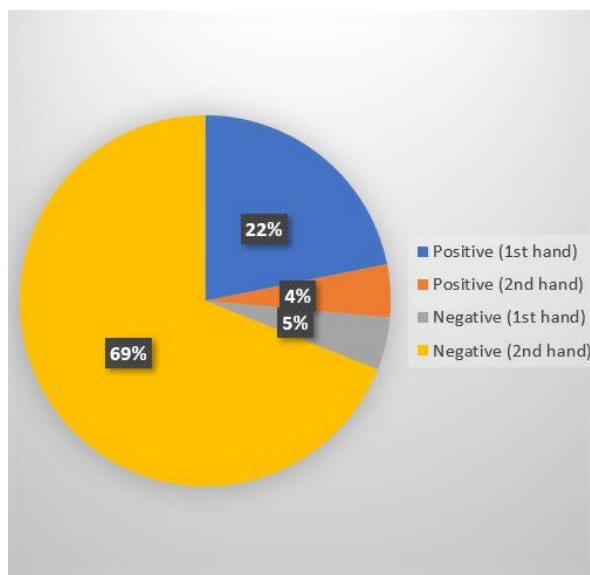


Figure 2. Distribution of valued opinions (%) due to the position of the informant.

5.2.3 Common Sense as a ‘Proof’ of a Statement’s Validity

During the process of assessing the 2nd hand position of the informant (if their provided information were collected from hearsay or an acquaintance), the concept of ‘common sense’ was frequently used. Ways to express this was for example “the general perception was [...]” or “everyone knew [...]” when giving testimony about the characters or behaviour of the Roma. Sometimes their position was revealed using the generic term “one” instead of the specific “I,” when giving a statement of opinion or experience.

As linguist Norman Fairclough (2015) points out, common sense is a form of “everyday thinking, which offers us frameworks of meaning with which to make sense of the world... a popular, easily available knowledge [which] works intuitively, without forethought or reflection.” (Fairclough 2015:13).

Hence, I interpret the use of “common sense” logic in the material as a legitimization of that what the informant is saying is true, even though they do not have their own personal experience of the matter. The logic is that since ‘everyone knows that it is true,’ it must be true. And as sociologist Anna Johansson (2005) suggests, to legitimize a legend’s validity, the 2nd hand testimony serves as both a way for the storyteller to escape accountability for the level of truth in the story, but at the same time, it fortifies the credibility of the story. In this way, the narrator can bring credibility to a story without risking being questioned about the story’s truth value. This strategy is frequently used by the respondents giving 2nd hand information, those who are reproducing stories they have heard from others but have not experienced themselves. The strategy of using ‘common sense’ as an argument is often powerful since people tend to have a desire to be perceived as knowledgeable as everybody else.

Several quotes from the material showed the power of the common sense, for example: “I’ve never known anyone, but I was afraid of them when I was a child.” (20696) “Nobody ever told me that’s how they would look, but I’ve always imagined it to be like that.” (20696) “They were considered work shy and thievish” (20705).

5.2.4 The Function of a Legend

“They were dangerous and stole children.” (20691)

Legends, myths, and sagas exist in every community. Their functions differ, and some of them seem to serve as a maintenance of moral behaviour, for example how we are supposed to raise our children, relate to the truth and the desirable general conduct in various every-day situations. Others manifest what behaviour is eligible in a community (Lövkröna 2020). These stories have consequently an impact on our behaviour and will therefore contribute to how we form our identities (Johansson 2005), and they have the function of being educational and correctional of bad behaviour, and what or who to avoid. Due to their comprehensible and

memorable structure, legends spread easily, contagiously. They contain preconceptions and are telling about the community’s norms and current ontology (Henriksson 2012).

The secrecy about the Roma ethnicity, described in the previous sections, which is a result of the twofold invisible making that leads to that few people from the majority society knows that they know anyone of Roma descent, allows myths and legends to flourish about the ethnicity. In the studied archival material, many extreme and quite unbelievable stories were told about the Roma people, including supernatural abilities, or that they would steal children. The historical stereotype that Roma people steal children is one of the most bizarre and widespread myths about the ethnicity, and stories of this kind were frequently mentioned in the archival material.

“Through the legends we obtain knowledge about what to be aware of, either if it is trolls or people from a foreign country, and what could happen if you are not careful.” (Henriksson 2012:15).

Parallels between the myths told about Roma people and how the legends and sagas about the Nordic mythical entity called trolls, can be drawn. Several sources (Asplund-Ingemark 2004, Jakobsson 2017, Henriksson 2012, Egerkrans 2013), suggest that there is a traditional idea that trolls are stealing children for several reasons. In some of the stories, trolls steal children to avenge humans who have treated them wrong. In other stories the trolls steal children out of envy, and some of them recount that the trolls abduct children just to eat them. One of the written sources suggest that the trolls of the human imagination are a secluded group that need the human children to diversify their gene pool.

“What they used the children for, I never found out” (20691)

Why Roma people would steal children is not mentioned in the material. And the reason for Roma people, or trolls, to steal children in the figment of our imagination might not be important. The function of the stories is not to be truthful or logical. The function is to educate and intimidate, protect, and alert about the object of the narrator’s own fears, probably sprung from ignorance or adaptation of common perceptions in society. The effect of the stories has on society in this context is clearly as a fortifier of stereotypes, as they reproduce the commonly accepted opinion about the ethnicity.

5.3 Reproduction of the Stereotypes

The third component of the loop consists of the stereotypes surrounding the Roma ethnicity. The lack of visible Roma role models that, if they were known, could function as a counterweight against the stereotypical image of Roma people, allows space for people’s general opinion to serve as a truth. And hence, the stereotypes are perpetuated and reproduced.

In this chapter, mechanisms behind stereotypes and prejudice according to Stangor (2000) will be explained and tied together with empirical material from the fieldwork. Quoted informants in this chapter are three self-identified Roma persons who I have chosen to call Joseph, Mathias and Nicola.

According to Stangor (2000), prejudice is: “[...] an aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group” (Stangor 2000: 22) and that prejudice is an acted-out attitude based on beliefs – stereotypes.

An influential actor who facilitates the reproduction of the stereotypes is mass media. As the report ‘Mediebilden av Romer’ (Institutet för mediestudier 2015) shows, the media image about Roma people is mainly negative, and still, the derogatory Z-word is frequently used and normalised within Swedish media reporting, despite the decision during the first Roma World Congress in 1971, that the word should not be used. The Z-word stems from the Greek term ‘xenons’ which means ‘stranger,’ and instead, the word ‘Roma’ should be used, which means ‘human’ in Romani (Institutet för mediestudier 2015 :21).

The search term has been used over 14 000 times since 1971, as seen in figure 3 below. When further analysed, by searching through the articles that included the term, I found that the way the term has been used has varied over the years. During the 1970’s and 1980’s the Z-word was used as a normal denomination for the Roma, and towards the end of the period, the word was mostly used in articles that illuminated that the term should not be used anymore. In other words, it could be argued that there has been a positive development regarding the awareness of how the term should be used. However, I would like to argue that the term should not be used in any context at all since 1971.

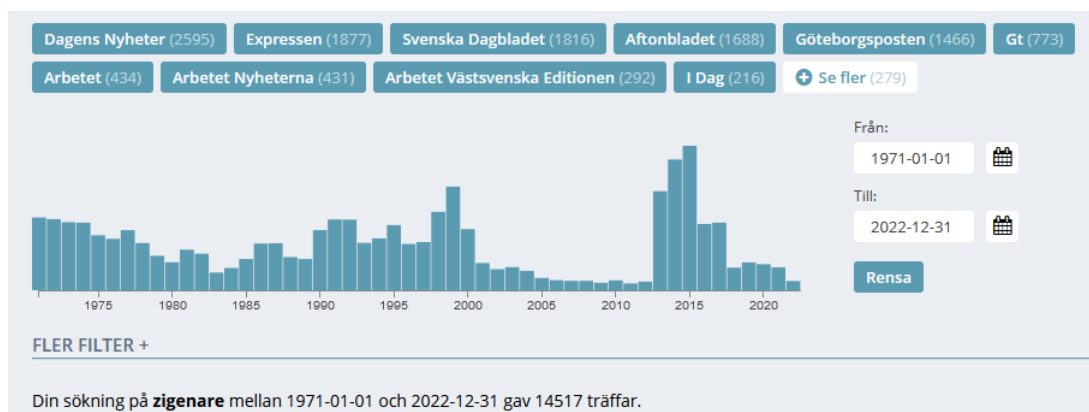


Figure 3, search results from the National Newspaper Archives, Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm.

According to the investigation “Mediebilden av Romer” (Institutet för mediestudier 2015), the media image of Roma people is divided in two. On the one hand, there is a negative image of Roma people as being criminals, ragged and dishonest. This image is seen in the studied newspaper articles and was also described in the archival material from the perspective of 2nd hand positioned informants. On the other hand, a contrasting image has been thriving. This image is referred to as a “filo-ziganist” (Institutet för mediestudier 2015:12) image which is explained to be an exaggerated mystical and romanticized image of the Roma as hyper-cultural beings. This image is lacking the purely negative elements from the first but is equally stereotypical and harmful since it fortifies stereotypes and is not an accurate representation of reality.

“The net effect of prejudice, thus defined, is to place the object of the prejudice at some disadvantage not merited by his own misconduct.” (Stangor 2000: 23)

A contemporary example of when a stereotype is presented as a truth is a story that made it to the headlines in 2013, namely when a Roma couple in Greece were accused of stealing a child. The child was blonde and blue eyed, unlike the couple who she lived with. The difference between them sparked a suspicion that the girl was not their biological child, and without further investigation or questioning, the couple were declared child abductors by the media. It later turned out that the couple had adopted the girl from a woman in Bulgaria who could not take care of her. This example shows the impact of the myths and stereotypes, and that even journalists, who are trained in critical thinking regarding sources, bought into the story.



Figure 4. Photo of the adopted girl in Greece. (From an article in Dagens Nyheter 2013-10-21)

“The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue - it’s that they are selective”
(Joseph)

During a conversation with my interviewee Joseph about the world as a peculiar place in general, and the phenomenon of stereotypes in particular, we talked a lot about why stereotypes exist, and how they work. I told him about my recent encounter with Stangor and his ideas about the matter, and his suggestion that stereotypes exist in every human and “serve as to simplify our social worlds and to make them comprehensible.” (Stangor 2000:18). I questioned the level of inherence in Stangor’s suggestion, that every human has a cognitive framework of categories that they are bound to use to be able to navigate in the world. In that case, everyone would be prejudiced and there would not be anything to be done about it, which is a claim that is easily rebutted. Not everyone is prejudiced, and not everyone is as prejudiced as everyone else. During this dialogue, Joseph suggested that the framework might be inherent or universal, whilst the content of the categories is unique for everyone and based on a person’s experiences and expectations, which is a new way for me to think about the concept.

Joseph further said something interesting, that the problem with stereotypes is not that they are necessarily untrue - the problem is that they are selective. For example, if the stereotype about Roma people is that they are thievish - then the truth is not that no Roma person is thievish. Of

course, there will be thievish Roma people, like there are thievish Swedes, Poles, or Danes. The point is, that people tend to search for evidence of what they already think is true, to make the stereotype fit with the reality. This is called ‘confirmation bias’ and, according to the Britannica Dictionary it is “the tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with one’s existing beliefs” (www.britannica.com).

Another cause for the reproduction and maintenance of stereotypes are self-fulfilling prophecies, which occur when our expectations of another person affect how we act towards them, and hence influence them to start acting in line with the stereotype (Stangor 2000 :210). Then the stereotypes come true since their function becomes transformative. Hancock (2003) also describes this phenomenon by claiming that a person who is constantly subjected to humiliation will lose their sense of self-respect and eventually starts to act and behave according to the stereotype that is projected on them.

According to Stangor (2000), the stereotypes are the beliefs that the categories are based on, and prejudice is the attitudes, in other words how the beliefs are expressed between one human to another. The term ‘prejudice’ also holds an indication of timing, as the Oxford English Dictionary defines it: prejudice stems from the Latin word ‘*praeiudicium*’ - preceding judgement - which implies “Preconceived opinion not based on reason or actual experience” (www.oed.com), which indicates that the nature of the opinion is that it is formed *before* an actual encounter with the object of the opinion. This implies that it could be altered after an encounter, if the object is behaving in a way that is rebutting the stereotype. In my own experience, this is also what mostly happens, when prejudice is at play: a person might change their opinion once they are faced with facts that are rebutting their first view. That is why the stories below from two of my interviewees, Mathias and Nicola really introduced me to a new perspective on the matter:

Mathias told me that he had always been very well-liked at his workplace, both as a colleague and as a friend, and that it was easy for him to create new relationships. After some years, he decided that he wanted to ‘reveal’ his ethnicity at work and tell his colleagues about his descent. Since he had always been well-liked, he did not think that it would make a significant difference, but the reaction of his colleagues was quite unexpected. He explained: “After ‘coming out’ as Roma, my colleagues started to treat me differently. They gave me the ‘cold shoulder,’ and suddenly they didn’t want to talk to me anymore.”

The other story, from Nicola, was similar to the one from Mathias in terms of other people’s reaction to the revelation of the Roma ethnicity. Nicola told me that he used to work in a small neighbourhood bar, a place with many regular guests and familiar faces every night. One of them was an elderly, quite posh lady, who used to visit the bar alone for a glass of wine a couple of nights per week. As the time went by, the two started to create a friendly bartender - guest bond and had some quite heartfelt conversations. Once, he even helped her when she had trouble with her car, and since she did not have many other close people to help her with these kinds of things, she was grateful towards him.

One night, she asked him about his descent, and Nicola was at first hesitant to tell her, since he had been taught to be careful about revealing his ethnic identity. But since their relationship was, what he thought, trustful, he told her that his parents were Hungarian Roma. The lady became pale, and her facial features stiffened. She reached for her purse that way placed on top of the bar counter close to where Nicola stood and she said: “oh, I didn’t know that you were one of *those*.”

These two stories show a sign of a mode of prejudice that I am not used to. In my experience, prejudice is about *preconceived* opinions that might change or be confirmed when exposed to the object of the prejudice. Both Mathias and Nicola were well liked before they came out, it was when they *did* reveal their identity they began to be treated negatively, which is an expression of prejudice that is unexpected.

This chapter has processed the prejudice and stereotypes that revolve around the Roma ethnicity, and how the prejudice is expressed and reproduced. The next section will make room for a further discussion around my findings.

6. Discussion & Conclusion

6.1 Main findings

This thesis' last section will give room for a discussion about the several aspects of the analysis. Several questions were rendered throughout the process, and points that are worth processing in a discussive way were revealed. The research question for this thesis was:

- How come the discrimination of Roma people is still prevailing in Swedish society, despite the governmental endeavours to counteract it?

This question guided me through winding trails of the subject, and my investigation touched upon various aspects of invisible making, stigmatisation, and levels of discrimination. I have collected information by conducting interviews, surveys, observations, archival material and newspaper studies, and the material was analysed through concepts such as recognition, stigma, stereotypes & prejudice, and narrative theory.

One of my overall discoveries was a structure, a metaphor loop that affects Roma people, and serves as a catch 22 for anyone who is trapped in it.

The loop served as a framework for my findings, and a way for me to structure my research. The loop consists of three main components. The components were then explained separately, and they were:

- Inside/Out & Outside/In Invisible making
- The Legends, the Enigma, and the Myths
- Reproduction of the Stereotypes

In short, the way the loop seems to work is that people of Roma descent are hesitant or unwilling to reveal their ancestry, due to social and legal circumstances, and hence are living under some kind of 'covert identity.' Together with lack of public recognition, such as monuments or acknowledgements in the history books, this secrecy results in that very few people from the majority society knows that they know anyone who is Roma. This further creates an enigma about the ethnicity and fuels the circulation of myths. The acceptance of the legends and myths as holders of possible truths, allows consequently the historical stereotypes

about the ethnicity to reproduce. The stereotypes contribute to an indisputable stigma of the ethnical identity, a stigma that prevents Roma people to ‘come out.’ Hence, the loop is completed - the circle is sealed.

I will now simultaneously discuss and conclude the loop and its three components. The questions raised in this section could serve as a continuation of the research, and perhaps they will elicit further interest in the subject by the reader.

The first issue I would like to discuss is connected to the inside and out invisible making. Who bears the responsibility of breaking the loop? Is it the Roma people themselves that are responsible, or is it up to the majority society to facilitate the act of ‘coming out’? Thinking about this, we are dealing with an example of the ancient riddle about what came first of the chicken and the egg. If a Roma person decides to ‘come out,’ and hence try to break the loop, how to make sure that they will not be subjected to discrimination? And if it is up to the majority society to fight for Roma rights - what is their incentive to do so?

These questions lead to further questions about the invisible making on an institutional level. If more monuments of Roma people were erected, would people automatically cherish them? Also in this case, an incentive and an interest are needed. According to Martins-Holmberg (2014) and Ronström (2007), everybody in a society benefits from diversity, hence that should be an incentive as good as any. However, the benefits that a diverse society implies, might be a too abstract and distant goal for people to grasp and believe in.

Another issue that needs to be discussed is about the impact public recognition in cultural institutions has on people. If “the one who controls the cultural heritage has an important tool for who ‘we’ are” (Bernsand & Narvselius 2018:85), does this imply that the ones who are not included or represented in the cultural institutions lack the knowledge about who ‘they’ are? In what way does the lack of public inclusion affect a community’s perception of recognition and self-image? As philosopher Charles Taylor (1994) suggests, recognition is “not only a politeness that we owe to other people. It is a basic human need” (Taylor 1994 :38) and he also claims that the lack of recognition can “cause deep wounds and burden its victim with a paralyzing pain” (ibid :38).

If Taylor is right, that recognition is crucial for a community’s feeling of self-worth, and if “lieux de mémoire” (Nora 1988) could serve as a public recognition, what happens when the latter is missing? Could it be that the twofold media-image of Roma people start to replace the

function of “les lieux de mémoire”? Does this media-image thus form the self-image of the Roma people’s perception of their past, presence, and future? What does that imply for Roma people’s self-image and feeling of self-worth? And likewise, could long lasting discrimination start to function as a backdrop for a community’s self-image and eventually become a part of their cultural identity?

When I asked my interviewees about what is needed to make Roma people more confident about ‘coming out’ and revealing their ethnicity, they all agreed on that it is knowledge that is needed, and that knowledge and education are factors that will help the contribute to the weakening of the stigma, the blurring and eventually erasing of the stereotypes, and to dissolve boundaries to facilitate inclusion and understanding. Joseph suggested that the discursive needs to change: it is not enough to decrease the structural antiziganism, the discursive, how Roma people are talked and thought about every in everyday life, what is written in the newspapers, and how they are depicted in popular culture such as films, books and magazines, that needs to change. And to be fair, what RIKC does, namely educating the majority society, having their employees bravely ‘coming out’ as Roma in public, they have already started the journey. And as Nicola hopefully put it, after extensive efforts to educate the majority society, which is one of RIKC’s missions, “maybe one day the spark will ignite.” His hopeful reasoning implied that if the (RIKC) just continues with their work about conducting educations and lectures, meeting people in various levels in society, spreading knowledge and raising awareness, maybe one day, there will be a positive change, a popular movement that will work in the favour of the Roma people, spreading like a fire.

The enigmatic secrecy of the ethnicity results in a ‘legendisation’ of the Roma community, and old myths and legends are allowed to flourish. As written in section 5.2, a lot of the historical myths, based on stereotypes, are still circulating today. For example, one of the most bizarre and widespread myths is that Roma people would steal children. As Hancock (2003) puts it: “there is no evidence for this, it is difficult enough providing for our own children.” (Hancock 2003 :95). The archival material showed that the opinion of Roma people was mostly negative among people who have never met any Roma person themselves, but rather had taken for granted that the rumours they had heard were true. The ones who have had first hand interaction with a Roma person, had mostly positive or indifferent opinions about them. An investigation from Brå, which is the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention shows that the most common hate crimes towards Roma people are conducted by people who do not know the

victim in person. (Regeringskansliet Ds 2014:8 :14). This also shows the effects of the secrecy and invisible making of the ethnicity. The archival material also showed that due to Roma people’s transient and volatile living-conditions, they have also been subjected to scapegoatism, and as Hancock (2003) explains, they often become an easy blame, since “what better evidence that they are guilty and are fleeing from the scene?” (Hancock 2003 :62).

The myths and legends that are allowed to flourish about the Roma identity, contributes to the reproduction of the stereotypes, which is processed in chapter 5.3. Stereotypes as a cognitive phenomenon is almost justified by Stangor (2000) who claims that “there is a natural basis for this tendency [overcategorization] [...] We have to decide whether objects are good or bad by classes” (Stangor 2000:23). As I understand his argument, there is no “cure” for stereotypes and prejudice since the framework is inherent and inescapable for all human beings. But why then, is it that we are not all as prejudiced as each other? How come open and unbiased people exist? I would like to claim that there is a cure, and even if the framework is inherent and existent in every human being it is possible to change it. I agree with my informants - what is needed is education.

6.2 Applicability

To give the reader a brief background about the situation of the Roma people in Sweden this thesis started with a historical context of the subject. The purpose of providing a historical background was to evoke thoughts of comparative approaches, about the historical struggles of other disadvantaged groups known to the reader. It was also meant to exhibit the expected and logical but unfortunately non-appearing cause and effect. The expected effect (the social and historical recognition of an oppressed and stigmatized group) of the cause (institutional recognition), is not disclosed.

One historical example that Joseph used to use as an illustrative parable to the situation of the Roma people is the women’s rights movement. Parallels can be drawn to the treatment of the Polish French scientist Marie Curie, who was widely recognized for her enormous scientific accomplishments and being awarded the Nobel prize, but still rejected membership in the French Academy of Sciences - all because of her gender (Schilling 2018). The imagined significance of biology seems inescapable. Or is it?

I often think about the quote from Nicola, “Maybe one day the spark will ignite,” and what it implies. I hope that soon, the knowledge that RIKC and other actors are spreading in society will ignite a spark and a will to make a change, so that the loop can open and turn into a spiral.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire LUF 183

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MORAL OCH KÄRLEK

Berätta vad som ansågs om tattarnas förhållande till den allmänna moralen och begreppet heder! Fostrades tättarbarn annorlunda än andra barn? Var deras liv friare? Utmärkte de sig exempelvis på något sätt i skolan? Hur behandlades de i skolan, av lärare och av kamrater? Tror Du att de dömdes hårdare än andra, eller kom de lättare undan när de begick misstag? Vad hade de för förhållande till kyrkan och religionen? Levde de friare än andra med egna normer och levnadsregler? Brukade barnen konfirmeras? Hur ansågs tattarnas allmänna vandel? Ansågs kvinnorna "lätta på foten"? Och karlarna "begivna på kvinnor"? Berätta!

UPPTRÄDANDE OCH UMGÄNGESVANOR

Umgicks de mest med likasinnade och med släkten? Hade de ett annorlunda sätt mot makthavare och myndighetspersoner än mot andra människor? Ansågs de vara krypande och fega mot överheten men överlägsna och utmanande mot vanligt folk? Uppträdde de annorlunda i grupp än när de var ensamma?

BOSTAD OCH HEMMILJÖ

Hur såg tattarens bostad ut? Varför tror Du att många dåliga och illa beryktade bostadsmiljöer förknippats med tattare? Beskriv några miljöer! Bodde de företrädesvis i skogsområden och på utmarker och fälader? Har det funnits tattare som haft det gott ställt och haft fina hus? Tror Du att det var svårare för tattare än för andra att få tag i en bostad? Brukade tattarna flytta ofta? Höll de sig till vissa trakter eller kunde det även vara långväga flyttningar? Har Du hört att det i Dina hemtrakter har förekommit tattare, som köpt hus billigt och sedan sålt dem dyrt till kommunen för att kommunen ville bli av med tattarna?

ARBETE

Har vissa yrken varit kännetecknande för tattare och tvärtom har man betraktats som tattare, om man haft vissa yrken? Huruvida tror Du att deras inställning till arbete har varit? Tror

du att det var svårare för dem än för andra att få arbete? Var det vanligt att de kombinerade flera sätt att försörja sig, t ex köp och försäljning av lump och skrot med annat arbete?

HÄSTEN OCH BILEN

Har tattare i dina trakter sysslat med hästhandel? Skedde denna enbart på marknaderna? Hur handskades de med hästarna? Berätta! Har de i senare tid övergått till att handla med bilar? Har Du några minnen av att tattare var de första i bygden som hade bil? Hur betraktades i så fall detta?

FATTIGDOM, UNDERSTÖD OCH OMHÄNDERTAGANDE AV MYNDIGHETERNA

Tror Du att dessa människor var fattigare än andra? Ansåg man att tattare fått mer fattigvård/socialvård än andra? Varför tror Du i så fall att det var så? Finns det exempel på att tattarbarn har tagits om hand av myndigheterna? Känner Du till om tattare brukade råka i konflikt med ordningsmakten? Kan Du ge exempel på hur deras uppträdande stred mot den allmänna ordningen? Hur var myndigheternas inställning till tattare?

STÖLD, TIGGERI OCH LURENDREJERI

Har man varit rädd för att bli bestulen när tattare var i närheten? Känner Du till stölder som begåtts av tattare? Berätta! Var det frågan om mera organiserad brottslighet eller snatteri? Har Du träffat tiggande tattare? Förekom det att de sålde krimskrams eller annat och hotade med hämnd om man inte handlade av dem? Var tattare kända för att luras i affärer och i andra sammanhang? Berätta om episoder, som du hört talas om! Har Du hört att de ägnade sig åt trolldom, spådom och signeri?

SLAGSMÅL

Var det vanligt med slagsmål bland tattarna? Brukade de enbart slåss inbördes eller kunde utomstående bli inblandade? Berätta om historier från Dina hemtrakter. Ansågs tattare "begivna på starka drycker"? Spelade kniven någon speciell roll för tattare? Varför tror Du? Berätta vad Du tror eller har hört!

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TATTARE

ALLMÄNT

Utgångspunkten för den här frågelistan är hur omgivningen har sett på s k tattare. Hur har man betraktat dem i Din bygd? Vilka attityder hade man mot dem? Vad sade man om dem? Hur förklarades deras beteende? Hade Du som barn en egen uppfattning om dem? Att de var spännande? Beundrade man dem? Utgjorde de något färgstarkt, men förbjudet? Har Du t ex varnats för att tattare stal barn, som de sedan sålde vidare. Berätta om egna erfarenheter av tattare, eller återberätta historier Du har hört om dem.

NAMN

Fanns det någon släkt i Dina trakter, som ansågs vara tattare? Var deras förnamn speciella i något avseende? Berätta om dem! Var det vanligt att man använde beteckningen "tattare" tillsammans med deras namn när man talade om dem, t ex Tattar-Fia? Kunde man även tilltala dem så? Förekom öknamn? Har man benämnt tattare utifrån den ort de bebodde, exempelvis Ramsåsatattarna? Vad kallades i så fall tattarna i Din bygd?

UTSEENDE

Var tattarens utseende avvikande eller speciellt? Har de ansetts för särskilt vackra? Har t ex kvinnorna utmärkts av en förförisk skönhet, som kunde utgöra en farlig lockelse? Och ansågs männen vara virila skojare med en farlig, mörk glimt i ögat? Brukade de ha någon karakteristisk klädsel? Berätta!

VAR TRÄFFADE MAN PÅ TATTARE?

I vilka situationer träffade man på tattare? Var det i hemmet, på marknader, i kyrkan eller på dansbanan? Hur bemöttes de? Ville man träffa tattare, eller undvek man dem helst? Deltog de i gemensamma aktiviteter i bygden?

MUSIK OCH NÖJESLIV

Har det funnits tattare i Dina trakter, som uppträtt som spelmän? Berätta om dem! Brukade de spela på gillen, på någon dansbana eller på mera improviserade tillställningar? Beskriv deras spel och framträdanden! Finns det någon mera namnkunnig musiker från dina trakter som säges vara av tattarsläkt? Förknippar Du tattare även med annat nöjesliv? Tivoli, skjutbana, nöjesfält etc. Berätta om detta!

EN KLASS FÖR SIG?

Har man i Dina trakter talat om tattare som "en klass för sig"? Var detta en grupp människor, som man helst inte ville ha med att göra? Skiljde tattare sig från andra? Hur? Var de fattiga och utstötta eller bara vilda och farliga? På vilket sätt var de annorlunda? Ville de leva för sig själva? Var de ett annat slags folk? Hade de ett större behov av frihet än andra? Vad tror Du? Vad ansåg man i Dina trakter? Förekom det att man avundades deras liv? Tror du att inställningen till tattare har varierat med vilken social ställning man själv hade? Hur? Fanns det ett socialt avstånd mellan tattare och andra? Vem umgicks med tattare? Hur betraktades de som umgicks med dem? Har man varit rädd för tattare? Vari bottnade denna rädsla? Ansågs det farligt att umgås med dem? I så fall varför? Kunde de bli hotfulla mot folk, som inte visade respekt för dem?

HAR SYNEN PÅ TATTARE FÖRÄNDRATS?

Finns det fortfarande tattare? Om så är fallet, hur lever de i dagens samhälle? Berätta om Dina funderingar kring detta! Om de har försvunnit: när skedde detta och hur förklarar man det?

TACK FÖR DIN MEDVERKAN!